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HEART OF
JESSY LAURIE



AMELIA E.
BARR

1. Fiction, American



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THE HEART OF JESSY LAURIE

OTHER BOOKS BY MRS. BARR

JAN VEDDER'S WIFE

THE BOW OF ORANGE RIBBON

REMEMBER THE ALAMO

FRIEND OLIVIA

A ROSE OF A HUNDRED LEAVES

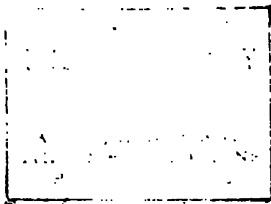
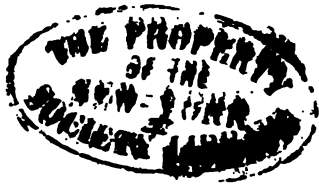
THE LION'S WHELP

THE BLACK SHILLING

THE BELLE OF BOWLING GREEN

CECILIA'S LOVERS

ETC.





THE HEART OF JESSY LAURIE

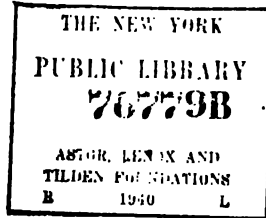
BY
AMELIA E. BARR

FRONTISPIECE BY
HARRISON FISHER



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1907



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To All Women

DISAPPOINTED AND DISILLUSIONED,

I INSCRIBE,

THE HEART OF JESSY LAURIE

A. E. B.



CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. THE HOME OF JESSY LAURIE	1
II. THE GATE CALLED DANGER	18
III. CAMERON'S DECISION	35
IV. A FATEFUL MEETING	57
V. PLAYING WITH FIRE	85
VI. CAUGHT IN A NET	103
VII. JESSY GOES TO GLASGOW	130
VIII. JESSY'S MARRIAGE	149
IX. THE LAST LINK IS BROKEN	169
X. THE VALLEY OF HUMILIATION	190
XI. THE HARD WAY OUT	202
XII. THE CALL OF DESTINY	223
XIII. FULLY JUSTIFIED	251
XIV. BACK TO ST. ANDREW'S	282
XV. LOVE, AND CONTINGENCIES	300

THE HEART OF JESSY LAURIE

CHAPTER ONE

THE HOME OF JESSY LAURIE

St. Andrews is the religious capital of Scotland. It is the essence of all the antiquity of that country, and the national flavor may be felt and tasted in its stately streets, with their spiritual traditions and romances, their dignified air of association with bishops and archbishops, reformers and professors. Nowhere in Scotland is there such sweep and breadth of sky, nowhere is the sea so beautiful — a sapphire, sparkling sea, reaching without a break to Norway. Fringed with white foam, the waves go racing up the yellow sands, and will not rest until they reach the “bents” across which lie the famous golf-links — a course nearly five miles round of velvety, springy, elastic turf, the finest green in the whole wide world. In the foreground are the Forfarshire hills showing patches of various color, and away in the distance the Grampians, crowned with the crest of dark Lochnagar, at the foot of which lies Balmoral.

2 THE HEART OF JESSY LAURIE

As to the city itself, there was nothing like it fifty years ago. Then this secluded sanctuary of ancient wisdom was a typical academic city, a sombre, old-fashioned, old-mannered place, bathed in scholastic repose and classic good-fellowship. The massive castle walls, the great tower of St. Rule, the lovely arches and windows of the cathedral rose above picturesque old houses set in fair, still gardens, and streets brightened by the scarlet gowns of the students and the gayly-colored skirts and kerchiefs of the fisher women. Noisy at hours was the town, with the songs and calls of the sea, with the laughter of young men and their endless chatter and disputing about golf; for in St. Andrews neither men nor women, old nor young, escape the fascination of that tyrannizing game.

One afternoon when the wind blew sharp from Norway a group of four youths stood near St. Mary's College. Three of them were students, and the stiff breeze tossed their scarlet gowns about, and blended their strong, vibrant voices with its own bravado. They were talking of golf and the links and their hearts were turning their feet thither, when suddenly a voice full of melody slipped into the confusion, and the whole four were silent a moment, renewing their conversation with a conscious effort.

"I'll not play another game with Forbes," said James Traill, "he doesn't wear gloves and he spits



on his hands — I'm not thinking him a gentleman."

"You'll not require to be heeding the like of that in a game, Traill. You'll have to put up with ungloved hands in life, and golf is very like life. Forbes is a good player — he has a fine swing and style."

"Golf is far too good a game to be like life," said handsome Logie Cameron. "Golf is just simple delight."

"It has its hazards and bunkers and bores, Logie, as life has, its dangers and risks and annoyances; and you'll need much the same temper on the links of life as on the golf links."

"On both bents you may learn a kind of wise tolerance," said a tall, studious-looking lad from the Hebrides. "Your partner's failings will need, maybe, as much patience as your opponent's; so then, a wonderful habit of unruffled calm may be acquired on the links, if you are willing for the lesson."

"Listen to Torrie! And yesterday he was spitting passion and ill words at some bit caddie — nobody knows the why, or the wherefore."

"I'll tell you then — the laddie has a predatory instinct. If he can manage it by any means, he loafs at the first hole, buries your ball and then holds you to ransom for the price of it. Evident duty to the meeserable little sinner binds you to the reproving of him. And polite words would be just nothing but

4 THE HEART OF JESSY LAURIE

a mock to the creature. Ill words, and the very worst you can remember, or invent, are the only ones that find his ear chamber — and —”

Again the wide, wind-blown spaces of South Street were filled with the same melodious calling, and the young men again ceased talking and turned towards the quarter from which the haunting syllables came:—

“It is Jessy Laurie,” said Logie Cameron, “and you may all go to the links that like to go. But as for me, I shall stay here and watch for her. She will be coming anon with her Finnan haddies. Ah, there she is! The lassie is a very vision.”

As Logie spoke all turned to the girl now coming towards them with swift, light steps. The broken sky, blowing up for rain, made a fine background for her gayly-striped fisher gown and bright blue kerchief. But Jessy herself was all color and beauty and strength. Her laughing blue eyes radiated light, and her rosy lips had a charm and a smile that might have moved any man. Her face was strikingly handsome, and set in a frame of reddish-brown hair, which waved and rippled in fascinating disorder around her brow and temples. She was tall and slender and walked finely, though on her left shoulder there was a basket of fish which her left hand — slightly raised — supported.

As soon as she saw the young men a vivid blush

brightened her cheeks and she sang out in a voice toned like an instrument of music:

"Finnan Haddies! Finnan Haddies!"

The shrill, sweet call, with its remarkable rising inflection on the last syllable was at once a greeting and a challenge, and Cameron caught its music and instantly repeated it. Before he had well started his three companions joined him, and as soon as they were still Jessy Laurie's clear voice again challenged the four youths to echo her cry:

"Finnan Haddies! Finnan Haddies!"

And so with mutual delight in the iteration, the girl and her chorus went down the aristocratic South Street. Old ladies with pleasant faces, and old professors with smiling tolerance, glanced out of their windows at the four students merrily calling "fish" and made some passing remark about the happy recklessness of youth; and no one saw in the harmless frolic the shadow that followed after.

No one, until they reached a locality of much humbler houses, by which time the merry challenge had lost much of its musical beauty, and was verging toward a laughter and license not nearly so pleasant and tolerable. Suddenly the door of a cottage opened, and an old woman appeared. She wore the striped linsey petticoat of her class, a tall white cap fastened by a black silk band, and a white apron. She was perhaps sixty years of age, but her eyes

6 THE HEART OF JESSY LAURIE

were bright, her cheeks ruddy, and her hair as black as the raven's wing. She had a quick tongue also, and Jessy knew it, and instantly tightened her heart for the encounter.

"I want a fish, Jessy Laurie. Come here, you hizzy!"

Jessy set her basket on the door step, and held up one of her brown beauties. As she did so the four young men passed her with a smile, taking their way to the links, and the old woman as she looked at the fish said: "I have been hearing tell about you and the lad Logie Cameron. Every woman that knows you has something to say about the circumstance; and my breath has been burning me, hearing their words. But this afternoon I have seen with my own eyes and heard with my own ears the folly of you."

"Are you wanting a fish, Margot Macintyre?"

"I am not, Jessy Laurie."

"Then what for did you call me?"

"To bid you take care of yourself."

"Keep your wisdom for your ain need, Margot. And pray what wrong have you heard o' me? And who said the wrong? Tell me that."

"I heard o' it, Jessy, by the cry of a passing bird as it were. I cannot tell you who, or what. It is flitting through the air now — a mere sough and sound o' wrong — but lassie, lassie, ill words have ill life, and they grow fast as weeds and nettles."

“What are you havoring about? Say the word, and be done with it.”

“Mind this then — if you don’t let Logie Cameron alone, there is trouble before you. I know the men of that house. His father — who is dead and damned — preserve us! I fear that is an actionable speech, but this or that, his father was a perfect roaring lion among the lasses, going about seeking which o’ them he could devour. Logie isn’t a bit better — if all be true that’s told of him.”

Jessy looked at her adviser as a hawk looks — straight in the face — and then answered:

“I can guide my own boat, Margot Macintyre, and it isn’t Logie Cameron that can coup her.”

“And you be to remember that you are all the same as married on Rule Macintyre! Rule is a fine young man and good whatever comes; forbye, he is my ain nephew.”

“Logie is a fine young man too.”

“Grace of God! A good girl will keep far and clear of that fine young man! Jessy, it is wonderful easy to get into danger. We need all the help we can get. I hope you’re not forgetting your prayers.”

“I’m saying them night and morning. So then, as I haven’t my own soul to keep, it may go well with it.”

“I am your friend, Jessy, and it is the best of

8 THE HEART OF JESSY LAURIE

advice I'm giving you. I would like to see you loved by every one, and having every one's good word."

"I am neither gold nor silver, Margot, and it is just impossible to please everybody. I'm not caring for what folk say about me. As for your advice, if I could make it into silk gowns I would be bonnily clad! Don't fash either your heart or head about my affairs." And with an angry laugh she lifted her basket and went toward the harbor crying "Finnan Haddies" with a sharp quick iteration that brought women to their windows or doors, and made men upon the street turn in their walk, or pause in their talk to look at her.

"She is fairly going to the mischief," thought Margot, as she shut the door noisily to emphasize the thought. "I'll have to speak to her mother or Rule — little use in either speech — her mother never had the lassie in holding, and since her father's death she has said and done as she wanted to say or do. As for Rule! Rule wouldn't believe the angels if they said a wrong word o' Jessy Laurie! Then what for will I fash myself? Jessy will take her ain way, and there's none can hinder her."

With such thoughts Margot filled her kettle and set her tea table, the while Jessy walked with rapid steps to her mother's cottage on the sea shore. She had ceased to cry her fish as she neared the fisher's quarter, but her quick movements and clouded face

were sure indications of the storm of anger within her heart.

There was a wet driving wind by this time, and she shook her shawl and petticoat free of rain drops ere she entered the house. Its main room was glowing with firelight, its wooden floor and deal chairs and table had, through much scrubbing, the color of ivory. Mistress Laurie was broiling the fish, the tea kettle was simmering on the hob, the table held the bright colored cups and plates that were her pride, and she turned with a smile on her face as she busied herself with the gridiron to say:

“My bairn, you come in a good time. The tea is masked, the fish brown, the scones toasted, and I was just wishing you here.”

There was no answer, and the mother looking more curiously at her child saw the gloom and anger on her face, and asked sharply: “Whatever is the matter wi’ you, Jessy?”

“I’m not cross without good reason, mother. What think you? Margot Macintyre stopped me on the very planestones of South Street, and began to flyte me about a lad called Logie Cameron. If a man looks at a bonnie lass, Margot has the ill thought of her. Nothing but wrong can come of it, by her say so — I fairly hate the woman!”

“She is Rule’s aunt, and you cannot marry a lad and hate his aunt. She is in the family as it were,

10 THE HEART OF JESSY LAURIE

Jessy, and she has a kind o' right to speak to you, advising and the like o' that."

"She has not the sign of a right to be checking me! If I thought Rule had set her on to it, I would fling him, and the whole clan o' the Macintyres to the wind, ere I would be flyted and fluffed by the like o' them!"

"I wonder at Margot."

"If a lass is bonnie, the men will look at her. Shame to them if they did not! I know well that I cannot walk South Street but the college lads will smile at me. Why shouldn't they? And the stranger men smile too, for a woman's beauty is just a blessing to them: You know yourself, mother, there was one made a picture of me this very summer gone by, — and plenty more wanted to — and I hope a girl isn't to be held responsible for the silly doings o' silly men-folk."

"Of course not — but Jessy, you are a promised lass, and Rule Macintyre is all the same as your ain man."

"I'm doing Rule no wrong, mother."

"There's none of the collegers or the stranger men that thought you bonnie enough or good enough to make a wife of; so then, if I was you, I would hold myself too good to be winked at and blinked at by any o' them."

“A cat may look at a king, mother, and a lad may look at a bonnie lass and no harm done I think.”

“I wouldn’t take my oath on that. So many lads looking at you, Jessy, has made you fancy Rule a bit below you. That is perfect nonsense! You are bonnie enough the now, but I was quite as bonnie twenty years ago; and Margot Macintyre a good bit bonnier. Yes indeed, Margot was once a beauty — none in St. Andrews like her.”

“I’m doubting it, mother. Nobody ever put Margot in a picture. And some one was telling me that my picture had been made a show of in Glasgow and Edinburgh, and that London city itself was just daft o’er it — folk running to see it and talking o’ the beauty o’ it.”

“Some one telt you a big lie — there’s nae doubt o’ that. What for would folk run to see painted water and painted boats and painted lassies, when they can have the real sea and boats and lassies before their very eyes. They would be mortal idiots to do the like o’ that foolishness.”

“As for Rule Macintyre —”

“Rule is one in ten thousand. There’s few like him, and if you were wise enough to ken Good Fortune when she comes your road —”

“I ken her well enough, but it is little she leaves on our door step.”

12 THE HEART OF JESSY LAURIE

“When Rule crossed it he came with honest love and honest plenty for any fisher lass.”

“Anyway his Aunt Margot has a fine house of her own; and she’ll be leaving it and all its plenishing to Rule, for she thinks much o’ him and has no bairns of her own to hold it. It’s no unlikely I’ll be mistress there mysel’ some day.”

“Margot comes o’ long-livers, Jessy. She may bide in her house forty years or more, yet. It is poor work waiting and watching for dead folk’s shoes. Rule will build you a braw little house o’ your ain. He has dry siller putting by for it, and he is aye busy and doing well.”

“Doing well, is he? He has nothing at all, but what he makes with his two bare hands.”

“He has his boat and God Almighty’s broad sea. And the sea from here to Buddon Ness is just the best farm in Fife. You ken that yoursel’, Jessy! Rule was here an hour ago, and he was dashed a little at missing you.”

“He could have found me on South Street, if he had walked that far. What for was he here?”

“He wanted to tell you, that he was going to the deep sea fishing wi’ Willie Geddes and Darsie Kilgour.”

“And I told him he was to be here, and take me to the Bible class the night—it’s gathering at

seven o'clock now — and he promised, and then he goes wi' Willie Geddes to the deep sea fishing. A nice way that is to court a lass! Well, well! I can go by myself. There will be plenty o' lads there, fain and pleased to convoy me home, no doubt o' that."

"Jessy, Jessy! Listen to me. You aren't to walk with any lad but Rule. I tell you to bide at home to-night. It's dark and showery and folks will talk, reason or no reason, and anon mischief-making; for there's many a tongue will wag the news to Rule."

"Let them tell Rule the worst in their hearts. Rule wouldn't believe a word against me. They'll lose their labor who try to make him."

"Anyway, don't go out the night! Margot was telling me about some lad that is always at your heels, and she says he isn't a good lad, if breed and town's talk stand for aught. Let him go by you like the sough of an ill wind."

"I'm not fashing mysel' about him. It is Logie Cameron, and you know the Camerons are the height o' the gentry. He'll be eating his dinner at seven o'clock, and no thought of the like o' me in his head. I am going to the Bible class. I'll not miss it for Logie Cameron; and if I did, with no sickness to excuse me, then Deacon Wabb would be speering the

14 THE HEART OF JESSY LAURIE

why and the wherefore and I would likely get one o' his public disciplines. I'll not run the risk of such a disgrace."

"I see well that I may be whist. Your way be it. But my way is the right way and the wise way, and you needn't look as if there was two right ways in the matter, for there is not."

"I'll take my own way this night, mother. Rule likes me to go to the Bible class, and what harm can come to me in a company of decent fisher folk?"

"None, if you keep yoursel' in their company. But my dear lassie, this Logie Cameron has ill forbears. Folks are saying that the deil has the management o' the young man, and it is dangerous work for any woman to take a job out o' his hands."

Jessy rose from the table, and going to the door of the cottage, threw it open.

"The rain is o'er-by," she said, "and the north wind has come down with the tide, and there's stars in the lift, so I'll put on my dress and hat and away to the class."

Then the mother washed the tea cups, while Jessy dressed herself in a dark cloth gown, and a felt hat with an eagle's feather clasped to it with an imitation silver thistle. She was very proud of this hat, and as she loosened the coils of her bright hair, and set it jauntily above them, she sang, in a kind of wilful bravado:

“Saw ye bonny Leslie,
As she gaed o'er the border?
She's gane like Alexander,
To spread her conquests farther.”

“I'm looking very well in this hat, and the feather
itsel' is just a kind o' dignity.”

“To see her is to love her,
And love but her forever!”

Mrs. Laurie took no notice of either the singing or the girl's comment on her own appearance. She had an instinct of reserve, and as soon as the cups were dried and hung on the rack she drew a cutty stool to the hearth and sat down. Her elbows were on her knees, her face in her hands, and it was a face full of troubled speculation.

Ere she left the cottage Jessy came and stood a minute on the hearthstone by her. She was radiantly conscious of her beauty, and her smile and attitude asked for some recognition of it. For its comparison with that of Margot Macintyre's youthful charms was still nettling her complacency, nor could she see any justice in the claim which the middle-aged mother made to a youth as beautiful as her own. But Mrs. Laurie did not pay her any compliment. She glanced at her girl's finery, and said coldly:

“You should have worn your petticoat and shawl. They are more weather-like; forbye, you look far

16 THE HEART OF JESSY LAURIE

bonnier in them. But if you be going to the Bible class, you haven't a sign o' The Book wi' you."

"I forgot The Book," she answered, a little dashed by a neglect so flagrant. "I'm gey glad you thought o' it, mother, for Deacon Wabb would have given me a red face if I had come to the class without my references; and I never know them in any Bible but my own." Then she went to her kist and took the book out, and so with a much less pronounced egotism left the cottage.

In a few moments the mother rose and went to the door. The windy heaven, the secret silence of the night, the cloudy unquiet sea moaning along the beach, none of these things she noticed. Her eyes followed the tall figure of her child, dimly seen and quickly lost in the general gloom of the hour and the environment. Ere the identity was quite gone, she turned quickly back into the cottage. "It isn't good luck to watch the loved one out o' sight, forbye there's neither help nor hope in the fearful thought"—and with this reflection she closed the door, and lifting the Guernsey she was knitting sat down to work and to wait. But as her nimble fingers pursued their labor many doubts troubled the heart within her.

"I wonder," she muttered, "why Jessy was so set on the Bible class. It has always been a cross and a vexation to her—and what for did she wear her Kirk dress and hat? That is out o' the usual—and

it wasn't for Rule — the poor lad is on the deep sea — who then? ”

In the mother's heart there was a name she would not speak; it was like a calling the thing she feared. Instead of that she dropped her knitting, and, clasping her hands, said reverently:

“ She went away with His Word in her hands Surely it will be a guide to her feet and a light on her path. A lassie with a Bible in her hands is safe — safe, from either man or deil, thank God! ”

CHAPTER TWO

THE GATE CALLED DANGER

So the anxious mother comforted herself, the while her daughter walked quickly and confidently toward the main street of the city. The night was bleak and cold, the streets but dimly lit, and there was nothing in all her environment to beguile the girl, no soft glamour of moonlight or starlight, no motion in all the visible heart of nature, that by its languor or its joyousness could predispose the heart to dangerous tenderness or reckless adventure. Indeed she had not gone far ere she was angry with herself and half-inclined to turn back homeward, for she had stepped into several puddles of water, and she also knew that the damp sea air was taking all the crisp beauty out of the feather in her hat.

“And what for?” she asked fretfully. “Just for nothing at all. I was looking for an hour’s fun, and there’s little fun coming to-night, that’s plain; and to-morrow night, Rule will be tagging after me, sploring away about marrying and the pleasures o’ it—and *Somebody* will find himself left behind, and serve him right! He is well deserving it, and even this night

he'll require to show up before I win near the Kirk or — *losh!* but girls are silly clean through, to believe look or word that isn't sworn to with book and ring — I — think — I'll — go back home."

Then Somebody stepped from a "close" or yard, and put his arm through her arm, and said softly:

"Jessy, my bonnie bird, where are you going your lone this dark night? Can I go with you?"

She laughed, and let her arm fall downward as she answered, "You know fine, Mister Cameron, that I am going to my Bible class, and I am very sure Deacon Wabb will be gey and glad to see yourself there also."

"You shall not 'Mister' me, Jessy Laurie. Bonnie Jessy Laurie! You must call me Logie, as the rest of the people do. Say Logie, and I'll dance with pleasure just to hear the word from your lovely lips. It would be the next dear thing to kissing them — but that is a joy far beyond my hoping for."

"You may say that o'er again, and let Hope, the lying hizzy! go past you. It is well known, that I am a promised wife to Rule Macintyre. You will be knowing Rule? Most folks know him weel. Everybody's good word follows Rule Macintyre."

"Buff on Rule Macintyre! Big as he is, I would thrash him for a copper half-penny."

"Aye — if you could."

"Well then, I am no David if he is Goliath, and

20 THE HEART OF JESSY LAURIE

if you have not the sling and the stone it is no shame to keep out of the way of the giant. I wonder you are not afraid of him."

"Me feared! Me feared of Rule Macintyre! *Fegs!* You make me laugh. Rule is nothing but a mouse when I am near by. I can send him here or there, or to the back o' beyont with a word or a look. That is because he loves me. Rule is furious fond o' me."

"He knows nothing about loving you, Jessy. He cannot love you as I do. It is easy enough talking of love, the question is what will he *do* for love of you. Listen! I will give up everything in the world for you. I will leave St. Andrews, and home, and my one dear sister Christine, and go away to India or Australia if you will go with me."

"You are very kind, Sir, but I am well enough in auld St. Andrews."

"Or we will go to France and Italy, and see the beauty and wonders of the world, Jessy."

"They are all papists in them foreign countries, and not a decent Kirk to go to; forbye—"

"Forbye, you shall have silks and satins and the finest of laces, and gold ornaments and diamonds, and—"

"You are promising o'er much, Sir. I am not heeding you."

"You'll think of what I have said, Jessy?"

"I'll do no such thing! That's a fact, and I'm wasting good time talking to you."

For at this moment she was so charmed with herself, with her easy conversation, and the knowledge that she was holding her own, that she did not much notice the handsome youngster bending with premature dare-deviltry towards her lifted face. "You see," she continued, "you come the day after the fair, for the whole town o' St. Andrews knows I am trothlighted to Rule Macintyre."

Suddenly she became silent. They were at the lamp post by the Kirk door, and she was late, for the deacons had gone inside, and the door was shut. This circumstance was favorable to Logie, and he tenderly detained her a few minutes, pressing his suit with all the ardor of his race and youth. And though she shook her head and would not give him a word of encouragement, Logie was neither disheartened nor surprised. Jessy's dauntless directness and brightness fascinated him as much as her beauty. He was resolved to win the girl, and he did not judge of his success by her rejecting words. For her eyes had the dangerous gift of speech and her very lingering endorsed all they said.

Then she stole as quietly as possible into the Kirk, but the deacon watched every step she took with anger. She was disturbing the class, and he suddenly put a stop to the exercises, and compelled Jessy

to make the progress to her own place in a marked and scrutinizing silence. A little later she received from him a severe rebuke for her ignorance of the lesson. But how could she remember? Cameron's black eyes were troubling her heart, and his voice, like the music of some unknown world, was playing in her ears.

The reproof of the Deacon, though just, had no kindness mingled with its justice, and Jessy was incensed rather than admonished by it. Indeed in some way it advanced the power of Logie Cameron over her, for she instantly compared its bitterness with the tender and flattering words whose charm had earned her the reprimand for her late attendance. She listened to it with a sullen carelessness and then purposely pretended ignorance of the questions asked, or else treated them with an indifference the Deacon felt to be personal animosity. When the class closed she hastened outside the Kirk, for she was afraid of being detained for private advice and censure. Also, she wished to see how her behavior — which she called her independence — had been taken by her classmates; and probably the strongest, though unacknowledged, motive was an expectation that Logie Cameron would be somewhere near waiting for her.

She was much annoyed to see that the majority of the class ignored, or even purposely affronted her. "The lick-spittles!" she said bitterly, "they think

the Deacon is watching them. Ah well! I had a good excuse for being late. There isn't one o' them that wouldn't have stayed the hour out wi' Logie if he had asked them; aye would they, and never given the class a thought at all. Preserve us! It is all pure spite and envy. Logie is worth the whole o' them."

Thus musing, she was soon overtaken by two fisher girls whose homes were not far from her own. They were eager in their sympathy, which Jessy frankly told them would have been worth more if it had been given a hundred yards nearer the Kirk. "But I'm going no more to Deacon Wabb's class," she said scornfully. "I am far beyond his 'references' and 'perceptive parts,' and I can read my Bible as well as he can and maybe a thought better. The teacher in the National School always called on Jessy Laurie to read the Gospel, and she watched me as if she was taking a lesson hersel' from my way o' speaking the words."

"Nobody doubts your cleverness, Jessy," said Mysie Baird, "and wi' the Gospel any o' us is competent. But what will you say when it's Chronicles or Numbers, and just verse after verse o' hard names?"

"There is nothing in names, nothing at all!" answered Jessy loftily. "Who can be the wiser for a mouthful of names? Tell me that."

“There is far more than you think in names,” said Belle Thompson. “Just cast your thought on Jean McNab’s two lads! Geordie McNab is in his ‘oils’ most o’ his time fighting death for a few fish on the deep sea; and his brother Francis Maximus McNab has been to college and wears his ‘blacks’ and a coat with tails to it, and the time is set when we shall all o’ us have to call him the Reverend Francis Maximus McNab. The one lad is as likely as the other — the differ was all in the names they got.”

“Parfect nonsense!” said Jessy, with undisguised weariness of the subject.

“And if my mother had called me Angelina, or Julietta, or the like, I would maybe have been wearing my ‘silks’ to-night, instead o’ this poor linsey petticoat,” continued Belle, “and so I like to study the names in the Old Testament. There’s a deal more than you think in a name.”

Jessy was not listening; Belle’s reflections were beyond the frontiers of her interests. She was thankful when they reached the Thompson cottage; and still more so, when a few yards further on Mysie bid her a rather cool “good night” and so left her alone. For Jessy was sure that Cameron was not far away; she had a certain feeling that he had either gone on before, or was following after her. So then, she was not surprised when she reached her home to find him

standing at the back of the cottage, waiting, he explained, "to bid her good night."

Her heart beat wildly to his pleasant words, and she felt repaid for all the evening's mortifications. Moreover, both her feelings and her vanity were touched by this attention, and partly because she feared to make a noise and so bring her mother out, and partly because she liked the taste of the sin, the kiss Cameron had hardly hoped for an hour previous, he now took with very little opposition.

Still she went into the house with a sense of shame, which she hid under an assumed depression of spirits, and her mother asked impatiently:

"What is the matter wi' you now, Jessy? You are aye either singing or sighing. I wish to goodness you could be as other lasses — steady and douce like. I hope you have not lost your Bible. I don't see the book in your hands."

"I was that put out, I left it in the Kirk — and no wonder!"

"Who put you out this time?"

"Who but Deacon Wabb himsel'? Our clock must be wrong, for the Kirk door was shut when I won there, and you would think I had broken the bank the way he looked at me when I came in ever so quiet-like. And I was that flustered with everybody's eyes set on me, that I couldn't answer my questions, and then the Deacon told me he would name me out in

the Kirk — name and surname — if I didn't learn them better."

"Keep and guide us, lassie! The man surely never said the like o' that to you — in public too!"

"Aye he did, he said them very words."

"Then I'll give him two or three lines o' my mind in the morning. A poor-hearted, nabal earthworm o' a miser, like Deacon Wabb to make you a monument to the whole town o' St. Andrews! I'll tell him to stick to his text in his own family — they need it, or it cheats me."

Janet's anger was very sincere, and the two women talked themselves into good accord over the insult offered to Jessy's biblical scholarship; for there is nothing so conducive to household harmony as some outsider on whom everyone can safely vent their ill temper. So they sat until near midnight discussing the many faults of the disagreeable deacon, and went to sleep with the wrong he had done them brooding in their souls. Fortunately in the morning Jessy had no opportunity to continue the irritating and useless subject. For when she awakened she found herself alone, Janet having gone to the boats for fresh fish, which she was doubtless at that moment selling in the streets of St. Andrews.

Jessy was well pleased to be spared this hard, cold part of their daily labor, for she loved warmth and

comfort and the early mornings were now frosty and disagreeable; besides, the keen salt air and rough wind were not good for her complexion, while the handling of the frozen fish made her hands red and sore.

“It is real good of mother;” she said softly, “real good! But mother is as proud of my beauty as Rule — or Logie — and Logie says it is just extraordinary — and goodness knows, he is seeing bonnie women of all kinds — but thinking me far beyond even the Edinburgh beauties.”

To such flattering thoughts she combed out her lovely hair, binding it with the crimson ribbon Rule had brought her from Aberdeen. “Blue would be far more becoming,” she said, as she tied the rosy bow, “but Rule meant it kind. He likes flashy colors; all fisher folk do. Logie says blue, blue the color of my eyes, is what I ought to wear; and Logie will be knowing, I’ll go bail for that.”

To this conviction she rose, and began to “redd up” the house and prepare breakfast, and as she did so she commented with much satisfaction on her mother’s thoughtfulness:

“I am gey and glad mother has gone with the fish,” and she stepped lightly about the house to the reflection. “I’m not minding the work in the summer time — there’s aye folk — stranger folk — about the streets to make it pleasant; but it is dree, hard work in the winter!” So she was delighted to be

relieved of it, though it would be too much to say that she was grateful.

In an hour Janet returned with an empty creel and a full purse, and the two women sat down in a cheerful mood to their pot of tea, and rasher, and oat cake. Deacon Wabb's bad temper no longer affected them, and their first speculation concerned Rule Macintyre. Janet wondered a little that he was not present, and thought he ought to have been home with the morning tide. Jessy said nothing, for her mother's happy face, her love and patience, their cheery home, their good meal were moral influences she unconsciously acknowledged, and for the time being Logie Cameron lost ground. She was even a little angry with him and her pride rose up to protest against his encroachments. She felt a sense of humiliation as if she had been belittled by his freedom and she was mortified at the easy conquest of her lips. She knew also that Rule had been wronged, and she resolved to make atonement by unusual kindness to him at the next opportunity given her.

Even while she was forming this resolve, Rule opened the cottage door. Janet gave him a hearty good morning, Jessy rose and went to meet him, and he took her in his arms and kissed her. At that moment she wondered how she ever could have put Logie Cameron in any comparison with the splendid

looking fisherman, whose whole heart was so honestly and lovingly hers. For Rule had as much local color as the grey old city of St. Andrews itself. He was the incarnation of Fife, and the North Sea, and was not aware of it. Human nature grows and spreads there, and Rule in his fisher boots was at least three inches above six feet. He seemed to be built of granite as he stood beside her, his legs planted slightly apart as if hauling up anchor, while on his sea-beaten, handsome face there was written the record of the casting of nets, the resolute fight with stormy waves, and the setting and reefing of sails to catch the changing wind. He had grey, out-looking eyes — large, restless, fearless — the eyes of a man accustomed to watch alone with the sea and the sky. His voice was sonorous, his gestures simple but withal a little grandiose, for he had nothing to do with the petty concerns of life — it was nature in her largest moods he served, both by day and night.

Then Jessy made him the cup of hot tea he desired, and served him with the sweetest of words and smiles. And the man forgot his all-night wrestle with wind and waves, and beamed and glowed as if the table was set in Paradise. He was so happy, so proud, so full of joy and hope, that all the care and labor of life sunk fathoms beneath his consciousness. That morning, at least, he would not tithe his good fortune. The boat and all in her must wait

30 THE HEART OF JESSY LAURIE

until he had drunk the cup of gladness and love offered him; he would not for mere business lose or leave a drop of it.

So, when the merry meal was over, he asked Jessy to take a walk with him on the sands. And she answered:

“Wait till I redd up the house and the dishes, Rule, and then I’ll go with you; for ye ken mother was up and at the boats before break o’ day, and she be to have her rest now.”

As she was speaking Annie Tulloch, a neighbor lassie, came in and heard the remark. Now Annie loved Rule just as Rule loved Jessy; that is, with a love that had cast out the very shadow of selfishness. She looked wistfully at the happy lovers, and said:

“Go with Rule, Jessy. I’ll stay and redd up the house and the dishes for you; and so your mother can take the sleep she is owing hersel’. Rule hasn’t many mornings to spare, you ought to give him his will when the good hour comes to him.”

“You are very obliging, Annie, and I’ll take your offer gladly,” answered Jessy, “but I’m not requiring any one to tell me that I ought to be kind to Rule. My own heart tells me that plain enough.” She lifted her plaid and looked with such a heavenly assurance into Rule’s eyes, that the big fellow hardly knew whether he was in the flesh, or out of it. In

spite of his great bulk, the solid earth seemed reeling in that transcendent smile and confession. But he offered her his hand and she took it, and they walked away over the brown, hard sands together — Jessy chatting and laughing merrily, and Rule silently listening, fairly lost in a maze of wonder at his own happiness. For a few minutes Annie stood in the door and watched them; then with a sigh she went to perform the work she had assumed.

The memory of her disloyalty on the previous evening was the active motive of Jessy's amiable mood; but Rule believed it to be at last the real heart of the maiden speaking. She told him how much she had pitied him out on the cold, stormy sea, and he felt thankful to the cold and storm if they had taught her the secret of love. Certainly he never doubted her truth, for he judged Jessy's feelings by his own and doing so he presently found the courage to talk to her of their future, as he had never before ventured to do. She appeared to be pleased, and encouraged him with bewitching smiles and tender unreserves to tell her again and again that he loved her more than life, and would gladly give her everything he had to give. Finally, she let him seat her on the rocks and draw her close to his heart, and say with all the solemn passion of his nature:

“World's love and world's care is little, Jessy, but oh, my sweet lassie, it is a great thing to be leal

and true to the love set deep in the single-hearted by Him that made it! And that is how I love you, my darling! I could even give you up to make you happy. I could give you my life, if it would make your life sweeter or better."

No woman, however selfish she may be, can resist such noble love-making. There were tears of honest feeling in Jessy's eyes, and she snuggled closer to the great heart beating for her, and for her alone. Full of happiness the hours passed swiftly away, and it was high noon when they reluctantly returned to the cottage. Janet was still sleeping, and Annie sat by the fire knitting. She appeared to be lost in thought, and said little to Rule, but as soon as he left the cottage, she turned to Jessy and looking her straight in the face, asked:

"Are you going to be true-hearted to Rule Macintyre from this hour forth?"

"What are you meaning, Annie Tulloch?"

"You know fine what I mean. I saw you last night."

"That isn't a thing to be wondered at. I was at the Bible class."

"And you were behind the house wi' that ne'er-do-weel Cameron lad. Think shame o' yoursel' to treat an honest man like Rule yonder way! If there is any more o' such carryings on, I'll not keep

quiet about it — it would be a sin against honest love to hide your false ways.”

“You are just jealous, Annie. Jealous folk see more than there is to see.”

“Well then, I saw you and Logie Cameron yestreen plain enough. The lad had the face to kiss you — and you let him do it! You cannot deny it.”

“I can, if I want to.”

“Then you would tell as big a lie, as ever was told.”

“What for are you peeping and prying into my affairs? Mind your own. Rule Macintyre is nothing to you.”

“*Nothing!* Ah well!”

“Nothing at all. Rule wouldn’t believe your Bible word if it was against me. So talk as it suits you! I’m not caring.”

“Well, well, Jessy Laurie, go your ain way, but if you wrong Rule you will rue it to the last hour o’ your life. And if you listen to anything Logie Cameron has to say to you, it will be still worse for you. I am telling you the God’s truth and you had better take heed to it.”

“You are an impudent cutty! That’s what you are. You can go and talk against me all you like to. I’m not heeding.”

“That isn’t my way, Jessy. You know that. I am gey and good at keeping my own counsel.”

34 THE HEART OF JESSY LAURIE

"I thought you were my friend."

"I *am* your friend — your friend and Rule's friend both. When you have seen me once you have seen me always, or the fault will be your own. There is nothing double in Annie Tulloch."

"I meant no wrong last night."

"Then don't do wrong."

"Logie will follow me."

"It is your own fault if he follows you."

"It isn't."

"It is."

"I'll not listen to such words."

"You are needing them sorely."

"Well, you are a determined creature. The very face o' you shows that — with your long nose and big teeth."

"There's plenty o' folk that think my face as bonnie as yours — maybe bonnier, but that isn't the question. Mind your P's and Q's with Rule Macintyre, or I will know the reason why. That is all I have to say now!" Suddenly she came close to Jessy, and taking her face between her hands, she kissed it, continuing:

"Be good for his sake and for your own sake, Jessy. I am loving you dearly, lassie!" and before Jessy could answer, Annie went swiftly out of the cottage.

CHAPTER THREE

CAMERON'S DECISION

Cameron House was at the extreme end of the fashionable part of the city, and indeed had at its foundation been outside the city limits. It was a large, white mansion of the Georgian period, and a fine example of the domestic architecture of that date. It was neither beautiful nor picturesque, but it had an air of breadth and depth and roominess that gave it a certain dignity and promised abundance of light and comfort. Logan Cameron's great-grandfather was its builder, and, during the residence in it of three or four generations, it had acquired in ways beyond explanation so much of the family phenomenon, its aspect and aura, that any one well acquainted with the Camerons would have felt on sight that it must be their residence. No useless vines at once beautified and destroyed it; shrubbery that trailed, or trees wanting symmetry were as rigorously excluded. The three former masters had all been soldiers, and they had ordered both house and garden according to their fine sense of military precision. Logan Cameron, its present owner, had the same instincts; no

36 THE HEART OF JESSY LAURIE

plans for change or improvement entered his mind. It was the handsomest house in St. Andrews, and he considered it a perfect example of a gentleman's residence.

His half-sister Christine Cameron was its mistress. She was the only child of General Cameron by his first wife, and until her seventeenth year had been considered his heiress. Suddenly the General married again, and Logan, the son of this marriage, became the heir. But at four years of age Logan was motherless, and then Christine virtually adopted the boy, lavishing upon him a love and care that deserved in the highest sense the term "motherly." It was no blind affection. She saw clearly the faults that marred his character, and especially the cold, callous selfishness, which considered finally in every case his own pleasure or interest.

"It is hard on the lad," she constantly commented to herself, "to be the heritor of passions he did not create. I have a measure of them in my own heart, and whiles it is almost impossible to make 'that other Christine' behave herself. Well I know, that without Logie to love and guide and care for, I should have been a hard woman — so I may bear with his faults patiently — forbye, young men have many and great temptations; women are not able to judge them fairly."

This was a very ordinary trend of thought with

Christine Cameron and she was exercising it, even while Annie Tulloch was reproaching Jessy with Logie's unwarranted familiarity. For an evil report flies quickly, and that morning the old hen-wife had mentioned in a casual way to Logie's sister, her brother's infatuation for the beautiful fisher girl.

"She cannot 'cry' her fish, but Master Cameron is after her, and folks are saying that he has driven far off a' the lave o' her sweethearts; no wonder in that, for there's none in auld St. Andrews can equal the young Master." Then she looked slyly for some fellow-feeling in Miss Cameron's face, supposing that her own vulgar interest in the gossip would be also the measure of her mistress's interest.

But Christine apparently took no notice of the ill news. Instead she looked dourly around the hennery, and when she spoke it was to express dissatisfaction with the week's output of eggs. "You are not attending carefully to the nests, Lucky," she said crossly, "some one is getting round them before you do. I shall be expecting much better results next week."

Nevertheless the report troubled her. A love affair was out of the usual course of Logie's waywardness. There had been disputes with his teachers, quarrels with his classmates, late suppers and too much wine, even losses of money on the race track and at the card table, but women were, as far as Christine

knew, a fresh complication. And the fisher girls were a dangerous class to trifle with. It was "one and all" where their honor was concerned, and there had been some notable examples of the almost brutal punishment given to betrayers of their love and confidence.

But she resolved not to carry a blind and dumb anxiety a moment longer than was absolutely necessary. Logie would be with her at the lunch hour, and it would then be easy to bring the subject to question and answer. That there might be a shadow of truth in the report she thought likely, but she was sure that even so, it was only the light-hearted daffing and foolery of a young man over a pretty face. "And they are just wonderfully pretty some of those fisher girls; there is no denying that fact," she admitted.

All the morning afterward she was recalling instances of their beauty, and the fate or fortune that followed the risky gift. Mary Fidler, whom a great artist had married — Jessie Monypenny, who had been adopted by a rich old bachelor and trained as a singer, and whose voice had won her a great name and a great fortune — Lizzie Thompson, whom an officer in the Black Watch had educated and made his wife, and who had settled an annuity on her parents and sent her brother to college, and carried her younger sister away to share her wealth and all the

advantages it could give her. "Oh yes, they have beauty for their heritage, there is no denying that," Christine commented, "but it would be ruination for Logie to have any entanglement of that sort — there is Lily Forfar! he must marry Lily. I promised his father almost at his last hour to do all that could be lawfully done to marry Logie to Lily. I must keep my word; forbye it is a pleasant promise to keep. Lily is lovesome and lovely, she is well-born and well bred and richly tochered. She is the wife among thousands for Logie, and he be to marry her! That is a fixed fact in my mind."

After this resolute decision she became almost anxious for the lunch hour. It was an important thing for Logie to understand his matrimonial obligation, and she regretted that she had left it in abeyance so long. With a woman's instinctive knowledge, she prepared in every possible way the environment most likely to induce a pleasant consideration of what she had to say. But it is not often that Fate permits us to interfere with her arrangements, and Christine found herself restrained by a circumstance she had not taken into account — Logie brought home with him to luncheon Lieutenant Grant from Edinburgh, one of his former classmates, and the talk was all of military life and movements, so that the situation which had seemed of so much importance slipped into the background.

40 THE HEART OF JESSY LAURIE

The afternoon was no more favorable, and soon after three o'clock the two young men proposed a walk to the links. But they did not go to the links. Logie had promised to show his companion "the Beauty of St. Andrews," so they sauntered up South Street listening for Jessy's cry. But there were no sounds in the grey chill street but the vacant laughter or noisy conversation of thoughtless young men; and the lilting strains of a violin, on which an old beggar man was playing "*The Garb of Auld Gaul*." "It is always the way," said Logie irritably, "if you want a thing it is out of sight and hearing; and if you don't want it you'll be bored to death with the sight and the noise of it."

Grant looked down the street indifferently and said, "Let us go to my hotel and have a game of billiards."

As he spoke Jessy came suddenly out of a close not twenty yards away and as soon as she saw the two young men, she divined Logie's motive.

"He's thinking to make a show o' me, and maybe let on that we are well acquaint. I'll show him that I'm neither ferlie nor plaything for Logie Cameron! I'll teach him that much, anyway!"

So defying her first cowardly instinct to turn into another street she went forward with all her usual alertness, supporting lightly the basket on her shoul-

der, but uttering no call and looking straight before her; not *at* Logie but as it were *through him* and *past him*. Her head was proudly poised, her face set, inscrutable, unknowing. Even Logie's "Good afternoon, Jessy," produced no sign of recognition — not the flicker of an eye-lash. She in a manner walked over the young men as if they were not there.

"Well, Cameron," said Grant sarcastically, "your beauty snubbed you fairly. I never saw any woman make a clearer outcast of a man."

"That is a positive fact," answered Logie. "Her Majesty's self could hardly have done the cut-direct better. So at least it seems — but Jessy will be another girl a few hours hence — she is shy of strangers, and I think I am liking her the better for it."

Grant's smile was not a pleasant one. He understood Cameron's implication and despised it; and a cold constraint fell between the two. Almost in silence they walked to the hotel, and there they parted, Grant having suddenly remembered a train that would take him back to Edinburgh.

"There is a military function I should like to be fit for to-morrow," he said, "and our game can wait awhile. I suppose you come to Edinburgh for the winter season?"

"Of course! Of course!" answered Cameron hotly. "I have a residence there — rather a handsome place

42 THE HEART OF JESSY LAURIE

— come and play the game there. I shall be glad to see you. Good bye!”

“ Good bye! Give my respects to Miss Cameron. I regret that I cannot offer them in person.”

“ A conceited puppy !” thought Grant as he turned away. “ Coming into a large fortune has spoiled him. He thinks all the world knows he is Cameron of Glenlochart. Whenever I meet a rich young man, I am glad that my sword is my heritage.”

And Cameron’s opinion of Grant was not any more favorable. “ A mere soldier, a creature to be ordered here and there, and told to do this, and do that. It is all he is fit for. He thinks the military rule the world. The fool cannot see that the world now prefers making money to fighting battles.”

He walked home attuned to such irritating thoughts but beneath them was an immense anger against Jessy Laurie. She had humbled him, put him in a false light, given him the appearance of being both a boaster and a liar; and he knew that it would be almost impossible to undo the silent accusation of Jessy’s manner. His mortification was even greater than his anger, and during its first acute reproaches he told himself that he would never speak to the girl again — he would even make a point of scorning her; and the handle of this whip he felt to be firmly in his hand. He was, however, more chagrined than angry, and he knew well that his mortification was

the work of his own vanity. But why Jessy had chosen to humiliate him so bitterly he could not conceive. It was only a smile and a joke that he expected, and he resented his own disappointment without considering that Jessy had a perfect right to choose not only the persons to whom she would offer the smile and joke, but also the time and circumstances under which the offering of such a favor would be agreeable to her.

When he reached Cameron House his surroundings were not conducive to continued irritation. To come out of the damp blowing wind and darkness into the warmth and light and peace of its beautiful rooms was a means of grace. Opening the parlor door he saw Christine sitting at perfect rest beside the hearth, and the soft, fitful firelight playing over her grey and white gown, her placid face and folded hands, was an obvious "*Hush!*" to his tormenting thoughts. Without speaking he stepped softly to his room and prepared for dinner; and this very restraint of motion was a bond on his annoyance. He hardly spoke to his valet, but when he returned to the parlor in his dark, slim young beauty and said "Christine!" in a voice which would have wiled a bird from a tree, she answered him with delight. He gave her his arm, and as he pressed hers to his side, he told her in a whisper that she "grew handsomer every day," and the pleased woman laughed softly, and felt that Lily

44 THE HEART OF JESSY LAURIE

Forfar would have the best husband in Fife, if she married Logie Cameron. The conversation which she had hitherto dreaded suddenly appeared natural and in season, so that as soon as they were alone, she prepared for its introduction by asking Logie why Lieutenant Grant had not returned with him to dinner?

“The man returned to Edinburgh by the five o'clock train,” he answered. “Nobody noticed him in St. Andrews. Even the fisher lasses refused to stare at him. It was a sore humiliation, and he went back to Prince's Street for some consoling female glances.”

“But his old classmates, Logie?”

“They were all racing to the links. Sandy McClure was doing wonders there, and those that met our friend had neither time nor breath for anything but a passing ‘*You Grant! You're in luck! Sandy McClure is on the links. Step quicker or you'll miss something.*’ Grant was disgusted. They did not even know he had kilts on, and that they were putting a military officer below a golf champion. But that was nothing to the fisher lasses! They just stepped to the other side of the street when they saw him coming, all of them but lovely Jessy Laurie, and she was far too proud to give him the planestones, so she walked past him with such unseeing eyes, that

the man felt he had not only been passed, but walked over."

"Jessy Laurie! I was hearing something about her this morning."

"I dare say. The girl is beautiful beyond belief, and a bonnie face sets every other woman's face against it."

"You know her then?"

"I pass a 'good afternoon' with her if we meet. Beauty is a kind of royalty, Christine, men must acknowledge it."

"Some of those fisher girls are wonderfully lovely — in youth. But they are a dangerous class to trifle with."

"Saville made a picture of Jessy, last summer. She was standing on the very edge of the pier watching her lover's boat fight its way into the harbor in the teeth of the storm. It was a great painting, and made a stir in London. Strangers coming to St. Andrews like to see the girl, and indeed she makes a picture worth looking at, as she comes up South Street crying her fish."

"Take care of yourself, Logie. Many a young man has wrecked his life for a pretty face."

"I shall not be among that class, Christine. Why are you talking to me about Jessy Laurie in this way? Do you think I am in love with her?"

"I believe people are saying that much, and you could not marry her."

"Marry Jessy Laurie! What are you thinking of? Could Cameron of Glenlochart marry an uneducated, vulgar girl who had cried fish through streets of St. Andrews? You ought to know your brother better. Besides which, Jessy is as good as married already to Rule Macintyre."

"Oh! That indeed is sufficient. Rule is a grand fellow. He could cover his breast with the silver medals given him by various societies for life saving. Last winter he did half a dozen miracles when that foreign steamer went to matches on the rocks, and I remember that the minister prayed for him in the Kirk, and thanked God that Rule Macintyre had shown us that our humanity could so closely touch divinity, and so on — Rule was ill for a week after the wreck, and the mayor called on him for the city, and offered him money which he would not take. A fine fellow! And Jessy is to marry him? That is right, the good and the brave deserve the beautiful. I shall speak to the ladies of the Kirk. We ought to give Jessy a wedding present."

During this reminiscence Logie looked at his sister curiously. He wondered what circumstance had produced this generous estimate of a man practically unknown to her. Then he quickly decided, it was the natural expression of some anxiety removed, or fear

proved false. On the man who stood between her brother and a ruinous *mésalliance*, Christine was eager to shower such reasonable favors as she could compass. Logie thought he understood this mood. Was not life full of such compromises and second-best satisfactions? And as he had the Scot's faculty for philosophizing, he was ready when Christine had sent her useless worry away with the intention of a gift, not too extravagant, to dispel all her doubts. Stooping forward and taking her hand he said seriously:—

“Christine, I do not promise to run away from beauty, even if it be in a fisher girl's kilted petticoat; but I do promise, never to give you a sister of lower estate than yourself; and never to give Glenlochart a mistress beneath the honor of my father's name.”

She kissed the slim, brown hand laid in her own, and was just going to speak of Lily Forfar, and the late Generals Forfar and Cameron's desire concerning their children, when a sort of stubborn inability to voice the subject assailed her. So she turned the conversation upon a rumor heard only that afternoon, that the great Doctor Chalmers was in St. Andrews, and would doubtless preach on the following Sabbath.

Logie was instantly interested, for the news touched a side of his character quite as pronounced as others, that might well have been considered impossible of existence with it. Yet there were hours when not even

Jessy Laurie could have wiled him away from some passionate theological argument, or the fiery oration of an inspired preacher. He had been reclining, but now he raised himself upright, and repeated the great doctor's name with solemn intensity, as he began to recall with startling accuracy the chief points of a sermon delivered by the mighty apostle on the bare mountain slope of Lochnagar a few years previously.

“There were eight of us together,” he said, “and on our way to the preaching we were full of fun and unsabbathlike tricks and conversation. All the country-side seemed to be moving to one centre — the grassy slope of the mountain — and there were at least a thousand people sitting there. Some were crooning hymns, others talking softly together, but the greater number were lost in thought, motionless and speechless. Suddenly the Doctor came among us, and took his way to a great rock which commanded the whole congregation and which was to be his pulpit. Christine, he was as homely in his dress and gait as any farmer there, but he had a great look about him like a mountain among hills. He read a few verses, prayed briefly and solemnly, with his eyes wide open all the time but not seeing. I have forgotten the text, but the sermon it is impossible to forget. It was filled with one thought — Death. He began slowly and calmly, and then suddenly —

like a man who has seen some great sight and was breathless to declare it—he told us how death reigned — everywhere — always — in all places — how we all knew it — how we would yet know more of it. The tide set in, deep called to deep, imagery and illustration ending ever in the same simple terrible word Death; until at last transferring to us his intense urgency and emotion he cried out as if in despair, ‘Death is a tremendous necessity.’ At these words he was looking over and beyond us, as if into some distant region, and he quickly cried out ‘Behold a Mightier! Who is this glorious in his apparel, speaking in righteousness, travelling towards men in the greatness of his strength, mighty to save?’ And as he spoke of Christ the Deliverer, the man was in an agony of earnestness and entreaty, and we were all weeping and knew it not. Indeed many had been drawn out of their seats and were insensibly approaching the wonderful speaker. Well, Christine, the eight of us walked back to the inn and saw nothing of all that had amused us on our way to the preaching; nor had we a word to say to each other that night. Grant was with us, and he has never been the same man since. I told him so once, and he answered — ‘Cameron, you are right. That hour Someone laid His hands on my shoulders, and turned me into a new path.’ You see the army was his only chance and he knew it, and of course a military man eats and

drinks and sleeps on an open grave. He seemed to feel that."

"My dear, dear Logie, you have given me a great happiness. When you are in danger from this world, I shall stay myself on the fact that you keep such a holy memory in your heart."

Cameron felt pleased with the compliment. The reminiscence had flattered himself. As a respectable Scotchman he could not neglect the spiritual side of his nature. There were even times when he felt sure he would have devoted himself to the ministry, if only he had been a poor, instead of a rich man. And even as a rich man he had always made a point of observing the ordinances, and of giving the weight of his example and subscriptions to the majestic strictness of a Scottish Sabbath Day.

"I think it is likely the Principal will have a dinner party while Doctor Chalmers is here, Logie. I should say it would be given about Friday, and you must not go to Glenlochart this week or you might miss the occasion. Forbye, the Principal wouldn't be liking your absence. A dinner party in St. Andrews without the Cameron, would show a want."

"But I am sure, Christine, none but the great masters and ministers will be asked. I would be ashamed of my youth among them."

"Indeed I am expecting an invite myself, for it is

more than likely the Doctor will have his ward with him, and if so, there will be other ladies, and young men will pass among ladies and not seem very much out of the way. Mrs. Caird was telling me that the bit lassie is free from her lessons now, and is just at the Doctor's heels wherever he goes."

"But I should think he would have his own say-so about a thing like that."

"He is very fond of her. He was fond of her father, and promised him to keep an eye on her education and companions, and I dare say she finds him work to do. She was always a little wild-heart, fond of her own way, and getting it generally either by guile or force."

"You seem to know her, Christine?"

"Why not? She is General Forfar's daughter — surely you remember Lily Forfar."

"Oh! Lily Forfar! Of course I remember Lily, a saucy spunky girl all arms and legs, with tawny hair hanging down her back, a little nose turned upward, a little mouth full of cutting words, and great grey eyes clear as a mountain tarn. We used to quarrel all day long that summer we spent in Arran, but she never kept anger a moment and she dug my bait for me, and carried the creel and our 'pieces' for lunch, and often shared hers with Donald and Sally Cathcart and sometimes even with me. So Lily is

52 THE HEART OF JESSY LAURIE

the Doctor's ward? Wonders will never cease! I hope she has outgrown her awkwardness and tantrums."

"That summer in Arran was seven years ago," continued Christine. "Since then she has been in the best of English, French and German schools. No doubt she has been taught the whys and wherefores of social good breeding; and Mrs. Caird was speaking of her accomplishments and her fashionable gowns. She made mention of her beauty likewise, but Sophronia Caird is a poor judge of beauty. Still, when a girl has eighty thousand pounds in solid cash, and the finest place in Forfarshire, her beauty is a kind of natural sequence."

Logie yawned, and Christine dropped the subject. But the assumed indifference of the young man did not convince her of his unconcern. She felt that her words had been dropped upon such good ground that she could wait for their harvest; and, as nothing could be gained by continuing the conversation, she was rather glad when Logie took out his watch and said he intended to retire early, as he purposed to ride out to Glenlochart in the morning. "I had a letter from Tom Boyd," he said, "and he wants to see me about the new cottages."

"Might it not be a good thing to remain at home this week?"

"What for, should I do that? It is my duty to go

to Glenlochart. Duty is a very certain satisfaction, Christine, waiting for some social opportunity a very uncertain one. The way of Duty is always clear, there are no 'ifs' or 'buts' about it."

"You are just like your father, Logie. Duty was the whole law to him — but then your father had a military training, and that may be summed up in one word — duty."

"Father judged everything by duty — it was not a bad measure."

With these words he rose and bid his sister "good night," and she watched his exit with a proud approval. Indeed Logie equally approved himself. He had spoken wise words, and they gave him all the satisfaction of wise deeds. So he walked slowly upstairs with the deliberate up-head carriage that he had always admired in his father's movements. Just then, if he had seen a wasting candle, or met a giggling servant, he would have assumed a reproving air; and the girl would have blown out the light, and gone to the kitchen to "wonder whatever had come o'er Mister Cameron."

But Cameron's moods were generally evanescent, and as soon as he was in his own apartments he did not find duty interfering with the freedom of his reflections. He made himself thoroughly comfortable, lit the little briar pipe that was reserved for his private satisfaction, and bade his valet place the

Glenlivet on the stand by his sofa. Then he lay down for a comfortable consideration of circumstances.

He thought first of that summer in Arran seven years ago, when he had been sixteen years of age, and Lily Forfar twelve—of the hills beyond hills, from blue to grey, over which they had tramped with their rods and creels. He heard the bees drowsing in the heather, the larks singing in the meadows and the voice of the waters everywhere; and he saw Lily by the trout pools, an alert, earnest creature with the rod firmly in hand, and the sunshine glinting through the rowan branches over what he still remembered as her rumped, tawny hair. Or they were on the beach—or in the boat rowing to the Holy Isle for a day's picnicking. Donald and Sally Cathcart had always been with them, but he had no memories of Donald and Sally. For the first time that struck him as strange. Sally was far prettier than Lily; Donald a big masterful boy, but his memory had not given them the smallest resting place. It was only Lily Forfar's image that pervaded the magical glamor of those summer days in Arran seven years ago. The glens, and bens and lochs of the island rose to his inner vision, and the slim little body with its tawny hair and imperative ways was the spirit of all the silent, lovely places. He let the hazy images

fill his consciousness, he closed his eyes to see them more clearly, a dreamy happy languor pervaded his being, he was on the verge of some experience beyond the ordinary senses, when suddenly, he heard a clear, shrill voice that swept the whole phantasmal picture away.

It was the cry of Jessy Laurie! He saw her coming up from the sea, and the breath and murmur of the sea came with her. The fresh winds blew her garments like clouds around her. She was color and beauty, and health and grace in one splendid, vivid, vital form. The voice was but the memory of her voice, and yet it was so real that he leaped to his feet and went to the window. In a moment she had turned out all intruders, in a moment wiped out all feeling of offense or wrong.

“It was Grant’s fault,” he muttered angrily. “If I had been alone I would have got the word and the smile my heart is even now hungry for. It was Grant’s red face and kilted regimentals that disgusted her, and no wonder! The women whose men are sailors and fishers cannot endure soldiers. And they are right enough! I ought to have remembered that fact! Grant is always trying to look fierce and he only gets as far as being incredibly ugly. Poor Jessy! Darling Jessy! Beautiful Jessy! My Jessy!”

56 THE HEART OF JESSY LAURIE

“ And Rule Macintyre? ”

“ I shall not consider Rule Macintyre.”

The divinity that warns every man had spoken, and been answered. From that hour Cameron's heart was fully set on an evil way, the end of which he did not care yet to consider.

CHAPTER FOUR

A FATEFUL MEETING

While Cameron mused and planned and Rule Macintyre toiled hard on the icy sea for the same fair woman, she lay warm and still and slumbered as peacefully as a baby. Her embryo soul was not troubled by dreams or visions or presentiments, and her physical sleep was the animal unconsciousness of flesh and blood uninformed by any spiritual visitation. The meeting which had so angered and chagrined Cameron on the previous afternoon, had pleased Jessy. She thought she had behaved with extraordinary pride and self-respect, and she was expecting praise from Cameron for the snub given to the soldier.

“From ever I was a bit lassie I have hated soldiers,” she commented as she dressed herself in the morning — “flustering, blustering bodies, who think the wearing o’ a dirk makes them heroes. I’d like fine to see that petticoated lad that Logie was showing off in Rule’s boat on a freezing midnight, when it soared up the steeps o’ sea water and then shot into the deep pits, while a deluge came o’er them and bel-

lowed after them, and every stitch o' clothing was wet and frozen. I wonder then what the poor body would be doing! Crouching in the bit cabin belike, while Rule, calm and steadfast, ready for life or death, would be holding the sheet with one hand and signalling the man at the helm with the other,— holding on, even with a smile, till the exact moment came to let the sail fall sheer, and cheat the wind and win into harbor. Rule is worth the love and kisses of any girl when he comes in from a fight like that; but a soldier wi' a dirk or a sword, killing he never knows who, or what for — I'm astonished the poor bodies ever win wives for themselves!"

To such musings she dressed carefully. Though she hardly ever saw Cameron on the street in her morning round, she had a hope he would certainly be somewhere within her circle, eager to testify his admiration of her conduct. For Jessy's nature lacked the greatest of all gifts — the power of imagination. She was not able to put herself in Cameron's place, nor even for a moment conceive the motives which had moved him to seek her recognition in the presence of his friend. Consequently she had no idea that her change of behavior would place Cameron in the light of a boaster and a liar. Her own point of view was the only one possible to her and men or women so built, are alas! capable of the most fatal mistakes both as regards themselves and others!

Of course she did not meet Cameron, for obedient to his own dictates on the importance of Duty, he had left for Glenlochart very early. There were other motives influencing him, though he did not consciously acknowledge them. Yet it was not Duty that made him wear his handsomest riding suit, and take his finest roadster, and make more than his usual speed so that his return might happen about the visiting hour in the afternoon. These things were connected in his mind with Lily Forfar. If she was in St. Andrews she would lose no time in coming to Christine — he was sure of that. The tie between them was as old as Lily could remember, and was too affectionate and homelike to be bound by social forms. He might even meet her on the street, in which case he could, if surroundings were favorable, introduce himself — supposing she did not remember him. In any case his riding suit was most becoming, and he could trust contingencies to whatever power regulated these affairs. This was Cameron's philosophy — to prepare himself, and leave ways and means to what might appear fortuitous and accidental circumstances.

His faith on this occasion was justified by its results. When he returned from Glenlochart he rode direct to the stable. There were two strange horses there. He felt as if he had expected them, and was not more surprised than pleased when a stable man volunteered the information that "the bay pony was

the mount of a young lady visiting Miss Cameron and the roan belonged to her attendant."

For a moment Cameron hesitated as to whether he should change his dress, and then the old proverb "Change your dress, and you change your luck," crossed his mind, and he thought, "My luck is good enough at present. I'll stand by it whatever it brings." So with his riding cap in his hand he entered his sister's parlor, affecting just that degree of hurry necessary to take away formality. And he was well aware that he looked exceedingly handsome with his wind-blown color, and wind-blown hair, and the general cavalier look becoming even to a homely man.

Christine rose as he entered. "Oh Logie!" she cried, "I am so glad to see you! Here is your old friend and playmate, Miss Forfar — but surely you will be knowing her!"

"Miss Forfar has never been forgotten," he answered gallantly — and then Lily rose and he was holding her hand, and looking once more into the truthful grey eyes he had likened to a mountain tarn, reflecting the heaven above it.

"And I am sure I ought not to have forgotten you, sir," answered Lily. "No poor girl ever had a more tyrannical playfellow. When I remember the tasks you set me, I could weep afresh — if I had the tears."

“ I am sure —”

“ You need not deny your cruelties, for they are graven on my memory. I hated to dig worms, and you knew it, yet you made me dig them. Three times you ordered me to cut them into small pieces. Shall I ever forget my feelings during that process? No indeed! And you stood calmly at my side superintending and directing.”

“ But it was a good lesson for you, and we had many happy days with the bait you prepared — you must not forget that.”

“ I think you ought to have prepared the bait.”

“ No. Women and girls always have prepared the bait for the —”

“ They don't do it now.”

“ They are growing too sentimental then. How cleverly you dug the worms — you did not seem to mind it.”

“ You only saw my face. If you could have seen my heart, you would have been shocked; it was always sick and shivering.”

“ Your heart was more tender than was necessary. Worms don't feel — much. Naturalists say that.”

Then there followed a conversation only interesting to the persons concerned. Every sentence of it began with a “ don't you remember ”—or a trifling dispute about the date of a certain catch — or their narrow escape from being swamped by the swell of a

steamer passing them — or some special lunch on the Holy Isle — or the making of cat's cradles during the long sermons in Senna Kirk. And several times during these childish recollections they inadvertently called each other "Logie" and "Lily" and then blushed and corrected the mistake, which only made it worse. And when this *faux pas* had been made rather frequently, it was a delightful thing to have Miss Cameron break into the old romance with a commonplace comfortable cup of tea.

For this every day rite brought about an every day conversation, and Logie asked about Lily's coming and staying, and heard that she had arrived the previous evening, and was going after the Sabbath to Forfar Castle, where she intended to remain until the winter drove her back to Edinburgh.

"And I shall wait here until Miss Forfar comes back," said Christine. "We can then go to Edinburgh together."

"A delightful arrangement," answered Logie. "For of course you will be requiring an escort, and Doctor Chalmers will then be too busy to run up to the Highlands for you. I may therefore hope —"

"Not at all. You are not knowing the great man. He looks well after the Little Ones. You should have seen him last night," she continued, lifting her small glowing face, "There came to him a deputation of the students, and the way in which he just

stood still and looked at the lads, brought their souls to their faces. One of them, a big giant from Sutherland, who is also 'lord of the links' stepped forward and said: —

“ ‘ If you would give us a dozen words, Doctor — a dozen words that we can set in our hearts for all the days of our lives — maybe you will, Sir — we are just waiting for them.’

“ There was a moment's silence — no, it was not silence to those who could understand. It was so full of feeling that I heard their breathing, and then a sigh or two, and syne a sob, and the dear old man stretched out his hands, and said in his broadest Scotch: —

“ ‘ My lads, I will just gie you your ain golf motto — ‘ FAR and SURE!’ The ball o' life is now in your hands, throw it far, even unto the heavens; throw it sure, even into the hands of Him mighty to help and to save. You may throw your ball far, and it may not be sure; you may throw it sure, and it may not be far. Scotland looks to her lads to do their whole duty, and throw every ball that is at their feet, or in their hands, baith FAR and SURE.’

“ And I wish you could have seen how they parted.”

“ I know,” answered Cameron. “ They would fling the old motto frantically to the skies, and go off with more *hurrahs* than an army with banners.”

“ They did nothing of the kind. They were too

much moved to speak — they only pressed round him and looked in his face, and one poor fellow, who is a humpback but very clever, kissed his hand and asked ‘Even me, Doctor?’ and he put the hand kissed on his head, and answered — ‘My dear laddie, it is gey hard to tell what great things God is going to do wi’ thee!’ And the laddie shouted ‘Amen’ joyfully, and went out uplifted beyond believing. His name is James Murrey, and the Principal told me he was both a seer and a poet and the finest scholar in St. Andrews, and I took a liking to him, and he is to be asked to dinner to-morrow night. Christine is coming too, and I suppose Mr. Cameron will give us the pleasure? —” and so on.

Cameron accepted the invitation with enthusiasm, and then Lily added, “You have reminded me three times that seven years ago I was a self-willed, high-tempered girl, who dressed badly and never had her hair smooth. I hope you may find that a variety of teachers and a French maid have done something towards my education.”

“I did not intend —”

“Please make no apologies. It really was all you said. Now I must go — will you order my pony?”

Cameron went personally about this request, and when he returned he brought with him his own roadster. “I will ride to the Principal’s house with you,” he said. She was going to refuse his escort but he

added persuasively —“ If you please, do not refuse my first request,” so she smiled and nodded acquiescence. Then he lifted her into the saddle and they rode slowly away together chatting as familiarly as if there had been no seven years interlude in their acquaintance.

It was not until they had reached a point on South Street which Jessy seldom passed, that Cameron remembered the possibility of meeting her lower down. The thought was hardly a fear but it was an annoyance; for he knew Jessy's power of making her presence felt both in a pleasant and an unpleasant manner. He trusted, however, to his good fortune, and failing to see anything of her throughout the wide, long street before him he gave himself, with even added gaiety, to the enjoyment of the moment.

They were nearing the Principal's house and had slackened even their slow pace as they approached the gate, when Jessy suddenly emerged from the little lane skirting one side of the garden. She stood a moment as if uncertain which way to take, then turned and saw Cameron and Lily approaching the main entrance. Without a moment's consideration, and actuated by some inward impulse that had her in its passionate grip she walked rapidly forward, and just as they were entering the gates flung in their very faces the four sharp syllables of her 'call'. It was the shriek of a woman's heart torn by a frenzy of

humiliated pride and passion, and Lily shrunk visibly from it, looking with a white scared face at her escort.

“Did you see that girl?” she asked. “Did you hear her? What made her look at me so? I feel as if she had struck me.”

Cameron laughed. “I saw her, and I heard her,” he answered. “She is one of the fisher girls. She was only crying her fish. It is a weird cry, but it is their business call.”

“No! There was no business in that cry. It was all feeling, ill-feeling, bitterness, anger — I know not what. It will haunt me as long as I live. And her face! I can not forget it.”

“She is quite handsome.”

“I only saw its hatred — not its beauty. It seemed to blaze with anger. I feel as if I were on fire — as if I had had a blow.”

“These fisher girls are fierce women, they have to be. They get the habit of looking defiant. She could not possibly have any ill-will toward you. She does not know your name.”

“Does she know you?”

“Every one in St. Andrews knows me.”

“Do you know her?”

“No. I see, as you do, that she is one of the fisher girls; they are very much alike. Most of them are handsome, and as good as they are beautiful. Do

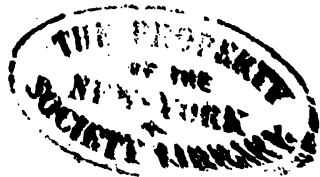
not give this girl a thought. Will you ride with me if I call to-morrow about ten? There is much you ought to see while you are here."

"Make the hour eleven, and I will go with you."

Then Cameron assisted her to dismount. "Good-bye!" she said drearily. "I wish we had not met that girl. She has blighted me — taken all the color out of our meeting — made everything look mean. To-morrow at eleven."

As she stood a moment on the spotless white steps facing him, Cameron had a full vision of her. He saw that she was small, slight and erect, with an air of complete self-possession; that her face was sweet and frank, her eyes grey and large, and of singular brilliance and that she had an abundance of pale brown hair. He saw also that she had the innocent confident air of a child to whom as yet "the pleasant habit of existence, the sweet fable of life" had been altogether a happy experience. What he did not see was the dauntless courage underlying this simplicity, a courage that would always make her victorious over evil; since if evil came, she would neither fear it, nor fly from it but facing and despising it, by her own will either conquer it or turn it into good.

Yet the full charm of the accumulated influence was over Cameron, and he suffered his heart to acknowledge that Lily Forfar was the very wife he desired, only not just yet — not just yet. There was one



other woman on whom his heart was set. She must come first. Lily was all he could desire — after Jessy. Even Jessy's wild unreasonable passion hurting no one so cruelly as herself, fascinated him. The very pain it excited was provocative, yes, even pleasant. It thrilled him with the anticipated joys that only such a wild, sweet-briar heart could give. He told himself that the love of all women was different, and that "the sharp tang, and salt savor of Jessy's love was a kind by itself, and not for any reason to be neglected."

In the meantime Jessy stood just where they had met her. Her basket was at her feet and she was leaning against a lamp post. Some one had stopped to speak to her, and she said wearily in answer to the question put, "No! I am tired, and not feeling like myself," and as she spoke she heard the canter of Cameron's horse. It was close at hand — the next moment it had passed her — passed without a look or a sign. She wished to strike the interfering girl; she longed to fly after her flying lover — to do some desperate thing, that would make him stop and speak to her.

But even a woman in love understands the wisdom of hiding a slight, and Jessy did none of the things her primitive nature urged her to do. She only shook herself free from the girl's hand, and said angrily, "I wish to goodness, Marion Bean, you would

be after your own work! I'm requiring no help from you. I can win home myself."

"I thought you looked sickly, and —"

"I'm as well as you are; maybe I'm a thought fagged wi' the fish, and wi' the contrary bodies that are wanting them for a bawbee — the pinging creatures! Forbye I'll be more than likely to meet Rule Macintyre at the bend o' the road."

"Good bye, then."

There was no audible answer. Jessy was marching swiftly enough down the street, and talking to herself. But it was noticeable that in this monologue she blamed anyone but Cameron. "He would have spoken to me but for the proud hizzie at his side! It was all her fault! Her indeed! Nothing bonnie about her! And then Marion Bean had to put herself in the way — I'll sort Marion for that ill turn yet. And yesterday it was that ill-faced soldier — bad luck follow him! But oh, I am the foolish woman myself! What for am I giving a thought to the like o' Logie Cameron?"

"What for indeed?" asked a voice within, that she could not say '*whist*' to. "Did you ever believe you could rock yourself in the Cameron nest? The Camerons build in the high tree tops, and your nest is by the sea side, on the very sands at your feet. Does the eagle ever mate with the grey gull? Foolish woman! Foolish woman!"

“He took my kisses without a wish or warrant,” she answered. “He vowed with every kiss that he loved me; he said I was the bonniest woman in all the world.”

“He knew better. Give him up! Give him up!”

“Not till he gives me up.”

“Too late then, too late!”

“I’m not caring!”

“You are going a road you’ll dearly rue.”

“I’m going the road I want to go.”

“I’ll say no more.”

“You are right there. I’m not heeding you.”

Then low as a far, far-off echo “Foolish Woman! Foolish Woman!”

She was irritated by this involuntary conversation. “I cannot even keep my thoughts to myself,” she said fretfully. “I wonder who was answering me. If I was answering myself then there is two Jessy Lauries, and one o’ them is putting on too much. She is aye advising or reproving or setting up Rule and his rights. Rights, indeed! between her and Annie Tulloch, Rule is well minded. I wish they would let the lad alone. I’d think the better o’ him, if he wasn’t flung at me morning, noon and night — it’s just wearisome — that’s what it is!” then she lifted her eyes, and saw Rule coming to meet her. Suddenly something marvellous happened, all her self-sufficiency and her putative courage vanished as

the big smiling fellow approached, and she felt strangely forlorn and disconsolate. So that when Rule lifted her basket, and drew her to his side, and called her "Dearie" and said he was "sick with wearying for her," she felt as if Cameron's scornful indifference didn't very much matter. Rule was sufficient, and she slipped her hand into his, and sighed with a sweet content. Logie Cameron might be proud and false, but in Rule Macintyre she could put her trust forever.

"Oh, but I'm glad to see you, Rule!" she said, "I'm fairly fagged out. Rule, I have been my last round wi' the fish. Whoever carries them in the future, it will not be Jessy Laurie."

"I'm grateful to hear you say that, Jessy. You know I never liked you in the street business. We will be married then, as soon as we can be cried in the Kirk."

"Married! That's all men think about! How can we be married till we have paid every bawbee on our home. We would be fools to begin our life with a debt round our necks; folks would hae a contempt for our want of patience and consideration. We would be told a dozen times a day, that we had baked our loaf before it was risen — and the like o' that. Every one would have a proverb to fling at us; you know how the talk would run, and you would get the bluff of it in the boats — old men warning

you, and young men joking you. You couldn't thole it, Rule, and I should hate myself if I put you in the way o' it. How much are we owing now, Rule?

"Only sixty pounds, less or more, and I have an offer in my pocket that means more siller than ever I earned before."

"How is that, Rule?"

"The London Fishmongers Company are offering me a place in their fleet, and I'll have the captaincy of one o' their biggest carrying steamboats, wi' a good salary — and what chances go with the post."

"You will surely take the offer, Rule?"

"If you say so. It is a hard job in the winter and I'll seldom be off the sea, and in summer harder still — day and night work and never an hour to call my own. But there's siller with it, and in a year, or maybe less we should be free to marry."

"Think o' that, Rule!"

"My dear lass, I think of little else."

They were by this time near the Laurie cottage, and they saw Janet standing at the open door watching for them. She was a little cross at the delayed meal. She reminded Rule that the boats would be waiting for him, and that the tea was overdrawn, and the buttered scones all but spoiled.

"I could not hurry myself, mother," answered Jessy. "It is not Rule's fault. I was like to faint

with very weariness, and mother, I have made up my mind, that I will carry the basket no more. That's a fact."

"You're havering. Where have you found a fortune? How can you live without working?"

"I don't want to be idle. There are other kinds of work. I'll go out to service, before I'll take the basket again."

"You'll go out to service, and shame the dead and living, Jessy Laurie! No you won't! No you won't! There was never a Laurie lass, and never a Gemmel lass, that went out to service. They had God and their men folk. And God gave them the great sea and the fish in it, for their living — with His blessing, you know — and they served God and their own folk, and never man or woman else. And you would hire out for a dirty pound a month! Think shame of yoursel' for it would shame me beyond bearing. I couldn't show my face on the streets with my basket. I would feel it a condescension to speak to you, and you my ain daughter. I'm short o' words, Jessy, you have ta'en speech away from me. Rule, have you nothing to say? Is this your plan?"

"My plan! No, no! I would hate Jessy to be waiting on this body, and that body; bowing to one and curtsying to the other, and running herself off her feet trying to please folk that are unpleasable."

“Now then Jessy, will you shame us both?”

“I’ll shame neither Rule, nor yourself, Mother. I’ll not stop in St. Andrews. Preaching and teaching bodies aye pin you down to the last halfpenny. I’ll go to Glasgow. Phemy Rathburn went to Glasgow, and is making all o’ twenty pounds a year. I’ll go as she did to some big hotel, for in big hotels you serve no one in particular. It’s the public you serve, and I’ve been doing that, ever since I could carry the basket and count the fish and the pennies, I’ll carry it no more, and that’s a God’s truth.”

“And what will Rule do wanting the sight o’ you? I’m not speaking for mysel’. I’m nobody o’ consequence.”

“Don’t get into a pet, Mother, that’s bairn’s foolishness! You are *Mother*, and that is what no one else in the world is, or can be. As for Rule, he is going away himself in a manner. Tell Mother, Rule. She’ll be glad o’ your good fortune.”

Then Rule took a letter out of his pocket and gave it to Mistress Laurie. She needed no further explanation. The work it asked from Rule was plain enough to her—he was to be captain of one of those low built, powerful iron steamers which are the carriers for the fish markets of London. She had been close to them several times on her husband’s fishing smack, and had always felt a sickening terror among the crowd of little boats crashing and grind-

ing against the big steamer, while the fishers flung their boxes of eighty pounds of fish to its reeling iron deck as easily as if they were playing dumb-bells. The noise — the confusion — the quarreling — O she knew well the man who commands a steam carrier had to be a giant among men! quick to detect wrong, masterful to right it and able to command and enforce obedience; especially during those eight months of the year when on the dismal North Sea there was always half-a-gale blowing and the carrier must lie waiting in the trough of the big waves for the smacks hampered by their rigging full of ice and their reeling decks slippery as glass.

She did not like to think of Rule in such a hard position. The title of Captain and the steady income were not payment enough for such care and suffering, and she said this plainly. Then Rule gave her another letter.

“It came this very afternoon, Mother;” he said, “but I fear you will be liking the offer no better than the steam carrying.”

Janet however gave this letter so much care and consideration, that Jessy grew impatient, and she rose, went to her mother’s side and read it over her shoulder. A sharp exclamation of astonishment escaped her. She looked up and smiled at Rule, and then went and sat down again beside him.

“Well Mother?”

“ Well Rule, it is a great offer for a man who has no woman-ties. But if you take it we shall see little o’ you. Still, to get your foot into Henryson Brothers is a big step upward; for it’s well known, wide as the world, that nothing but good seamanship tells in their boats.”

“ That is the great point, Mother. Their best officers were born like mysel’ wi’ the sea in their mouth — all of them out o’ the boats, one way or other. And they go up by their merit only, so then I might even come to one of their big liners. I’m a bit proud of their offer.”

“ What are you talking about Rule? Tell me straight out.”

“ Well then, Jessy dearie, if you don’t mind me being away from you a good deal of my time, I can be third officer on one o’ Henryson’s boats, and as I said, I have only to do my duty to go higher.”

“ Where will you sail to? ”

“ Maybe, first to some Mediterranean port. I’ll be well watched and well tried, and if I do my duty I’ll win to the Atlantic liners. Think o’ that, Jessy! ”

“ And is there money in the job, Rule? ”

“ Plenty to put us in our own home in a few months.”

“ Then take the Henryson’s offer, Rule. Don’t let it go by you! And very like I may go to Glasgow, for I’ll write to Phemy Rathburn to-morrow to

get me in where she is; then you could see me there easy, and if I went to Edinburgh, you would doubtless be putting in to Leith — but this or that, we can surely spare each other for a few months, when it is to bring us together for the rest of our lives.”

A happy mood of looking-forward then took possession of the lovers, and they sat hand-clasped forecasting the joyous days that were to be. Mistress Laurie however felt none of their enthusiasm. She rose from the tea table with a sigh, and began to wash the cups and plates, and as she stepped slowly between the tray and the rack, her heart sank below all the tides of hope. For though she made some brave attempts to join in the happiness of her children, she could only feel the chill of apprehension. Her life seemed to be slipping from its old foundations. She had the feeling of being carried on the irresistible tide of some deep, dark river, without either hand or oar to help her stay her course or win a footing on the dreary shore.

Meanwhile Rule and Jessy whispered love words, and lighted the hearth with their smiles, and surrounded themselves with an atmosphere of the rosiest hope. They knew nothing at all of the chill terror that made the mother sigh wearily, while her prescient soul took its first, long look down the *Sorrowful Way* it was to travel.

It was a relief to Janet Laurie when Annie Tul-

loch softly opened the door and asked —“ Is all well here? ”

“ Come in, Annie;” answered Jessy. She was not pleased at her intrusion, yet it gave her an opportunity for boasting that she was eager to seize. “ Come in,” she continued, “ we are all well, and just uncommon happy over the good luck that has come to Rule. What made you think any of us might be sick? ”

“ James Buller told me Rule would not be in the boat to-night, and so I had a moment’s fear.”

“ When was ever Rule sick? And I am pretty sure Rule will never be in the boat again — don’t ‘ *hush* ’ me, Rule. Annie will be a miserable woman, if she does not learn, on the very instant, the why and the wherefore.” And then Jessy with her handsome head lifted and her eyes sparkling continued:—

“ The Henrysons of Glasgow, them and no less, have sent Rule a letter. They are needing Rule in their boats, and every body knows that the Henrysons open the door o’ good fortune to all they take in hand.”

“ Aye,” said Annie, “ we all know that.”

“ So it will be up, and up and up for Rule Macintyre, no doubt, until he stands on one o’ their big liners with a captain’s coat and all its trimmings on his broad shoulders; and then —”

“Do be still, Jessy; you are running far ahead, my lass.”

“And then, I shall be Mrs. Captain Regulus Macintyre — for of course, Rule will put the whole of his name to his title — and I’ll be living in a fine house in Greenock, or more likely in the West End of Glasgow. And now, Annie,” she went on breathlessly, “you will be wasting time looking after Rule’s health and Rule’s rights. He will be far out of your eyesight and your hearing — for you must know, Rule” — she said, turning her radiant smile upon her lover, “that Annie is constantly watching me for fear I give anybody the shadow of a smile, or a broken word of civility, that ought, by her say-so, to belong to yourself.”

“That is right, Annie;” interposed Rule with a hearty laugh. “I’ll just leave our bonnie Jessy in your charge, while I am far off. You be to watch her carefully.”

“Well, Rule, if Annie watches me, I’ll take care she sees enough to pay her for her trouble.”

“Don’t take any offense, dearie; we are only joking;” said Rule, and Annie turned the conversation by a remark about the dinner party at the Principal’s house, the following night.

“My cousin Grace has charge o’ the table;” she said, “and I was helping her an hour or two, brightening up the silver and the like; and she was telling me

that only the cream o' the quality are bid. And there is a young lady with the Doctor, a perfect beauty. I was seeing her mysel' as she came down to dinner to-night. She had a light blue dress on and a chain of sparkling blue stones round her throat, and a white Japonica fastened her bertha, and another white Japonica was in her hair; and her hair itsel' is like spun gold —"

"It is nothing of the kind, Annie Tulloch. It is just like tow. Able Greer's six towsy lads have hair the same particular color. I saw her riding with the Cameron lad this very afternoon, and she's no beauty, nor like to be one — just a common little body well dressed up."

"I thought she was sweet and bonnie, and every body is in love with her kind ways. I was hearing young Cameron was on his knees to her already."

"And you are telling me, that Cameron was a young Satan, not fit to pass the time o' day with any decent girl."

"Did I pass on Cameron in such like words, Jessy? If I did, I have clean forgotten the circumstance."

"Jessy is mista'en herself;" said Mistress Laurie crossly. "I said the words, and I'm ready to say them o'er again."

"What for are we talking of folk that we care

nothing about? I'm sure Rule and his new outcome are far more interesting; and him going away, perhaps to foreign parts, early in the morning."

"And you yoursel' ready to flit, as soon as you can make shift to do it;" continued Jessy's mother with an angry look at her discontented daughter. "Have you told Annie, that you are no longer a fisher lass? She has a cousin or two out serving folk — maybe, she can help you to a 'place.'"

"Well, Mother," answered Jessy, "If I had not thought of a change before, it would only be right for me now to try and move forward with Rule. Annie herself knows how girls are tormented with saucy college lads, and conceited, impertinent men folk, who think themselves always free to joke with a fisher lass — or praise her beauty — or even make love to her in an underhand kind of a way. I am sure while Rule is away fighting for us both, it will be far more modest-like and thoughtful-like to be in some family of quality, or even nobility, learning the ways and speech that I'll require to use, when Rule has won his own, and can make me a lady. I want to be worthy of Rule, and I think I can go into the world a few months, and come back and be all the more contented and wise-like wife, for the experience."

"I know far better — or worse;" said Mrs. Laurie. "A woman that goes into the world, will

never be happy out o' it again. She'll go to it as the moth to the candle flame. It has always been that way. Does any o' you think Eve, after she had had her run of the outside o' Paradise, would have cared to go back into the quiet garden? I'm thinking the angels and the flaming swords were not needed to keep her out, but they would have been required to put her inside again."

"Mother! that's Bible talk, and we have no right qualifying our private ways with it. I'm astonished at you!"

"Well, it's chapping ten o'clock, and I'm going to my bed, for I be to look for my living from the fish, and they'll be here at the dawning;— and good bye Rule, and may you be well guarded, and brought safe home again."

Then Rule rose and kissed the kindly face while the light of the blessing was on it. And after her departure a strange constraint fell on the little party. Annie knew she ought to go, and let the lovers have half-an-hour in which to say their parting words; but she kept trying to speak some word that should leave a pleasant feeling behind her, and every thing she said somehow turned wrong, until at last Rule grew silent and Jessy restless, and still the girl seemed spellbound and unable to move.

At length Rule rose. His time was up, and he held

Jessy in his arms and kissed a few parting words on her lips. Then Annie rose, and with the gruffness of tears in his voice, Rule said, "I'll convoy you home, Annie," and the two went away together.

In a passion of jealousy, Jessy locked the door after them, covered up the fire, put out the little lamp, and opening the small lattice window sat down to cool the fever of her blood in the wind blowing from the sea.

"She got her way, the sly, planning creature," she muttered, "took him off with her, without giving us a moment by oursel's. I wonder Rule didn't see through her — but Rule has aye set Annie o'er close to me. I'm not liking it — if I wasn't so bonnie, I wouldn't doubt but she'd get him from me — for she's a persevering creature — and she'll be watching me, for Rule's sake, of course. I'm feared for her big, grey eyes; and somehow she aye gets the best o' me. I'll take myself out of her ken and boundary — very soon too." She was trembling with anger, and just beginning to blame Rule as well as Annie, when she heard a long, heavy step coming towards her. In a moment or two Rule was at her open window, and she stood up joyfully to speak to him. "I couldn't go without my kiss, Jessy;" he whispered. "I would have been useless on land or sea, wanting my kiss." So Jessy leaned forward,

84 THE HEART OF JESSY LAURIE

and throwing her arms round his neck she whispered love words and blessings sealing every word with sweetest kisses.

Then the lattice was gently shut, and Rule went away in a wonder of joy; vowing to himself that for Jessy's sake he would yet wear a captain's coat with all the trimmings on it.

CHAPTER FIVE

PLAYING WITH FIRE

Three days after this parting Jessy received a letter from Rule — her first love letter — and for awhile it made her happy. In it Rule said, he had “signed papers with the Henrysons and immediately gone aboard the steamer on which his duty lay.” He wrote in a very hopeful mood, and Jessy was more than equally hopeful. She was sure she was right in giving up the sale of the fish, and her unhappy mother had no argument strong enough to combat a desire beyond her comprehension. For she could not understand how a determination so positive had formed itself in an hour or two. Jessy had left the cottage at three o’clock in a very happy temper. In arranging her fish among the cool sprays of seaweed she had praised their beauty, and then with her basket on her shoulder gone away with a light step, and an apparently light heart. And at five o’clock she had returned in a rebellious temper, out of love with her life, and resolved to stand still until she could make a new road for herself.

And it was small comfort to the mother, that Rule

had taken the step upward. For if Rule had remained in St. Andrews Jessy would surely have resumed the work so natural, and hitherto so generally agreeable to her. As for her daughter going out to service, that intention was a great humiliation to Mistress Laurie. She had scoffed at other girls demeaning themselves and their families by such work, and now she would doubtless have her scorn returned to her, with the merciless interest women pay such debts with.

It was small satisfaction that Annie Tulloch took Jessy's part, and that even Rule's aunt thought it might be a good thing for the girl to get into a larger world. "Jessy will get her notions concerning hersel' straightened out a wee," she said to Mistress Laurie. "You know well Janet, that the lassie thinks she is the one bonnie woman in the world, and Glasgow will teach her a different lesson; she'll come back home wi' that conceit taken clean out o' her."

"Glasgow is an awfu' wicked place for a young lassie to go all her lane into."

"She isn't going her lane. I have a cousin there, a wise-like far-seeing woman, who owns what they call a Temperance Hotel. I'll write and ask her to take Jessy in care and keeping. Rule will like that, for he'll be in Glasgow at least once a month, or oftener maybe, and so he too can hold the lassie under his influence."

“Margot, Jessy is all I have. Together we have managed to scraffie a livelihood, but it will come hard on me without her. I don’t mind the work — God knows I have done it cheerfully — but Oh Margot, it isn’t the work, it is the loneliness, the want o’ my child, the loss o’ her love and her kind words, the thought o’ strangers getting what I ought to have.”

“Tut, tut woman! It is very selfish o’ you feeling in that way. I’m fairly astonished at you! I’m sure I wouldn’t be —”

“You know nothing about it, Margot. You never had a bairn.”

“For which I’m a thankful woman. As far as I can see, bairns are a very certain sorrow, and a very uncertain comfort. But I think a deal o’ my nephew Rule, and I want him to have a good wife and one suitable for the place he is bound to win his way to. And I do think Jessy will be much improved, if she sees how a world a bit above her ain world lives and behaves. So I say, let her go to Glasgow. She will be in the way o’ civilizing hersel’, and let me whisper another word to you Janet — she’ll be far out o’ the road o’ that young scapegrace Logie Cameron. That’s a fact worth thinking over.”

And in the long run the mother, after a good deal of weeping, told Jessy “she must just take the road she had set her heart on taking, but she wouldn’t be

responsible for any ill that came on it, or through it.”

Upon the whole Janet was not very pleasant to live with in those days, for a woman brooding over a change she feels is all wrong and yet which she has no means to intercept, is not a cheerful or hopeful companion. So Jessy while waiting for some definite result, spent a good deal of her time with Rule's aunt. For Margot Macintyre was sympathetic, and therefore in Jessy's opinion reasonable.

These were the conditions influencing Jessy's life for the first week after Rule's departure. Then a change occurred. It began in Jessy's own heart. She had during the whole week deliberately tortured her pride and her passion by seeking unsuspected opportunities of watching Cameron and Miss Forfar. Annie Tulloch had taken her to the Principal's house and procured her an opportunity of watching 'the Quality' going in to dinner. And from her hiding place she had seen Cameron and Lily Forfar — Cameron in full evening dress and Lily in shimmering white silk and lace leaning upon his arm. The sight hurt her cruelly, but she would not have foregone it. In her hatred of Lily she seemed to possess another existence. She wished to hate her still more, and she sat at her aunt's window watching for her to pass. Logie was generally with her; she saw them riding, she saw them walking, she filled her hungry

eyes and burning heart with their images. On the Sabbath day she lingered round the beautiful little chapel of St. Salvator's College — for Doctor Chalmers was to preach there — and as she expected Miss Cameron and her brother were with the Principal's party. Logie walked gravely at Lily's side, and, as became a Scotchman of rank and influence, he looked Sabbath-like and evidently spoke in the low and measured manner proper to the day.

But oh how handsome he was in Jessy's eyes! Riding or walking, at the feast, or at the Kirk, in every dress and in every mood, he seemed to her more and more wonderfully beautiful and graceful. And he was *her* lover. She told herself this positively. Lily Forfar was taking him from her, consequently she hated her. And hate is as greedy as love. Though the very sight of the flaxen head, with the blue Glengary crowning its braids, hurt her like a knife in her heart, she craved the sight. "Some day," she told herself, "she would pay the tow-headed hizzy all she owed her;" and in the depths of her heart, she scarcely set any bounds as to what she would personally do to humble her rival, though it were only for an hour.

Against the swift growth of this passion, reason, duty or obligation were powerless. Passion fights no intellectual battles. It listens only to the voice of another passion stronger than itself. And it was not

90 THE HEART OF JESSY LAURIE

long before Jessy's passion of love for Cameron and hate for Lily, consumed like tinder the superficial affection she had for Rule. Rule was everything that was right and prudent as a lover, Logie everything that was wrong and foolish, but Jessy was in love with folly and pleased with ruin, if only they would give her the triumph and the happiness she craved.

Generally speaking we are responsible for whatever fate or fortune comes to us. The things we passionately desire we summon. They are vitalized by our hopes, and move steadily in the paths of our longings; but such desires being selfish and short-sighted, are too often tragical calls on destiny. At this time the one craving desire of Jessy's heart was to see and to talk to Cameron, and Cameron having seen Lily depart for Forfar turned as easily as a vane turns to Jessy. The very fact that he had not seen her, or even heard her voice for a week stimulated his interest. He walked about the streets she used to frequent, and they seemed empty wanting her brilliant vitality. He wondered what had become of the girl. Was she sick in consequence of his neglect? This suggestion made him sorry for her. "Poor Jessy!" he commented. "I have given her a sore lesson, and it is time we made friends again. I am lonely and unhappy without her. And maybe,

while I have been wearing the days away with Lily Forfar, Jessy has been spending her time with that big fisherman. That won't do. I must even take a step or two to win her back. Then he rose, went to his desk and wrote a letter.

"Hector."

"Here, Sir."

"Hector, do you know Jessy Laurie?"

"Yes sir — in a way — I know the sight o' her."

"Have you seen her to-day or yesterday?"

"I can't say that I have seen her for many days, Sir."

"Do you know where she lives?"

"I have a kind o' instinct anent the place."

"I want this letter given to her — on the quiet, you understand. You must find a way to do it."

"Very well, Sir."

"You must be particularly cautious — and quick."

"I will put the letter where you wish it."

"As soon as possible Hector."

"To-day Sir — sometime."

But Hector's instinct did not lead him to the right place until the afternoon of the third day; then as he passed Margot Macintyre's house, he saw Jessy standing at the window. A slight movement of his hand arrested her attention, the sight of the letter brought her to the door. Swiftly he put it into her

hand, and then in a loud voice asked if she could "direct him to the house where David Burns, a weaver lad, lived."

Before Jessy could answer, Margot asked sharply, "who are you talking to Jessy?"

"Here is a stranger, Aunt, and he wants to know where David Burns — a weaver lives."

"There is no David Burns, and no weaver bodies in St. Andrews," answered Margot crossly. "He'll have to go South to find a Burns, and a weaver. By grace of God, we are all fishers and sailors, if we be not preachers and scholars, in this corner o' Scotland. Ask what for he is wanting a David Burns?"

"He says just news of a lost friend."

"Then send him to Pixie Fraser. She knows where everybody is, and what everybody is doing — or it will be a wonder."

Hector received this direction with a smile and departed, and Margot tried to catch a glimpse of the man as he passed the window. "But it is little I can see of him, but a red head!" she said fretfully, "my rheumatism grows worse every day. I'll be a helpless creature before long Jessy." And Jessy trembling with love and expectation comforted her as well as she could. Then she toasted the bread and made the tea, and in so doing found an opportunity to get into the outer room and read her letter:

MY OWN DEAR, DEAR JESSY:

You have kept out of my sight for more than a week, and I am desperate with love and longing for you. Come this or come that, whatever happens, you must give me an hour this evening. I will be at the Blair Hill House at seven o'clock, and I will wait just inside the gate until nine. But have a little mercy on me, and come as soon as you can. I am wretched wanting you. If you have cast me off, tell me so; and I will go over the sea and trouble you no more! but oh darling, dearly loved Jessy, I am hoping still that you have a kind feeling for your devoted lover,

LOGIE.

“Blair Hill House!” she mused. It was a mile further west, and what excuse could she possibly make for taking that road at all? But love finds out a way, and as she was washing the tea cups the difficulty was solved. Then she went to Margot full of excitement and said:

“Aunt, I know who can take the rheumatism out o’ your feet, and when I have finished the cups, and made you comfortable, I’ll away and see the woman. I wonder I didn’t think o’ her before this.”

“What woman are you sploring about?”

“Bessie McAslin.”

“The old witch! I’ll have none of her charms and cantrips.”

“She isn’t a witch, aunt. She is just a clever woman, and there is no more harm in going to her, than to Doctor Stuart himsel’. If there is, I will take the weight o’ it.”

And when rheumatism is playing among the muscles and tendons of the feet, the source of relief is not often a question of conscience. Margot speedily surrendered her opinion, and was even eager for Jessy to seek the wise woman in her behalf. This was all Jessy wanted, for Bella's cottage was but a little way beyond Blair Hill; she could get Bella's advice and then delay the time with her until seven o'clock. For though quite as eager for the interview as her lover, she did not wish to be at the tryst before him.

Bella certainly did not look like a witch. She had a small, delicate face, slow-moving mystical eyes, and that atmosphere of remoteness — of something unknown and unseen — which those who live much outside the rim of the visible world acquire. She listened silently to Jessy's description of her Aunt's trouble, and then gave her some herbs which she said "might help her, though she feared they would not."

"You had better send for Doctor Stuart," she said, "and tell Margot Macintyre to pull herself together, and get ready for a fight. She will win through it — if she wants to."

At length the clock struck seven, and Jessy said: "I must hurry myself now," and as she rose she laid a shilling upon the table. But Bella pushed it

towards her, and said with the air of one speaking in a dream:

“Lift the money yourself, Jessy Laurie. If you go straight back to your Aunt, it will bring you a blessing; if you turn off the road, you will go through an evil gate, and you may fling the silver away; for you will fling away far more than silver or gold can pay for.”

“What are you meaning, Bella?”

“It is a sign to you, and you know well what it means. This very hour, Jessy Laurie, is the turning point in your life. Good and evil are now set for your choice. If you choose evil, you will never never again get back to this hour — and all your future —”

But Jessy with a cry fled out of the cottage, leaving the shilling behind her. She was trembling with anger and fear. All the pleasure had been taken out of her tryst by Bella’s words; and for a short distance she determined to heed her counsel.

“She is a wise woman,” she reflected, “and folk are saying ‘she sees beyond.’ I’ll go straight back to Margot, it will serve Logie right to be disappointed. I’ll cross the road and not touch the evil gate with my sleeve or gown —”

She was in this mind until Blair Hill House came into view, and she stood still to reason with herself,

or rather with temptation. And what woman ever reasoned herself out of temptation? Safety lies either in flight or prayer, and Jessy was averse to flight and forgetful of prayer. When she resumed her walk she had come to the conclusion, that it would be "foolish to cross the road, because Logie would see and follow her; and there might be some one on the road — even Annie Tulloch herself for she was aye prying and peeping. It would therefore be best to walk past the gate, as if it wasn't there; for why should she go out of her natural road for Logie Cameron? And if he spoke, she would just pass the hour, and walk rapidly on."

As she reached this determination, she reached the gate. It opened swiftly — a strong hand drew her half-resisting into the garden — the gate closed — she was in Logie's arms — and before she could utter a word of remonstrance, he was sealing her lips dumb with kisses.

"O Logie! Logie! Logie!" she at last found herself able to exclaim.

"O Jessy! Jessy! Jessy!" he answered passionately. "You beauty! You charmer! You troubler of my heart! I'll never let you go again! I have been out of my senses not seeing you!"

"You had the other lass — she seemed to suit you fine."

“Miss Forfar you mean? She is only an old play-mate. I never said a word of love to her.”

“What did you say then? Love words of course; just such words as you were saying to me the now.”

“I did not Jessy, you do not understand our life. I had to be attentive to Miss Forfar. We have been friends with the Forfars for a generation; but as for love! I wouldn't give one hair from your bonnie head, for all the love of Lily Forfar. I love you Jessy! I love you, and only you —”

“Then what for did you —”

“Stop, my darling. We have no time to waste on questions and excuses and explanations. Let by-gones be by-gones. And oh, queen of my soul, just forgive me and love me! And tell me so, and then we will talk of the future — the glorious future we are going to spend together.”

Never had Jessy looked so splendidly beautiful as she did under the soft twilight heavens. Clinging to Cameron's arm, she was as tall as her lover, and her straight, supple figure lifted her lovely face, with its starry, love-glancing eyes, level with his own. At that hour she appealed to his heart in a more unselfish manner than ever before, and he was sure that he could love no other woman, as he loved Jessy — “and if she were only educated” — always the ‘if’ of some kind or other.

But their meeting at this time was too hurried to admit of any discussion but such as related to a future tryst, and just then none appeared so secret, and so possible, as the garden in which they were walking. It was sheltered from the road by a high brick wall, it was full of shady alleys, and lonely little retreats; and the place belonged to Cameron, he alone had the right to enter it. At any rate it was the best place until a better was found. They parted slowly and reluctantly, but thrilling with the hopes and promises on which they had built their longing love — indeed Jessy hardly felt the ground beneath her feet. She had put defiantly down every thought that could darken her happiness, and was so truly alive only in her memories of the past hour, that she started as if she had been struck when Annie Tulloch stopped her with the question:

“What are you doing in this quarter o’ the town, Jessy Laurie?”

“And what are *you* doing in this quarter o’ the town, Annie Tulloch? Answer me that now.”

“I just wandered up here looking for you. You weren’t at your own house, and as I passed Margot Macintyre’s I saw Jean Sutherland reading the Book to her; and I wondered where you were, and so started along here for the chance of meeting with you.”

“What are you wanting with me?”

“Little in particular; but oh Jessy dear, I was

just feared for that young Cameron. I know well that he will not let you be, and I thought if he was troubling you my company might be a sort of protection to you."

"Thank you for nothing, Annie Tulloch! I can take very good care of myself, and I think it a downright shame, I cannot go about honest business without your prying eyes following me."

"Say loving eyes, Jessy, for as sure as I live, I have not a thought that is not a kind one for you — and Rule."

"You can leave Rule out o' your thoughts, and as for young Cameron leave him out also — if you put me with him."

"I am glad to hear you say that much against him."

"Against him! Not I! I have not one word against him. Why should I? It is not a sin to love me, I hope."

"You are Rule's promised wife, and every one is saying Cameron and Miss Forfar are engaged."

"Every one lies; but that is none of our business."

"This is the road to Cameron House."

"Aye it is. Were you thinking I had been to see him? That would be a queer thing."

"I was fearing you might have walked this way for the chance of meeting him — you are thinking no

100 THE HEART OF JESSY LAURIE

wrong, Jessy, but just foolishness and daffing — only now, when Rule has left his honor with you —”

“O woman, you are an ill-thoughted soul! I’ll tell you where I have been — to Bella McAslins.”

“And why there? Surely you didn’t go for a charm — or the like o’ that?”

“I went for this;” and Jessy took the package of herbs out of her pocket and made Annie examine them. “I went for this, you jealous prying body — a few herbs to cure my Aunt’s sore feet. Think shame o’ yourself, Annie! You are always putting ill to all I say, or do, and it would be just as easy to put good.”

“I do think shame for misjudging you, Jessy; but you are that bonnie, and the men so taken up with you, that it is terrible hard for you to walk straight for them. I only want to help you, to have you feel I am your true friend, whenever you need a friend.”

“Thank you! I’m sure you are very kind and condescending to a poor girl like me with your friendship.”

“Don’t make fun o’ me, and of the true love I offer you, Jessy.”

“You don’t trust my true love for Rule, and I trust yours for myself just as little. You are aye watching me, so we will not walk together. I’ll go first, and you can walk behind, and then you can

take tent of every step, and of every man, woman or child, I speak to. If you'll believe me, I am going straight to Margot Macintyre's; and there is no lad hiding in any close or corner that I know of — not even Mr. Cameron."

"Oh Jessy, will you not understand me?"

"No. Your ways are not my ways. I never pry into your secrets, and I'll wager you have as many as other girls."

"I'll say no more, Jessy."

"You have said o'er much already;" and with proud swift steps Jessy hurried forward to her destination. As soon as she entered the house she saw Margot was cross at her delaying, and she took up the complaint first:

"Here I am at last!" she cried, "fairly tired out, and sore and sorry I ever went on any such errand."

"What's the matter wi' you? Did you see Bella?"

"Aye, I saw her — a sorrowful-looking, out-of-the-world creature, as ever any one saw. She was full of warnings and evil prophesying, and I was feared of her waxy face and far-seeing eyes. She made me creepy all over. And then as I was hurrying home, Annie Tulloch stopped me, and wanted to know what I was up that road for? And as good as charged me with going to Cameron House to see its master. She fairly insulted me with her questions

and suspicions, and Rule will have to make the unlucky, crabbit woman leave me alone, or I'll break every promise with Rule, and go away where nobody will ever find me."

"And who will you go wi'?"

There was a tone of suspicion even in the question, and Jessy answered defiantly: "I'll go with Jessy Laurie hersel' and no other, and that will be seen and heard tell of; for I'm tired out with being advised, and checked, and suspicioned. You may give a girl a bad name, and then make a scapegoat of her, and drive her into the wilderness, and I'll take myself out of the power of such friends as Annie Tulloch, and Bella McAslin."

And thus casting the ball of her anger between the two women, she passed the weary hour which her aunt's necessities demanded. Then how thankfully she shut the door of her room, and gave herself up to dream of Cameron; and to throw over all his neglect, his hasty little rudenesses, and his selfishness, the all-sufficing cloak of her adoring, abounding love.

CHAPTER SIX

CAUGHT IN A NET

It was now an open quarrel between Jessy and Annie, and for a short interval Jessy had two tasks that required all her woman wit to accomplish: one was to meet Cameron, and the other to prevent Annie finding it out. The one girl was ever covertly watching the other, and Annie was hard to deceive; she saw things clearly, because she did not try to see far. So to delude, to circumvent, to escape Annie's vigilance, or set her on a false scent, became to the lovers a kind of amusement which gave them a childish delight. Moreover, these trifling difficulties whetted Cameron's determination to win Jessy. It was really now the passion of the chase added to the selfish passion of desire. He had never yet put anything before his own wishes, so he gave himself up to the pursuit of the girl, and vowed he would "not be circumvented by either man, or woman."

And alas! in such cases, it seems as if an evil Destiny follows a woman. Every circumstance and every event plays into the hands of her pursuer. Thus it happened, that the very day on which the

long-looked-for letter from the Mistress of the Temperance Hotel in Glasgow came to hand, was the very day on which Margot Macintyre succumbed to the rheumatic fever she had for some time fought against. Then there was no question of Jessie leaving St. Andrews. Her place was naturally at the side of Rule's aunt, and indeed Margot begged her so pathetically not to leave her, that there seemed to be no other way possible. Besides, Margot added to the request the promise of a sum of money that would make the change to Glasgow much easier for Jessie's mother, and much pleasanter for herself.

Also, since the letter asking for this place had been written, a great change had taken place in Jessie's love affair with young Cameron. They were now on familiar terms, and Jessie was loath to leave him. For she realized at once that her instalment as nurse and manager in her Aunt's house gave to her lover opportunities which Annie would be powerless to interfere with, and of which Cameron soon made himself master. These were so evident and ample, that if Jessie's evil genius had been suffered to arrange them for the girl's destruction, it could hardly have planned circumstances better.

For Mistress Macintyre's house, like the grander houses on the same street opened at the back into a garden; and this garden was full of tall shrubs, and had a very easy and convenient outlet into an un-

tenanted alley beyond, and Cameron had the caution of a hunter after his prey. The man had not stalked the red deer in the mountains, without learning the value of that patience which can wait long, and watch long, for the favorable moment certain to come at last. And Jessy found in the necessary housework a hundred excuses for leaving her patient at intervals, and luring her hunter to her own ruin.

For such folly no girl ever wanted a plausible excuse, and Jessy constantly assured herself that she was only acting with proper prudence. "It is but right and wise-like," she said to her conscience, "that I should give both of the men their chance. For I'm no very sure myself which of the two I like best, and it would be a sore pity if I married Rule, and then found out that I had made a mistake, and that Logie was the right husband for me."

At this time she was playing no tricks with her intelligence, she really believed that Cameron intended to make her his wife. He had been cunning enough to always speak frankly to her of their marriage. He knew the fisher girls too well to even insinuate any less honorable relationship. Rule did not use the sacred name of "wife" with more frequency and fervor, than Logie. But there was one great difference in their presentment of the momentous ceremony — a difference which Jessy from utter want of outside experience did not estimate at its true value

— even if she estimated it at all. It was this fact. Rule looked forward to making Jessy his wife among her own people, she was to be surrounded and proudly attended by the men and women who had known them both all their lives. Cameron insisted that they must seek a home in a strange land, where the difference in their social station would not bring her chagrin, and humiliation, and himself family quarrels and estrangement.

And to Jessy, Cameron's reasoning appeared both wise and thoughtful. She knew that she would be very unwelcome to the proud Camerons, and she had no wish to thrust herself into their household. Her own home, even in a foreign land, would be better; especially as this home in her conversation about it always included her mother. And she was really in her own way as proud as Logie himself, and touchily ready to resent the slightest word that lighted the fishers in any respect. The natural independence of the men and women of the Sea was in her blood, it beat in her heart, and threw up her head, and sparkled in her eyes, and if Logie's arguments were ever less than just or complimentary to her people, it spoke very plainly from her lips. At such times he looked at her with a singular speculation — he felt unsure of the girl, lest through this little door of racial pride she might after all slip away from him.

Rule's first visit in his blue cloth uniform and gilt

buttons, increased in a marked manner this sentiment. It occurred while his Aunt was very ill, and fortunately while Logie was on a visit of inspection to his Glenlochart estate. Concerning this Glenlochart visit, Jessy had some not very flattering suspicions. She thought indeed, that Cameron was afraid of Rule, and for the time being Rule gained considerably in her estimation. She was very kind to him. She was honestly very proud of his appearance, and not insensible to the promising future he pictured. And she finally found the courage to tell him about the Temperance Hotel in Glasgow. She was sure she would be happy with his aunt's cousin, and she wanted to see something of the world and the ways of it.

“And forbye, Rule,”—she added with a charming smile, slipping her hand into his—“forbye, dear Rule, I'll be nearer to you. Every time you come into port you can see me, though it be but an hour; and that is my chief thought, Rule, and you must not deny me.”

He was not disposed to deny her. A pleasant ambition had crept into his loving heart. He saw before him every prospect of rising, both professionally and socially, and he wished Jessy to acquire some knowledge of the world he hoped eventually to take her into. His aunt's cousin was a respectable, kindly woman; he had seen her once, and he knew her hotel was well spoken of. It would be pleasant to know

108 THE HEART OF JESSY LAURIE

Jessy was in Glasgow, watching the reports of his ship, and waiting perhaps on the pier to see her cast anchor. And from this point it appeared rational and easy to look forward to their own home, with Jessy's mother sitting at the fireside with them.

During the two days of Rule's visit, Jessy was her very best self. Rule's open, serious, faithful affection moved the noblest feelings she had, and in spite of Margot's suffering they were happy days. Indeed Margot added to their satisfaction sensibly, for she was constant in her praises of Jessy, who she said had "been so patient and clever and good to her, that nothing she had to give, or to leave, would be enough to pay her."

The only thing that cast the slightest shadow over this visit was Jessy's complaints of Annie. Rule either heard them in silence, or excused them on the ground of Annie's sincere love for them both; and then when Jessy, with a shrug of impatience answered, "she didn't want Annie to love her, and she thought any good girl would stop loving another girl's promised husband," Rule was visibly pained. He said "Annie had been mother and sister to him all his life, that she had nursed him through typhoid fever, and inflammation of the lungs, and comforted and advised him in all his sorrows and difficulties. "If Annie Tulloch stopped loving me," he added with much earnestness, "I would feel, Jessy, as if there

was an open grave in my life. My darling, none can take your love, or your place. You are my wife, you are heart of my heart, soul of my soul, and there is no one to come near you. But you must always love your mother and I must always love Annie — she has been all of home and kin, I ever knew.”

And as these words were uttered, Annie entered the house and Rule rose smiling to greet her, and they all went together to speak to the sick woman. And then Jessy was mollified, for there was nothing talked of but her goodness, and her cleverness, and the wisdom of her nursing, and the cheerfulness of her temper. It was evident indeed that Margot Macintyre was as much infatuated with Jessy, as her nephew was.

Annie heard these praises with smiles, and an inward fear that she had been unjust to the girl. She helped Jessy to prepare the tea and waited on the patient, and afterwards put everything in place; and, as she did these things, managed to ask Jessy to “forgive her suspicions and lay neither word nor look up against her.” And Jessy was in a mood so important and so self-satisfied that she felt magnanimously ready to forgive. “Poor Annie!” she thought, “Poor Annie! She hasn’t a lover at all, and I have two.”

But Annie, though quite sincere in her regrets and in her trust in Jessy, under the influence of Rule and

Rule's aunt, was less sanguine when she was alone. In solitude the inner voices drop words that cannot be mistaken, and then the praises she had heard with faith became dashed with doubt. Then Jessy's smiling, self-satisfied face and modest deprecations did not inspire her with any confidence.

"She fooled us all very prettily," she thought, "and I was the worst-fooled of all. I told her I was sorry for doubting her, and I am not sorry. I told her I was wrong and I know that I am right. I told her I was sure she was true to Rule and I am sure she is false. Well then, what can I do? Just nothing at all. Rule would not believe her false if one from the dead came and told him so; and Jessy would not take counsel from me, not even if I showed her the letters young Cameron has written to three fisher girls before her."

For a few moments she pondered this question, and then she found its answer — not among Jessy's good, but among her evil qualities. As this solution came to her she rose and began to undress herself, for Jessy's ferocious egoisms needed no consideration — they were so certain, and so strong, that Annie felt if better reasons failed, they could be trusted. "She is that fond o' herself," she murmured, "that not even Logie Cameron can make her do aught that will be likely to give her a moment's

pain or trouble. She may fool the time away with Logie, but she will marry Rule — Poor Rule!”

But “poor Rule” went back to sea with a light heart, and as soon as he left St. Andrews, Cameron returned from Glenlochart. He made his usual signal to appraise Jessy of his presence, and she did not answer it. A little contempt was in her heart, she was sure Cameron had virtually run away from Rule; that he was afraid of him. But it was not altogether fear that took Cameron to Glenlochart, he was cautious rather than cowardly; for he knew that in any quarrel with Rule Macintyre, he would certainly, from a social point of view, get the worst of it. His own class would ask at once what right he had to place himself in any position of antagonism to Rule Macintyre, and they would condemn him for the position without regard to the subject of dispute. He really had acted wisely both for his own good name and Jessy’s; but how rarely will a woman thank a man for acting wisely? The dusty, dirty *éclat* of a public quarrel which shall put her name and beauty in a scornful notoriety for a brief hour or two, is to many a girl a more pardonable action than the silent retirement which appears to leave her without knight or lover.

So Jessy made no answer to Cameron’s first signal, and when it was repeated, she opened the door

partially, and said in a low voice: "Come in. You needn't be feared. Rule is away to sea."

The words hurt him, the tone in which they were uttered hurt him worse. For a moment he was deeply offended and his first instinct was to turn round and go away. Perhaps Jessy divined the intention for she said in an irritable whisper: "Come in quickly. The night is bitter cold. There is a good fire and you are needing it." Then rather sulkily he drew close to the bright blaze and after a moment's delay threw off the large cloak which he wore. He was in full evening dress beneath it, and Jessy looked at him with wonder and admiration.

"Is that what you call evening dress?" she asked.

"Yes. I am going out to dinner."

"Where to?"

"To Lord Monteith's."

"Oh! It is very suitable to you, but it isn't as becoming as Rule's uniform—he had a gold cord on his little blue cap, and gold buttons on his blue coat."

"Gilt buttons, probably."

"Gold no doubt; and he was looking fairly splendid."

"Perhaps I had better go."

"No, you may sit still. Margot is fast asleep, and like to be for an hour yet."

“What on earth is the matter with you, Jessy?”

“Nothing. I hope you were well taken care of at Glenlochart. I see you have won safely home again.”

The contemptuous toss of her head, the mockery on her face, the utter splendor of the girl's beauty in the firelight, fascinated Cameron anew. His anger was great, but his passion enormously greater:

“Jessy, you beautiful Vixen! You adorable termagant!” he said, taking both her hands in his, “I would rather have a scolding from you, than a kiss from any other woman in the world. Scold away! You are more beautiful than I ever before saw you. Come and sit beside me, and tell me what I have done to make you scorn me so tremendously.”

“Why did you run away?”

“For your good, and my own—mostly for yours.” Then he explained a number of things to Jessy she had not considered, and so reasoned and argued out his own case, from his own point of view, that the girl was first confused, then convinced, then sorry, and more than willing that he should kiss the scorn out of her face, and the love-light into it. After which he took out his watch, and said he must go. And Jessy longing to detain him, and not caring much what words attained that end, said:—

“I'm going to Glasgow to live, when Rule comes back again.”

114 THE HEART OF JESSY LAURIE

He looked at her in amazement, then in downright anger. "Jessy?" he asked, "what for are you telling me a thing like that?"

"Because it is the truth."

"Then you are going to marry the fisherman?"

"He isn't a fisherman now. He is third officer on a steamer, and like to go higher. Maybe, some day you may be crossing in his ship, and win at the dinner table to a knife and fork at his right hand, and be proud enough of the place. I know how folks talk about sitting at the Captain's side. I have read plenty of such havers."

During this forced tirade Cameron was trying to understand the girl's intent. Was she really going to desert him for Rule? Or was she still in a temper and trying to annoy him? He could make nothing of her. She was standing in the firelight with her head thrown proudly back, and the look of self-defence on her handsome face was almost fierce in its egoism. He decided that an air of injury was his best retort, and he answered:

"I shall never take a place at your husband's side, Jessy Laurie. After all your promises to me! It is incredible! Jessy, Jessy, how can you be so cruel? You have promised a thousand times to be my wife."

"I haven't yet said, I wouldn't be your wife, have I? You are just making trouble."

"I must go. I can bear this scene no longer;"

and without a caress, or a word of farewell, he passed quickly out of her sight.

Then she was utterly miserable. She had a sharp, momentary impulse to call him back, but her pride restrained her; and she sat down on her stool, and laid her arms on the chair Cameron had occupied, and her head on her arms, and sobbed without restraint.

“I’m not fit for the life I’m sent into;” she complained. “What for am I let love a man who despises me even while he loves me? I’m not fit for Logie, and he knows it and I know it; the love we have was born in sin and disobedience, and what the end of it will be I’m feared to think. And yet I love him! Oh, how I love him! The curls of his hair, the glint of his eyes, the touch of his hand, his words in my ears, his dear kisses on my lips! Logie, Logie, though my love for you spell ruin I must even love you still! Oh, ’tis a cruel road for God or deil to put a poor girl on — a cruel, cruel road! And Logie, he is eating and drinking, and anon he will be playing with the cards, and a sovereign gain or loss, will put me clean out of thought. Oh, *waly, waly!* Women have the cross of the world to bear. If I had only been a lad — a strong, up-hearted lad furling the sails and casting the nets, and treading on the hearts of the lasses! but I’m just a silly, loving woman living on kisses and a few soft words, and dying in despair if I cannot get them — and with

116 THE HEART OF JESSY LAURIE

all that so woman-foolish as to let my temper run away with my life. I'll just have to humble myself now — I'll have to bend, and smile, and coax, and get as a favor what I ought to have as a right. Always, all my life long I have been proud at the wrong moment; always by some bit of folly missed at last what had been long waiting for me — if I had had the sense to take it."

These complainings were not uttered consecutively as written. They were broken up into interjections, lamentations and regrets. They were emphasized by sobs, and wet with tears, and though the little kitchen in which she mourned was but an offset to the real house, and noise in it not likely to reach the room in which Margot lay ill, yet on this night some transference of the sorrow in it did trouble the sick woman. She rang the little bell at her side impatiently, and when Jessy answered the summons said,

"There's somebody crying; who is it?"

"Just myself."

"And what for are you crying? You ought to be shamed of yourself. If you were lying here, with every inch of you aching, or —"

"You needn't bring out your instances, Aunt. I'm not caring for what other people are suffering. It's Jessy Laurie I'm fretting for."

"Jessy Laurie has much cause for thankfulness for all the good things she has."

“I’m not believing that nonsense any longer. I want to have some pleasure. I want to have fine dress and nothing to do but amuse myself. I want to have a chance to show my beauty and enjoy my youth, and I’m just a poor fisher girl with no outlet of any kind, and no dress and no siller, and little thought of me, and I’m not thinking my life worth having.”

“There now, you’ve said more than any good girl, in her senses, ought even to think. Count your blessings, and then you’ll maybe count your life worth having. Is your mother out of your list? And Rule? And myself? Suppose you had been as ugly as Robina Tamson — or had a short leg and a squint, like Agnes Hyslop.”

“You are just supposing nonsense, Aunt. Will you have a cup of gruel now?”

“Rule’s good fortune, is your good fortune. You may put that down in your list.”

“There’s many a slip between the cup and the lip.”

“And if you are so wicked as to be thinking o’ slips that might come between you and Rule you deserve them — that’s all. And as for you having no outlet that’s another of your lies! You are going to Glasgow as soon as I can move myself, and I have promised you new clothes — all that are necessary.”

“I know! I know! I ought to have my mouth in the dust, thanking all and sundry for my mercies.

Well, then, to-night I'm not a bit thankful, and if I was asked what would make me thankful, I could give you a list that would open your eyes. But I've had my cry out and I'm thankful you didn't call me before I was through with it. Let me give you your gruel, and shake your pillows, and don't fash your head about me. There's none but God could give me the desire of my heart, and I'm sure He will never do it."

"Tut, tut, you're letting your temper give lying the bit and your tongue run away with your sense."

"There's no use trying to argue with you, Aunt."

"No, for you are aye in the wrong. But I'll tell you one thing, Jessy Laurie, if you want to be a miserable lass, you have only to start thinking of yourself—what you want—what you like—what you ought to have—what you don't have—what people think of you—and what they ought to think of you. I'll warrant you a good cry any time over such unreasonable thoughts. You are an ungrateful cutty, a perfectly ungrateful cutty!"

During this speech, which Margot delivered with increasing anger, Jessy had time to consider herself, and to bring to her aid those small diplomacies which she knew would restore peace. "Aunt Margot," she replied, "My giving way is partly your fault, though God knows you cannot help it; but I have been watching you suffer day in and night out, and

though you bore all with a just wonderful patience I had to give way a bit. If you knew it the house is fairly full of your pain, and the sense of it got into my heart someway and I thought what poor helpless mortals we were and a fear come o'er me lest I too might have to go through such a valley of the Shadow of Death, and between the pity of the pain and the fear of it, I lost the grip o' myself and just took a sobbing fit. I ought to be ashamed of my selfishness, and I hope you'll forgive me. I might have learned a lesson from your extraordinary patience, but as you say, I'm a foolish, ungrateful cutty."

"Well, well, you are as God made you — maybe a thought worse — but you are young and have a childish heart in you. It is not to be told what I suffer and I have no doubt the sense o' the misery is all through the house. I may have been extraordinary patient — I think I have — but it is of His Help and His Grace, and you must just try and be patient with your own end o' the trouble. I shall take care you get some kind o' recompense; and my promise is in my say-so, Jessy — there's no one to interfere with it. For thank God, ever since my husband died I have kept the hank in my own hand; and I'm a thrifty woman, you know that. Now give me my gruel and shake up the pillows. I'm glad the stramash is over."

“ We shall both of us feel better of it.”

“ I don’t doubt it. I was feeling all day long, that dominion for a time, had been given to the Pow-ers o’ contrariness. The room is clearer now. When there’s bad temper inside, it takes a bit worse temper to drive it out. I learned that when I was in the condition of a married woman, for whiles Luke Macintyre would come home glum and sulky, and then I would fly into a tantrum till he found his good temper. Aye, aye, Jessy, it takes a little o’ the deil inside the house, to keep the deil outside: — whiles — now and then — you mustn’t give him too large a commission — or — you know what will happen.”

Then Jessy laughed merrily, and kissed her Aunt and told her “ she was the bravest woman in Scotland, and that her cheerfulness was just beyond belief, and ought to be made a sermon and an example of — that itself and no less.”

And Margot sighed quite happily, and said — “ if the Dominie was just made aware of how well I have borne the dispensation, he would feel there was a lesson in it for some folks both he and I know — people aye girning over a headache, or a sniff o’ cold or just a bealing finger like old Jennie Ballantyne — but I’m not wanting the praise o’ mortals!” she added piously; though Jessy’s assurance, “ that the Dominie ought to know of her suffering and patience, and that she herself would speak of it,” certainly gave her a

sense of justifiable compensation for what she had gone through.

Satisfactory as this conversation was in one respect, Jessie was glad to escape from it. She was haunted by uncertain presentiments, lest by her irreparable show of temper, she had ruined her happiness. She thought Cameron had taken offence very willingly. He went away without the caress he had always before seemed so eager to have — there were other little things that her loving heart reminded her of — for a loving heart is a very craving, suffering thing and seldom sparing in reproaches. It reminded Jessie, that her worst wounds had been inflicted by her own hands. “You are yourself to blame,” it kept reiterating, until the girl grew angry and audibly answered its inaudible complaints.

“Keep your peace,” she said in her broadest Doric. “I’m not heeding ye. If I did kindle the fire I can thole the smoke.” And with this assertion of her ability to bear the grief she had summoned, she added — “I’m away to sleep anyway. It is chapping twelve o’clock, and I won’t worry for Logie Cameron or any other body.”

And to sleep she went, leaving the tumult of the disconsolate evening and the inarticulate murmurs of her other self to die away unheeded. But not for her neglect were they silenced. They hovered round the place of sleep, and filled the second sight of dreams

with visions, that made her soul fear and ache through all its senses.

Three days of utter weariness followed. She was forced to bear the suffering of a stifled, unimpassioned grief, and her soul sunk back upon itself and refused all affection. Wanting Logie's love she cared for no other, and on the fourth miserable morning she resolved to humble herself and write to him. She knew it was a step in the wrong direction, but she was impatient of her misery and determined to end it. But she resolved to make the letter as short as possible, for if he wanted to see her, he would come as gladly for one word, as a thousand. Besides writing was not a very easy matter to her, she always got confused about the capitals and the double letters in a word, and even the following message had to be written twice, because in her first impulsive copy she wrote affectionately with one 'f' and gave the word the capital letter that seemed necessary to explain her sincerity. However she was aware of her error as soon as committed, and the second effort was a creditably perfect request —

DEAR LOGIE: I am very sorry. Forgive me.

Yours affectionately,

JESSY.

Then she went to the Post Office with her note, but just as she was going to drop it into the box a voice

at her side said, "I'll take it for you, Miss," and looking up she saw Cameron's valet. His eyes were on the address and he held out his hand politely with the request. It seemed to Jessy a very providence. She smiled frankly, and with a few words of thanks put the little letter that had cost her such sorrowful thought into Hector's charge. The man's whole attitude had been one of extreme respect, and Jessy was flattered by it because she knew that servants generally reflected the feelings of their masters. Until the evening came she would have to wait, but somehow the burden was lifted. She braided her hair, and put clean crimped ruffles in her waist, and watched the hours away with what hope and patience she could evoke from Cameron's past affection for her.

And she never knew that when Hector spoke to her, he had in his hand a letter Cameron had just written — a letter full of love and regrets, begging her to see him a few moments that night. Hector however had had a large experience in love affairs, and the moment he saw Jessy with the letter in her hand, he knew it was for his master and that his Master's letter would probably be better of reconsideration. He laid both before him without a word, and Cameron read and understood.

"Hector," he said, "you have done a very wise thing. You have fully earned this"—and he pushed towards the man a piece of gold—"for you have

given me the whip hand of a difficult circumstance.”

For an hour afterwards Cameron neither moved nor spoke. With the passing of the sovereign the devil had entered into the young man's thoughts. For the germ of every crime is the reflection whether it be possible. Hitherto he had shirked, or put angrily down any consummation of his desires which must ruin the woman he loved. He had preferred simply to drift on a tide of passion having many of the elements of pleasure necessary to his ideal love affair — secrecy, rivalry, a pursuit full of little difficulties, and little triumphs; and the fact that he had never been quite sure of Jessy. She had always evaded any conversation tending to bring things to a climax. And though he believed he might have finally to give her up he had always told himself there was no need to rob the present. By the time the break was forced upon them, both might perhaps be a little weary of the liaison; and also there were other women, quite as handsome, quite as tantalizing, and probably more compliant and suitable.

But Jessy's little message had opened a door into his subconscious self. It said to him a thousand things not written down. He saw through the few pitiful words as through a looking glass the girl's love and sorrow and utter dependence on him for happiness. She had given herself away through the pure compulsion of her great love. He had not

asked her for this surrender. It had been offered him. Should he not take it? Then some interior councillor answered him in a couplet from one of his school recitations: —

“Lovely Thais sits beside thee,
Take the good the gods provide thee.”

And just as soon as he had accepted provisionally the unworthy suggestion, he blamed Jessy for his decision. And she was to blame. She had taken a step towards Cameron, that Cameron ought to have taken towards her. She had reversed a natural position. Instead of a mistress she had become a suppliant. She had already begun to fall from her proper position. Her letter was a capitulation. To Cameron it meant the earnest of full surrender. And then, as soon as he believed the crime possible, he began to lay plans for its accomplishment.

He burnt the letter he had written to Jessy and with it burnt all reluctances. He assured himself that in love and war every thing was lawful. The end he now had in view was the winning of Jessy. He was determined to compass that end by any means that were possible to him. It was Jessy's province to protect, and defend herself. This position was clear to him, and he resolved to make it clear to Jessy.

But that night he said nothing to the girl but words of passionate affection. She was wonderfully

beautiful, and as he looked at her he felt that he could not for any consideration abandon a creature so bewitching and already half-won. All pity for the young, lovely life he was intending to crumble as added spice to his own life, was put sternly down; for love that is not pure love, is always cruel — it longs to hurt the thing it plays with, as a cat enjoys the torment of the mouse in its claws.

Having raised the infatuated girl into a condition of absolute trust in his love, he suddenly asked, "Why are you going to Glasgow, Jessy, if you are not to be married?"

"*If Logie!*"

"*As* you are not going to marry, what takes you to Glasgow?"

"I told you I would never go through the town with the fish again, but I be to do something to earn a living for myself and my mother. Mother is often sick lately, and if it wasn't for the siller Margot is giving me, I should be home with her now. But Margot has a cousin in Glasgow, mistress of The Temperance Hotel, and she wrote to her about me, and I am going there. I'll wait on the table, and the like of that."

"Jessy Laurie! I am astonished. What are you talking about? Don't you know if you put yourself in a position of that kind, you make it out of my power to marry you?"

“How is that, Logie? I am doing no more than other good girls have done.”

“You are fisher born and bred. You have your own traditions and methods of life. You stand a good deal above the land laborers of all kinds. In your way you are as respectable a class as any class in St. Andrews. A man might marry an educated fisher girl, and he would marry as independent a bit of beauty and freedom as lives. It would be at least a picturesque *mésalliance*, and his class would soon forgive him. But a servant girl! Waiting on the dinner table of a Glasgow Temperance Hotel! It is an impossible thing, Jessy! You are clever enough to see that.”

“And whatever will I do, Logie?”

“Would you go to school, Jessy, if I paid all expenses?”

“I’ll not take a bawbee from you till I am your wife — not a bawbee. And I am not caring for book learning. I want to see the world. I want to see how ladies dress, and move about, and to get the trick of their talking. I want to be more like you, Logie.”

“And do you think the people who go to this Temperance Hotel will be like my people? They are further away than yourself, Jessy — but,” and his face suddenly lighted, for the way he wanted was open to him — it only needed a little management.

“But what, Logie?”

"I know a lady in Glasgow who will be glad to have you with her. She is the sister of a tutor I had for many years, an elegant little woman though much of an invalid. Her name is Rose Finlay. I will go and see her, for I have to go to Edinburgh this week."

"O dear! What for, Logie?"

"To give orders about the opening of our house there. We always go to Edinburgh before the New Year."

"How long will you be away?"

"About a week."

"How will I win through a week wanting you?"

"I shall be wanting you, Jessy, but I shall also be arranging everything for a happy winter for us."

"I'm feared this fine lady won't have me."

"I am sure she will. She will do anything I desire. What is the name of this cousin? And where is this Temperance Hotel?"

"Margot's cousin? Her name is Mistress Gilhaize. The Hotel is 207 Renwick Street. But I'm feared for what Margot, and mother, and others will say. You'll not manage it, Logie?"

"I will. Be sure of that. I want you in Glasgow. I can run down there two or three times a week to see you. Say nothing to any one. In a few days there will be letters from Miss Finlay, and from Mistress Gilhaize, and that will take all trouble out

of your hands. And do be happy meanwhile, Jessy. I like to see you smiling. We must have no more quarrels."

"No more, Logie."

"And you will do all I want you to do."

"Maybe —"

"I know best, Jessy."

"Well, well Logie, you'll have your way. I have no heart to go against you."

Nor had she. The sea is not fuller of water, than the heart of Jessy Laurie was at that hour full of love, and forgiveness, and absolute trust. And oh, what infinite treasures must love possess, that it can squander them so lavishly upon the false and the unworthy!

CHAPTER SEVEN

JESSY GOES TO GLASGOW

The following week brought two letters to St. Andrews which vitally concerned the Lauries. One of these was from Mrs. Gilhaize to Mrs. Macintyre, and ran as follows:—

“MY DEAR COUSIN MARGOT:

“When the time went so far by, for Jessy to come to me, I was much put out, and swithering in my mind whatever I could do with the lassie in the dead of the winter; but yesterday comes Miss Rose Finlay and asks, if I will give up Jessy. She wants to hire her as a companion to hersel’. And as the place is far better than I could offer, and I got the matter of a couple of pounds for ‘courtesy siller’ in giving up my contract, it was a kind of godsend all round. However, I made proper inquiries about the lady, and she is one of the most respectable members of Doctor Robertson’s Kirk. I saw the Doctor mysel’, and he was a trifle disturbed at my thinking any queries necessary about a lady member o’ his Kirk. He said more good things of her than I would dare to, not knowing the creature, but I am sure you may hold to the Doctor’s word. Anyway you could let Rule take her to Miss Finlay’s, and if he did not think well o’ the place and the lady, he could bring her to me till something turned up.

“To my thinking there was a kind of ordering in the matter from *Them* that see further than ourselves, for when I asked Miss Finlay how she came to know of Jessy’s purpose, she told

me Ann Coggin, a lass I had just sent away — having no work for her — had been hired by her; and she said Ann was complaining of being sent away because of Jessy Laurie coming in her place. And then she repeated some of my havers about Jessy's beauty and Miss Finlay remembered seeing the picture the London artist made of Jessy, and so nothing would do her but getting the lassie for a companion. She is a lonely old maid, not rich and not poor, and it is little she wants and ready to pay far more than I could dream of paying; so I hope you'll be satisfied, both you and the Lauries, and not forget that I had the first claim on Jessy but gave it up for the lassie's good. I hope you are quite well now, and remain your loving cousin,

JEAN GILHAIZE.

“Gave Jessy up for the lassie's good! mair like for the two pounds for her own good,” muttered Margot. “However all this sounds likely and no doubt there's some corn in the chaff. We shall see. Jessy will doubtless have her own communication, and if I don't watch her she will be taking all the honor and glory of the circumstance to hersel' and that weary picture of her. I'll not suffer that. It was myself set that wheel birring. Dear me! Some threads so easily spin themselves further, and this thread seems to have spun itself clean beyond my ordering.”

In the afternoon, as Margot expected, Jessy and her mother came to her with Miss Finlay's letter. They looked very important, and it was hard work for Jessy to allow her mother to open the subject. For Janet was inclined to give it all the consequence

132 THE HEART OF JESSY LAURIE

possible, and to her it appeared a waste of wonder and surprise, to take out the letter at once.

“ We had great news this morning, Margot, I may say wonderful news, extraordinary news, and I said to Jessy we must just go to Margot with the letter.”

“ What letter? Anything about Rule? Has Rule won another step up? ”

“ No, no! It is Jessy this time. I was —”

“ Aunt Margot,” interrupted Jessy, “ I have had a letter from a rich Glasgow lady, and she saw the picture painted of me and she just fell in love with the face o’ it. And when she heard tell I was going to your cousin, she drove down there in her carriage and put gold in Mrs. Gilhaize’s hand to give me up to her.”

“ Was the creature crazy? How much gold? ”

“ I’m not knowing. It would be ten or twenty pounds no doubt, for she is offering me thirty shillings a week. Think o’ that!”

“ What for? How will you earn the half o’ that? ”

“ I am to read aloud to her — papers and books — and give orders for her — and go with her to drive — and to shop — and sit by her in Kirk — and such things as that. And she calls me three times in the letter *Miss Laurie*, *Miss Laurie* mind you, no Jessy about it; and besides, she says nothing menial will be asked of me. Not likely, for I am to sit at

her own table, and have my own room and all because of the picture, aunt! Fegs! but it was a lucky picture I'm thinking. I have been sair kept down in the world by scant and want and poverty, but now! *Now!*"

"Now, everything seems brought to a head like a wish. I'm real glad I wrote to Cousin Gilhaize; for I'm hearing from her, and I find it was through her this Miss Finlay heard o' you. And Janet, you'll be glad to know that Cousin Gilhaize went to see the lady's minister, and got a very good character of her — she's quite respectable and a member o' Doctor Robertson's Kirk — that of itself is a clean bill of moral health for her. I'm hearing often that Doctor Robertson is a minister who not only feeds his flock but also herds them well, knows where they live, and how they live, and all the rest o' the contingencies. So I fancy Jessy will be well holden in."

"Well Margot," answered Janet, "putting the matter at what we may call its broadest, entering Miss Finlay's house, will be to Jessy like entering a superior state of existence; and we must do our best to give her what advantage of dress we can."

"Of course Miss Laurie must look genteel, going among the quality. I shall see to that. I promised her clothes fitting. I'm not needing to repeat the promise."

Then she entered willingly enough into the par-

ticulars and necessities of the clothing proper, and told Jessy to get the best cloth and the best dress-maker in St. Andrews. And the three women had a cup of tea together, over which they settled all the preliminaries of Jessy's change of life over it. And Margot, who was much the wisest of the three, did her best to check the childlike delight and pride of the mother and daughter. She knew it would give offence, she was sure that no one would believe the half of what Jessy asserted.

"They are just two foolish babes;" she commented, as she watched them going away together full of laughter and excitement, "just two foolish babes. Both o' them perfectly ridic'us. I could hardly keep my composure watching them."

And Jessy had also her private little laugh. She knew that it was neither Mrs. Gilhaize, nor the picture of herself, that had won her the situation of companion to Miss Rose Finlay. In some way she was sure it was Cameron's doing and because of this surety her happiness was twofold.

For the first time in her life she had ten pounds to spend on herself. Margot had given her eight pounds for a dress and cloak and hat, and her mother added two pounds for shoes and gloves and the like. The girl was radiant with hope and joy, and she had naturally a very proper understanding of the fitness of attire. Besides, had she not the memory of Lily

Forfar's trig, blue cloth dress, and light grey hat to guide her? How she had longed for a suit like it, and now she had her wish, even to the grey gloves and cloth boots that she suspected were necessary.

In these days her mother looked at her with wonder. She began to understand how really beautiful her daughter was. Never before had she seen her so brilliant, so good natured, so joyous and obliging. The little cottage was full of happiness and as it happened the weather was wonderfully clear and sunshiny.

"You are just a cordial of gladness, Jessy," said her mother one evening as they sat together. "I'll find it hard, and harder to part with you. You are bonnier and sweeter than ever before."

"And why, mother? When you have plenty of money it is gey easy to be sweet and bonnie. It's the want o' money makes folk cross. A few bits of gold are fair salvation — whiles."

"That isn't what The Book tells us."

"My new dress is a perfect fit. Miss Meredith said I was looking like the Queen of Sheba in it."

"Havers! She never saw the Queen o' Sheba, nor a picture o' her. If she had wanted an example, she might have chosen Queen Victoria, though I'm thinking that would be high treason o' a certain kind."

Jessy laughed. "I'm not wanting to be like her

Majesty ;" she said. " I'm a deal bonnier than Queen Victoria."

" Think shame o' yourself, Jessy Laurie! "

" I'm just joking, Mother."

" Well then, joke about lawful folk. Queen Victoria is not a lawful subject for joking and folly — not to speak o' lying — for there's nobody like her! She is one by hersel', God bless Her! "

" Preserve us, Mother! What are you sploring about? One would think I had broken the Third Commandment to shivereens."

" You come pretty nigh doing it. Let dignities alone — we are simple fisher folk."

A sharp knock at the door interrupted this conversation. Jessy rose quickly and opened it. A man was standing there, and he asked if they could " tell him what time the tide was full, or if it was yet safe to walk round the point? "

Jessy appealed to her mother, and she turned to look at the clock. " I would not try that road to-night," she answered, " it is a neap tide now, and the time is bare enough."

" Thank you, mistress! " he said, " and good night! " His mission was accomplished, for while Janet's face was lifted to the clock, he had put into Jessy's hand the letter with which he had been sent. Of course it was from Cameron. He said he was " distracted to see her, but could think of no place

but Blair Hill House, now that Margot was well, for their meeting. So he would be waiting at the gate for her from seven to eight the following night and her wit must find a way to meet him there."

And when does a woman's wit fail her when set on such a search? In a very short time Jessy had all arranged. Indeed her new engagements with her dressmaker, milliner, staymaker and shoemaker, gave her every opportunity for slipping into these occupations a tryst with her lover. Returning from Miss Meredith at dinner-time the next day, she affected some anger. "I have often heard tell," she said, "o' the weariness of waiting on a dressmaker. I have been five times to Agnes Meredith's and she promised my dress sure, by six o'clock to-night, and now she wants me to come at six, and let her fit the trimmings on the waist and sleeves o' it. It's a shame, Mother!"

"Well, you see what rich folk have to put up with. They are at the beck and say-so of their hair dressers, and milliners, and the like — no time to call their own — I would think it a mortal sin to waste my life 'getting fit on' as they call it."

"If she would have let me come in the afternoon, it might not have been so out-o-the-way; but I fancy Rule may get here to-night."

"Have you heard from him?"

"He was due in Glasgow yesterday, so he might

be here to-night. I am not saying he will be; there are others beside himself to ask."

"To be sure. If he comes, I can send him to Agnes Meredith's for you."

"He might miss me, for I be to go about my new stays again. I was there this morning, and they didn't fit; so I must go again to-night:— for there's no time to lose now. Rule may be here any hour, and I want him to convoy me to Glasgow. It will be a kind of set-up for me with Miss Finlay, to come with a man as handsome as Rule; and then the uniform! Women are furious fond o' uniforms."

"Rule is never here till eight o'clock."

"And I'll be home long before that. We will have an early cup of tea, and then I'll go and hurry up the trifling, lazy hizzies."

So Jessy had no difficulty in meeting her lover. She reached the fateful gate before seven, but Cameron was there, and as soon as she touched its threshold, he drew her swiftly within its shelter. With tender words and caresses he led her to the house, the door of which yielded to his touch; and in a moment they were in a small room warm with fire, and bright with candlelight. There were a couple of chairs and a table on a large rug before the hearth, and he seated Jessy and then said:

"I could not keep you in the cold, sweet girl, and so I made this little room comfortable for our talk,

for I have a deal to say to you, and I shall not see you again till we meet in Glasgow."

"The lights will be noticed, Logie, and people will be wondering."

"Why should they wonder? The house is mine. I can use it, if I choose. Besides, no light can be seen. I have taken care of that—all is right, Jessy."

"So then, it was you spoke to Miss Finlay for me."

"Yes it was me. She is an old friend of mine, her brother was my tutor, and she was quite delighted to have you with her. And she understands, as you must now, that my name is never to be mentioned between you; and that I shall never be seen at her house. I have my reasons for this arrangement, Jessy, and you must trust them a little while. She is to give you every Wednesday and Saturday afternoon from three o'clock till you choose to return. I told her sometimes you would go to the theatre with a friend, and might be late. But if so, she will ask no questions, and you are not to make any explanations. She was told on these days you would visit Mrs. Gilhaize, and she said 'that was correct, and she had no objection.'"

"But when shall I see you, Logie?"

"Every Wednesday and Saturday that I can possibly get to you. I shall be waiting for you always at three o'clock in the druggist's shop close to Miss

Finlay's residence. When we meet in Glasgow we may make better plans, but these will do in the mean time. When are you going darling?"

"As soon as Rule comes. He will take me back with him."

Cameron for some reason seemed pleased with this design, and after a little more conversation about Miss Finlay, he suddenly grew impatient of the whole affair. "I wearied day and night for you in Edinburgh," he said.

"I'm not believing that, Logie. You never wrote me one letter."

"See what I brought you — you loveliest woman on earth!" and he took from his pocket a little box, and put it in her hand. It contained the desire and envy of her heart — a ring set with rubies and diamonds.

"O Logie!" she cried in wondering delight. "O Logie! I have wanted it all my life;" and she kissed it passionately.

"Jessy, Jessy, what are you wasting kisses on stones for? Give them to the one who loves you best in the world; and see here little Sweet-Tooth" — and he pushed towards her confections of fruit, and the "sweeties" of sugar and caraway she so dearly loved; and then with shining eyes and words trembling with love, he watched her eat, and kissed her hands and her mouth, and filled the girl's heart and memory with

the low, caressing, flattering words that made her believe, there had never been on earth a lover so warm and true and handsome.

“ And whatever will I do with my bonnie ring? ” she asked when the parting moment came. “ I dare not wear it — there will be too many questions. ”

“ I thought of that, Jessy ” — and he took a piece of narrow ribbon from his pocket, threaded the ring on it, and tied it round her neck. “ Very soon, ” he said with a kiss, “ very soon, you will dare to wear it in every one’s sight, my own dear Love! ”

And the girl believed him. Why should she doubt? She had no experience, and no knowledge of Cameron’s life, and in her own life and among her own people such words were worth all they claimed. It had vexed her that Rule had used them so sparingly, for she did not consider that Truth is a thing of “ yea ” and “ nay, ” made no stronger by oaths and asseverations, and no weaker by the want of them.

So they parted, and the next day Rule came. And that afternoon Jessy had the greatest triumph of her life. For her new suit having come home, she dressed herself from head to foot in it, and with Rule at her side went into the city to call upon Aunt Margot Macintyre. And as they were coming down South Street, the observed of all observers, who should they meet but Mrs. Grahame the Minister’s wife? And she stopped and chatted full five minutes with them,

142 THE HEART OF JESSY LAURIE

wishing Jessy all sorts of happiness, and Rule all kinds of success. And as she spoke she took from a nosegay in her hand, a branch of white fuchsia and some heliotrope, and fastened them on Jessy's breast.

"And I was like to take wings to mysel'," said Jessy as she delightedly told the incident to the proud mother—"there was Mysie Baird, and the both o' the McNab girls, and Bella Tavish wi' her fish basket and old Pete Robinson, all o' them watching us and just gasping with envy and wonderment. And in the very nick o' time — while Mrs. Grahame was pinning the flowers on my breast — who should come by, but Deacon Wabb. Deacon Wabb the very sel' of him! And I looked him straight in the eyes, and kind o' nodded to him careless-like as if he was a nobody. And he had to smile and bow to the Minister's wife, and I took it to mysel', and nodded again very condescending. I wish you could have seen how he glowered at me! But he said nothing. Rule stood at my side. And Mother the way Rule lifted his cap, and bowed to the lady, was a sight in itself — it was the very height of fine manners, and where Rule learned the like I can't tell."

"Fine manners come with fine clothes," said Mrs. Laurie parenthetically.

"I know better, Mother. I have come across women and men likewise, dressed up to the nines, and no more manners with them than there is with a bull's

horns — but Rule had the real touch and the real bend, and I was proud o' him."

"My dear lassie, you must not praise me o'er much."

"Rule, I was fairly delighted with you. As for my dress, Mother, I saw nothing to equal it. Poor Mysie Baird! I think she'll have a cry o'er it, when she gets home; and I wish Annie Tulloch would come in, I want to see what fault she'll pick out for it."

This incident though commonplace enough to the reader of to-day, was a very great event to the fisher girl of more than half a century ago. It served for conversation and exultation all the evening, and really became, as Jessy said it would, the talk of the town — that is, of the small community which constituted the Lauries' town. Mysie Baird ran in to tell Margot Macintyre, and Margot soon had half a dozen cronies talking it over with her; and the McNabs carried the story among their kin. Bella Tavish sold her fish to it and old Pete Robinson was not too old to make it the occasion for dropping into the kitchen of the public house he favored and sipping a glass or two of toddy to the gossip about it.

The influence of the story was, however, what Mrs. Grahame designed it to be, kindly and good. People generally revised their opinion of Jessy Laurie and were anxious to show their change of sentiment, so that the next day — the last day of Jessy's home life

— was rendered almost uncomfortable by the number of callers, most of them bringing some little farewell gift to Jessy. And though the very earliest train was taken, the going away was, as Bella Tavish said, “more like a wedding than a simple departure”— Jessy’s old companions were mostly at the station, and some brought flowers, and some cakes and at the last sent her off with the waving of handkerchiefs and a medley of hopes and good wishes.

Jessy’s first night in Glasgow was spent with Mrs. Gilhaize. She was weary with the unaccustomed fatigue of travel, and it was thought best that she should rest and refresh herself before her interview with Miss Finlay. And as Rule had cut his visit to St. Andrews in order to save a day of his leave for this very purpose, there was no hesitation in adopting this plan.

So about noon the next day Rule called to take her to her new home. They found it at the upper end of Great George Street, not very far from the then aristocratic quarter of Blytheswood Square. Miss Finlay was at home and received them with much effusiveness; a manner at first quite disconcerting to Rule. Once a very pretty woman she was now thin and faded, with the affected manners of a beauty who had gone simpering through life, receiving compliments and paying them. Her dress was an expression of her character; it was of some limp, pink ma-

terial and adorned with a great deal of falling lace, and bows and ends of ribbons. She looked with a kind of wonder at Jessy, at her firm, vivid beauty, and trig handsome dress, and then turned to Rule. He took her facile fancy captive at once. She insisted on having him eat lunch with them, and during the meal a sort of impromptu friendship sprang up, for it was impossible to put aside without acknowledgment in kind Miss Finlay's smiling familiarity. Rule took it with the large good nature of a man pleased with a child's advances; Jessy, in her ignorance, accepted all as the proper accessories of the situation.

After lunch Miss Finlay played and sang some Scotch songs, and the subject of music having been introduced, Rule spoke of the Negro melodies just then coming into recognition in Scotland, and Miss Finlay said—"she had read about them," and "Oh how I long to hear them!" she added—"Is it really true that black men sing them? Do you know Mr. Macintyre I have never seen a black man. Are they very dreadful looking?"

Then nothing remained but that Rule should offer to take the ladies to that evening's concert. Jessy's eyes sparkled her delight, and Miss Finlay clapped her hands like a little girl, as she cried out in an affected impatience—"Oh Mr. Macintyre do go at once and get the tickets. Where is the performance?"

“ At Glover’s theatre.”

“ Then get tickets for the pit. Miss Laurie will hardly be prepared with a full dress toilet ”— and turning to Jessy, she said in a low voice,

“ Have you white kid gloves with you? ” Jessy shook her head. “ Then what size, dear? ” Again Jessy shook her head. “ Give me one of the gloves you were wearing. ” This request was readily granted and Miss Finlay went close to Rule, and in a confidential tone said —“ Here is one of Miss Laurie’s gloves. Go into Campbell’s and get her a pair of white kid the same size. ” And Rule smiled intelligently and promised to do so, though it was certainly the first time in his life he had ever been deputed to buy anything of the kind. “ Oh Mr. Macintyre ”— Rule was at the parlor door but he turned and held it open in his hand —“ Mr. Macintyre, don’t forget to bring us each a little bouquet — violets, or something very modest you know. ” Rule smiled his acceptance of this further order and then disappeared, and Miss Finlay turned to Jessy:—

“ You sweet, lovely girl; ” she said enthusiastically. “ I am sure we are going to be dear, dear friends and companions. Come, and I will show you your room. It is near my own, and I think you will say it is very comfortable. Then you shall help me to look over my frocks, and choose one for to-night; and I will lend you an opera cloak. Fortunately I have several. ”

“An opera cloak!” said Jessy, quite at sea about Miss Finlay’s meaning.

“Yes my dear, a little white wrap. I have just the thing for you — white cloth and white satin and marabout feathers — you will look heavenly sweet in it; minè will be pink. Pink is my color. I am so blonde, so very blonde; but many men — gentlemen I mean — admire blonde women.”

So twittering and chatting and dressing herself Miss Finlay kept Jessy at her side, until Rule returned with the tickets and flowers and Jessy’s gloves.

It was a clear starlight night, just pleasantly cold, and the walk down Great George Street to Glover’s old theatre was one Jessy never forgot. How big and reliable was Rule! How bright and busy were the streets! And then the theatre itself! She had never dreamed of entering one — she had an idea it was not Christian to do so. A curiously pleasant sense of doing something not right excited her, and she pressed Rule’s arm closer for a sense of companionship in the sin. Then the wonderful doors opened, and there was the crowd and the stage with its semi-circle of dusky singers, and the orchestra just breathing out in delicious melody — “*Way Down Upon The Swanee River, Far, Far Away.*” Jessy’s heart thrilled, and her eyes shone like stars. She trembled through all her being. She felt all the throes of a momentary travail, until with a great sigh she put

her hand in Rule's hand. She had been born again, born into a world of which she had never even dreamed.

It was a miraculous two hours — the pathos, the comedy, the exquisite dancing, the sound of the mixed instruments, the electrical crowd, the beautifully dressed women in the boxes, the walk home under the late moon, the delicious emotions which made them all a little silent formed for Jessy an experience she could never forget, and never hope to duplicate in its deepest and freshest feeling.

They had a little supper with Miss Finlay afterwards, and then Rule bid his love a happy good-bye. He told her he would write to her mother before he slept. "I want her to know," he said, "I want her to know, my dear one, what a good home you have found." And Jessy with the intoxicating pleasures of the evening lingering in her face, lifted it to meet his shining eyes and loving lips.

"Remember me, Jessy — always remember me!" he said softly.

"I shall never forget you, Rule, never;" she whispered; and at that hour she believed her promise.

CHAPTER EIGHT

JESSY'S MARRIAGE

It seemed as if now Jessy ought to have been perfectly contented with her life, and for a little while she was so. Assisted by both Miss Finlay's experience and gifts, she was enabled to dress herself in a manner that would once have satisfied her highest ambition. Rule spent with her a couple of days every three or four weeks, and Cameron seldom missed the afternoons and evenings he had appointed. As soon as she left Miss Finlay's door she was aware of his presence. If the weather was cold or wet, a carriage was waiting, and they went together to some picture gallery, or concert, or walked in the arcade until it was time to have dinner; then the evening was usually spent in the theatre. Indeed Jessy was disappointed if this amusement was for any reason not in their programme. She had very little imagination, and the phases of life she saw on the stage were accepted by her as veritable. Mackey's *Rob Roy*, Macready's *Richelieu*, Miss Faucit's *King René's Daughter*, Mrs. Glover's *Jealous Wife* made on her immature mind the impression of reality. And her

150 THE HEART OF JESSY LAURIE

appearance always attracted so much attention that Cameron was proud to lead her to their box, while every eye and glass was fixed upon his splendidly beautiful companion.

But — and alas we all find out how soon “but” comes — but the return home was not always as pleasant as Jessy wished it to be. She liked to tell Miss Finlay all about her dinner and the play, and for a while her experiences appeared to give that lady a reflected pleasure. It was scarcely however to be expected that this second-hand entertainment would be satisfactory for any great length of time, and in less than a month Jessy began to notice an ominous change in her employer. She was at first taciturn and unsympathetic, then sarcastic, finally cross and dictatorial. Of course there were intermissions of these moods, and when Rule was in port and took both women about, Miss Finlay was apt to shower upon Jessy many penitential kindnesses and favors.

So the weeks and months of the winter passed, and there was a little fatigue in every heart. Miss Finlay fretted privately at the poverty which made it almost a necessity to longer endure the presence of a girl whose youth and beauty and usual high spirits, so cruelly emphasized her own faded youth and despondent hopes. And Jessy, feeling the fresh winds and bright sunshine of April days, had visions of the gardens in St. Andrews full of daffodils, and the

breath of the sea was in her nostrils, and the sound of the sea in her ears, and she said wearily one afternoon to Cameron as they were walking together —“ I think I am home-sick, Logie. I want to go home and see my mother.”

Cameron was glad to hear these words of dissatisfaction. He had been waiting for them. His relations with Jessy had come to a point when change was almost imperative, although he had no idea of permitting the change Jessy longed for. Everything has two or three causes, and Cameron had at least two reasons for urgently desiring a change of environment and circumstances. First, though not stingy where his own desires were to be gratified, he was naturally a careful man in money matters, and the twenty pounds a month he had been paying Miss Finlay for Jessy's board and training and the girl's small salary, was something of an item in his personal expenses. In fact, Jessy altogether had been a considerable extravagance. His visits to Glasgow were not small considerations, for apart from necessary charges, there were carriages, dinners, theatre tickets, and the flowers and trinkets and sweetmeats which lovers bring as offerings. For what lover likes to approach the shrine of his divinity empty-handed? And for all this expenditure of himself and his money he did not feel as if he had received an equivalent pleasure. He was satisfied that he had followed the

same route long enough; he must now test the progress he had made.

There were two other considerations urging him to this test; his family had returned to St. Andrews with the understanding that he was to make a short visit abroad, and then join them; and Rule had that day sailed for India, and possibly China, and was likely to be some months away. So when Jessy said she was home-sick, he drew her closer to him, and answered —

“ I am your home, Jessy, are you tired of me? ”

“ Oh no, no Logie! I could never weary of you — but I am not happy — yonder.”

“ With Miss Finlay? Is that what you mean? ”

“ Aye, it is. She is envious o’ me, and jealous o’ me, and that makes her cross and ill to live with — but I’m not wondering at it — I have felt just as she must feel — poor thing! ”

“ And she is cross with you? ”

“ Very. I wouldn’t have taken half as much bad temper from my mother — my dear Mother! I wish I was with her.”

“ And what of me, Jessy? Do you want to leave me? ”

“ You know far better. Why do you ask me the like o’ such foolishness? ”

“ Because, Jessy, the hour has come when you must decide whether I am to be all in all to you, or else

nothing at all. You must take me now in place of every one else, or you must give me up forever."

"Oh Logie, you are just teasing me! You know that I will never give you up, until you give me up."

"Well then, dear girl, here is the point. My sister and the household have gone back to St. Andrews. I am going abroad for a few months."

"Abroad! Where then?"

"Anywhere, everywhere. If you will go with me, you shall say *where*. If you will not go with me, one place will be just the same as another; though I think I might try America — it is so big I could lose myself in it."

"What would my mother say?"

"I happen to know that Miss Finlay is going to Switzerland, let your mother think you are going with her."

"But why?"

"You know best. I suppose the fisher people of St. Andrews would say unpleasant things if they suspected you were travelling with me."

"Not if I was your wife — and you are not asking me to go, *unless I was*."

"That is just the question, my darling. I could not possibly marry just yet."

"Then what for are you speaking of me going with you?"

"Can you not trust me, Jessy?"

154 THE HEART OF JESSY LAURIE

“No!!” she said the word with a brusque decision, looking him straight in the eyes.

“This is extraordinary;” he answered. “I would trust you Jessy, with all I possess — every shilling. I would trust you with my life itself.”

“If I had siller, I would put every bawbee in your power. I would give my life for your life, without a thought or a regret. But Logie, a woman has something beyond the price o’ gold, beyond the worth o’ life; and that I will not lose, nor give, as long as my name is Jessy Laurie. It is a God’s truth I am telling you — so there’s no more to be said.”

They were sitting in one of the little boxes in McLean’s restaurant, and she rose as she ceased speaking, and began to fasten her cape around her shoulders.

“Sit down, Jessy, there is a great deal more to be said. If you can not trust me without another man between us —”

“I want no man between us, but the Minister. We shall never come together until *he* is between us — true as death!”

“Very well, Jessy. I will get the Minister. You will be remembering Matthew Barbour — long Matthew we called him — he was in the Divinity Class three or four years since. Did he not marry a fisher girl called Jean Robertson?”

“No, he didn’t. I saw Jean Robertson swing her-

self blind at Agnes Meredith's the week I left St. Andrews."

"Well then, he is engaged to her."

"Perhaps, he's not married to her."

"That is nothing to us, anyway, Matthew Barbour is now in Edinburgh; he is but very poorly off, and will be glad to marry us quietly. I suppose you have no objections to a quiet marriage."

"I would like my mother present."

"Jessy you are unkind and unreasonable. I have told you before that my father left the wish in his will that I should not marry till I was twenty-seven years old. My sister, my lawyer, and all my friends will make no end of a row if I tell them I am going to marry. Are we to wait four years for the whim of a dead man, who if he could only see you, would urge me to lose no time in winning you. Or, are we to marry quietly and begin to live and enjoy life now. Jessy, as soon as we are married we will go at once to London, then Paris, Venice, Rome, all the beautiful cities of the world, and we want no one — no one at all — interfering with our happiness."

"My mother, Logie —"

"My sister, Jessy, she has been a mother to me. I want no one but you."

"O Logie, Logie! I am sore troubled! If my mother would only say it was right. Wait till I send her a letter."

“No. From this hour I must be every one and everything to you, or else you must bid me farewell for ever.” There was a kind of hurry in his voice and manner that frightened Jessy. If he should go away! Any alternative seemed easier to bear; life without love and Logie, what would it be worth?

He watched the weakening of her will with a curious pleasure. He was sure he was going to prevail. In the mean time the sight of this beautiful creature in his toils, struggling more and more ineffectually, gave him a sharp pleasure. He held her hand and pleaded in low passionate words for her approval, and as he saw it slowly coming, he threw her more and more on her own will. He said, he would “scorn to force her in any way. She must consent voluntarily — willingly — with all her heart;” and when he saw that her eyes were full of tears, and her lips quivering, he drew her veil over her face and gave her his arm. “Come darling,” he whispered, “I will not make you suffer any longer;” for it was one of the secret pleasures of Cameron’s dissolute life that he was always outwardly a gentleman. There was no trace of swagger or of vulgar impatience in his entreaties, nothing overdone; he sinned with a certain decorum.

They walked silently up Regent Street, and when they reached the Square Jessy made as though she would take the turn to Miss Finlay’s house. But

Cameron led her away from it. "Answer me, dearest," he pleaded.

"If you would just let my mother stand with me. I'm not caring for any one else."

Yet she did care very much, for there is no young girl who has not her dream of the greatest of all events to her and who does not desire all she loves to be present with her at that hour. Jessy had often planned the ceremonies of her wedding and these always included a great crowd of witnesses to it. She felt that marriage was shorn of all its importance without this publicity, while Cameron hardly realized this phase of her reluctance to a private marriage and her stubbornness about her mother's presence almost angered him.

"Jessy," he said, "if you will stay with me we must be married on Friday morning. I am going to London on Friday, with you, or alone. It is impossible for your mother to get here — and she is not required. The question is, will you go to London with me? or shall we part forever where we now stand?"

"Oh Logie! Logie! I'm happy to go to the end o' the world with you, if —"

"There are no 'ifs,' Jessy. Trust me altogether, or do not trust me at all."

He ceased walking as he ceased speaking. They were under a lamp and he watched the girl's face anx-

iously. As she looked up it was full of trouble and perplexity. "Give me this night to think o'er things, Logie;" she pleaded.

"I cannot. In either case, I go back to Edinburgh to-night."

For a few moments she stood motionless, speechless, as the diver stands ere he takes the leap. Through generations of religious men and women behind her she had been dowered with strong moral instincts, but their hereditary force at this critical moment was made ineffectual by that insinuating solvent, named Love. Heredity failed her, and she was not vitally religious. On abstract principles, it was folly to expect self-control from a girl so much in love, and she did not think of asking for Higher wisdom than her own. She reasoned as a child reasons, she had no imagination to help her to calculate consequences, the man she loved stood waiting for her answer, and she gave way before circumstances too strong for her. "I love you Logie," she whispered, "I will do whatever you think best."

And having given way, it was quite in natural order that she should become almost reckless. "Tell me what to do and I will do it;" she said in answer to his passionate words of love and gratitude.

"When you go home to-night —"

"I'll get a scolding, or more likely a hateful smile, and a scornful word."

"Never mind either. You are now past that part of your life. Tell Miss Finlay you are going abroad with friends. Tomorrow pack your trunk, and send it to the Railway Station, and on Friday morning take the eight o'clock train for Edinburgh. I will meet you there."

"My Mother! What will I say to her?"

"Write and tell her you are going to London, Switzerland and maybe Paris and Rome, and will not be back for half a year. Let her believe you go with Miss Finlay."

"Suppose Miss Finlay writes to her?"

"She will not. I will forbid her. She will get a letter from me in the morning."

"Will she mind you?"

"Yes. You need not fear that."

"You will have the minister ready Logie?"

"We shall be married at eleven, and take the noon train for London."

She asked no more questions, and no further directions. She had accepted the destiny she had not been able to deny, and the womanly reaction from struggle and uncertainty, showed itself in an heedless and even prodigal assent to all her lover's wishes.

She did not see Miss Finlay that night, and the next morning she was in an amazing good temper. "I hear you are leaving me Miss Laurie;" she said,

“and indeed, I myself am going away on Saturday morning — going to London, Switzerland, Paris and Rome. I have long intended to take this trip and my affairs are now in a condition to allow it.”

“What will you do with your house?”

“Lock it up and leave it in my lawyer’s care.”

Jessy could not help wondering at this sudden change in Miss Finlay’s summer plans, but it was only one little part of the great circumstance which she found herself accepting with a reckless acquiescence. She was going to give up so much, that all else seemed of small consequence. Rule must be forgotten. Her mother must be deceived, and she herself — in this sudden hurry of love, and Love’s requirements — be deprived of the wedding garments and the wedding feast she had so often planned. All her small vanities and triumphs must be resigned, and in her ordinary street gown, in the parlor or the study of some unknown Minister instead of in her own Kirk, the ceremony of making her Logan Cameron’s wife be performed. It was a great curtailment, “but then I shall have Logie,” she told herself, “and that will make up for all wants.”

In an atmosphere of happiness from which she resolutely thrust back every shadow of discontent, she attended to the few duties that had to be performed. She packed her trunk, went out and bought herself a white hat and gloves and other trifles of dress, and

when all else was finished wrote to her mother a wonderfully tender little letter. Indeed some mothers, more sorrowfully experienced than Janet Laurie, would have divined from the unusual words of affection some unusual sorrow or disobedience. But Janet had no diplomacies, and she feared none. She was disappointed that Jessy was not coming home for half a year, but she was also proud of her daughter's visit to foreign countries. She dressed herself after reading Jessy's letter, and with it in her hand went to all her neighbors to tell the great news. "My Jessy is going the round o' Europe and Paris and Rome itself" she said with a proud little sigh. "She will be all o' six months on the travel, but it's a great instruction and a wonderful opportunity for the lass; a good lass too, for she sent me the whole o' her saved siller—a matter o' more than fourteen pounds—what think you o' that?" And as "a matter of fourteen pounds" is a good thing beyond dispute, Janet received nothing but congratulations.

And yet as she sat quietly on her own hearth she was dissatisfied. She felt hurt and wounded and she did not know why or how. Yet someway she had been instructed by the experience, for as she put Jessy's letter and the money in the blue tea-pot adorned with the likeness of Robert Burns, the special ornament of her chimney piece, she said aloud and almost angrily—"If folks have good news they

should bide at home with it; nobody wants to hear tell o' it."

This letter and remittance to her mother was Jessy's last duty. All was ready for her new life and there was the long spring night before her. But she made no attempt to reconsider the step she had taken. On the contrary she looked steadily forward. The act of renunciation had been accomplished. She was not the woman to fret over what she considered a fixed arrangement. As she braided her hair she told herself that no one got everything as they wanted it, that Logie had rights as well as herself, and that it was but fair to give and take between them. Then she lay down and slept soundly until the dawn awakened her.

A terror seized her lest she had overslept and would be too late for the train Logie expected her to take. She dressed with feverish haste, listening intently for the striking of some clock but not hearing any; and then when she went down stairs she found herself alone — the servants still asleep, and the darkened house so crowded with trunks, so comfortless and oppressive that she drew the bolt of the door and quietly passed out into the street. For the last time in her life she crossed that threshold, and most girls would have had a thought of this circumstance and of the joy and sorrow she had known in the house of her sojourn; but Jessy did not perplex the streams of

her feelings with any reflection behind the one that was urging her forward. She had not bidden Miss Finlay farewell, she had not taken any breakfast but neither of these things troubled her. She was glad to avoid the parting courtesies and she knew she could get a cup of tea at the Railway restaurant. Upon which reflection she remembered that her breakfast could not be much more elaborate, since she had sent her mother all the money she had, except one shilling over and above her railway fare.

However the shilling was quite sufficient. She had her tea and a fresh roll, and then with the remaining pennies engaged a portèr to get her trunk and tell her when the Edinburgh train was ready. The man was in one way faithful to his promise for he put her trunk on the baggage van and then notified Jessy, who was dozing in the waiting room, that her train was made up and it would be better for her to get into a carriage and not be hurried at the last. But he did not tell Jessy that he had sent her by the seven o'clock train, instead of the eight o'clock train; for his breakfast hour was seven, and he said to himself "the young lady may as well be on the road as sleeping in the waiting room."

In ordinary cases this deduction would likely have been fairly correct, but in this case it was the wrong foot foremost. When Jessy reached Edinburgh there was no Cameron to meet her, and before he did ar-

rive she had fretted herself into the temper of an injured and slighted woman; so that Cameron's first view of his proposed bride was not a pleasant one. From the feather in her hat, to the rosette on her shoe, her dress expressed the indignant movements of her body; and when she turned to him her face was flushed with anger and her eyes full of tears.

He was cross at this unexpected unpleasantness — no matter what might be its cause — and in a voice sharp and masterful he asked,

“Pray what is the matter now, Jessy?”

“I thought you had forgotten me.”

“I am here on the moment. What more do you want?”

His manner, the tone of his voice, the stern look on his face, were the manner and tone and look of a master correcting some exasperating servant, and Jessy's angry anxiety was promptly changed to angry amazement. The instant demand of her heart was to leave this man and hasten to her mother. If she had only had a sovereign in her pocket she would have gone straight to the office, and asked for a ticket to St. Andrews. It was the last putative effort of some good influence to turn her back, and good influences seem often to lack the foresight of evil ones, else why had it not suggested the prudence of keeping a sovereign for emergencies? As it was, she stood still and silent and before she could tell what to do

or say Cameron was making apology for his "excitability," as he called it. He said his valet, at the last moment, had refused to accept anything less than the balance of the year's wages, and in order to prevent delay he had had to pay it — his clothing was then to pack in a hurry — his breakfast was miserably cooked — his hotel bill was a scandalous overcharge — he had found it difficult to get as nice a carriage as he wanted — he had also forgotten his umbrella — a very handsome Sangster one that his sister had given him. He thought Jessy might understand how he felt when he saw something was also wrong with her.

Finally he won a smile and anon a promise of pardon, and then he got her a cup of tea, and the trouble was apparently over. But such heart wounds leave a scar that wears not out. As long as she lived Jessy could never forget those last few moments, when she stood with her foot touching — but not yet over — the fateful line which was to separate her forever from her previous life of careless happiness.

It was striking ten when they reached a small two-story house near Holyrood. The stair to the upper story was outside, and Cameron led Jessy up it. Then he touched the brass knocker sharply and the door was quickly opened by a girl who bid them take a seat in the study. It was a small room full of books and papers, and looked precisely like what the girl

called it, a study. Jessy was pale and silent and completely subdued by her surroundings. In a few minutes Logie left her and went into a room across the hall. He said he would be back immediately, and Jessy in dumb acquiescence watched him tap at the closed door. Then there was the sound of pleasant talking and the door was again closed.

A tall man wearing spectacles, and dressed in black with the ministerial white band round his throat, took Cameron by the hand. "I am ready," he said, "but I thought I would ask you once more, if this is a perfectly just arrangement for the lady you brought with you? You know how I stand now — I have left theology — it was too high for me — and as I told you I am studying chemistry; but oh Cameron, if you can honorably give me that fifty pounds it may be my fortune, for I am on the verge of a great discovery — mind, I say honorably."

"Matthew Barbour, you may take the money on my word. There is no harm intended to the lady. I have her full consent. Ask her. She understands thoroughly *why* our marriage must be as it is."

Then they went together into the study, and the simple ceremony of a Scottish private marriage was performed. Jessy had frequently seen couples married in the same way. There was nothing in the surroundings or the ceremony unusual, but after the pronouncement had been made, and she noticed Cam-

eron pass a roll of money to the minister, she was aware of an omission; and she said in those brusque, rapid tones that are natural to the timid forcing themselves to speak:—

“I have not got my marriage lines yet, Logie. Where are my marriage lines?”

Cameron tried to ignore the question, but Mr. Barbour said, “Mrs. Cameron is wanting her certificate. If you will wait a few minutes I will write it.”

There was an uncomfortable pause while the lines were in process of writing, and then there was the question of witnesses. It was Jessy that faltered on this question and it could not be ignored. “I will call the mistress and the lass from the kitchen,” said Mr. Barbour. But Jessy looked critically at the paper. It had not the look with which she was familiar. She held it thoughtfully as she said,

“It has no printing on it.”

“It is all right, Mrs. Cameron. I had no printed forms by me.”

Then she smiled, and with a childlike impulse of her years and her station made a motion as if to put it in her bosom, her general repository for things secret and precious. Cameron intercepted the intention. It shamed and annoyed him.

“Give it to me, dear;” he said. “I will put it in my pocket book.” The next moment he was leading her down the stairway to the waiting carriage.

168 THE HEART OF JESSY LAURIE

As the minister stood at the open door and watched them a cloud came over his face. He took off his glasses and brightened them on his white handkerchief. "I wonder if it is all right!" he mused. "I wonder if it is all right!"

CHAPTER NINE

THE LAST LINK IS BROKEN

It was a warm, damp evening towards the end of August, and Jessie Cameron was sitting alone at the open window of her room in a London hotel:—a large, gloomy room, full of heavy mahogany furniture and dark upholstery relieved in an almost startling manner by the white draperies of the bed. The outlook into the square of garden was hardly less mournful. A few old trees, heavy with damp foliage, shut in the place as if with a green wall; the grass was wet, the few flowers or shrubs smoke-stained and sorrowful-looking, the whole atmosphere of the place lonely and melancholy.

“If I could only win home;” she said softly to herself. “Oh for a sight o’ the sea stretching far, far away! and the long moonbeams on the sand! and the fishermen trailing to the boats. There was always a laugh snuggling somewhere in their beards—I think Jessie has forgotten how to laugh.” She let her head fall backward against the cushioned chair as she spoke. Then she closed her eyes, and was

170 THE HEART OF JESSY LAURIE

strangely still for a creature so naturally restless and fond of motion.

In this mood of sombre inertia, her mind wholly occupied with interior things, it was easy to see that a change had taken place in the outer woman. Her beauty was still remarkable, but that glow and bloom of love and expectation — which is to youth what dew is to the flower — was no longer there. It was evident that in some form she had taken the Great Initiation of Sorrow and the glow and the bloom had been washed away in tears. Yet to the eye that can perceive spiritual beauty she had never in all her life been half so lovely. If something had been taken away, something also had been added. She was no longer a girl with childish ideas and ignorant ambitions; she had that air of repose and indifference which marks those who have “found things out” and who can no longer be deceived.

For a little while she kept her eyes closed as if determined to seek the refuge of sleep. But it was not now as in the days that were gone, when she could sleep anywhere, and at any time. Something within her had grown wakeful and watchful. She had never heard of the Inner Woman, or the Subconscious Self, but at such restless invasions she would say, “It is the other Jessy, and what for is she worrying now?” She finally roused herself to these very words and began to walk slowly about the room. In its darken-

ing shadows she was really a very beautiful woman. Her long gown of sheer white muslin gave to her a transcendent grace, and its entire absence of color an air of purity and refinement; while it emphasized in a remarkable manner the tints of her hair, the rose on her cheeks, and the deeper rose of her lips.

She clasped her hands behind her and walked slowly, wondering why this other Jessy was so restless and nervous; for Cameron had been kinder than usual that evening. He had praised her dress and appearance, and on going out to meet some friends had actually said, "he was sorry to leave her alone in such dull surroundings."

His words gave her little pleasure. She had lost faith in words, and also she was in a mood of languor and indifference. To be alone was a relief. Not that she wished to think, she felt too utterly weary of everything to go over again the little plan that was the desire of her heart — making a home. Cameron had always spoken of a home which they were to make together. He had said it might be in America or in some foreign country, but a home somewhere had been the ultimate hope of her dreams and her desires. He had found no place suitable yet and had returned to England. Would he then try America? If so, she was willing; only she must, she must go and see her mother first.

But even this momentous movement did not rouse

her to active consideration. It drifted lazily through her mind as she sat quite still sometimes gazing vacantly into the dreary space called a garden, sometimes closing her eyes, and wooing sleep by her apparent unconsciousness. Then suddenly there came to her that sharp signal of approaching trouble which she had learned to understand only too well. At such times it seemed to her, as if the other Jessy was like a sailor watching his glass go down, and down, and down, though the sky was blue and there was not a breath of wind, but knowing well what was coming and hurrying to lower away masts and sails, and make everything snug for a storm. All typified by this imaginary preparation, Jessy suddenly felt; and her first instinct was to rise and walk about. She knew well this strange intelligence of coming sorrow was not all delusion, and that the sudden tremor which she could neither understand nor explain was the awakening of her soul to meet some urgent danger or some present wrong.

She was no longer indifferent, no longer inert. She was alive instantly in every sense, and when Cameron opened the door she turned like a sentinel on guard, and her whole attitude was a question. He had entered with a smile, but he felt the interrogation and instantly took another attitude. A few times before he had seen Jessy in that mood, and he knew she was not deceivable in it. So he said simply,

“ Sit down, Jessy. I want to talk to you.”

She sat down at a small table, and he placed his chair opposite to her. She saw that he was sober, and that there was no trace of the rage of evil passion which always followed losses of money at the card table. Her terror was then America — she felt surely at last this trial had come.

“ Jessy, I am going away by the midnight tide.”

“ To America? ”

“ America! What absolute nonsense! I am going with some friends to the coast of Norway — and other places.”

“ You should have told me sooner. I shall have little time to prepare —”

“ You are not going.”

“ What then? ”

“ Anything you choose.”

“ I should like to go to St. Andrews, but if I do, where will I stay? If you would give me a letter to your sister — maybe.”

“ You are very impertinent. Why should you go to my sister? She knows nothing about you.”

“ I'll be always welcome at my own house. You took your wife out of mother's cottage, and the bit place can still hold her.”

“ You are not my wife. You never were my wife, and never will be.”

“ Logie, is this a new way to make me miserable? ”

You are aye finding out something cruel, but this is fairly wicked.”

“It is high time, Jessy, we stopped playing this silly matrimonial game. It is a perfect farce and every one sees through it.”

“A game! A farce! Was my marriage to you on the eighteenth of last April a game? Was the minister a farce? And the prayer? And the promise? Is this gold ring on my finger a farce?”

“All a farce, and you know it as well as I do. Your silly conscience had to be soothed, or it would have spoiled our pleasure; and also you wanted some fine excuse when the play was over, to ape the poor deceived maiden. I gave you all you figured for—cost me fifty pounds too. Now, we are both weary of the play, and it is time to ring down the curtain and each of us go our own road. I am going to Norway. You can go to America, if you wish.”

She sat motionless, looking at him. Her face was white as death-clay, set as marble, her colorless mouth closed tight, her eyes wide open, unwinking, implacable. The stillness of the grave was between them, for in those few moments Jessy was burying the honor, the love, and the hopes of her ruined youth. And she was burying them alive, quick in all their senses, and the struggle was as the struggle of life and death.

He was at length angry, perhaps a little fright-

ened, and he stretched out his hand and touched hers. The touch was like an electric shock. She leaped to her feet, pushing away the chair so fiercely that it fell backward.

“Do not touch me, you sevenfold villain!” she said. “You tell me that I connived and plotted with you, my own ruin. You liar of Satan’s own breed! As the God of my fathers lives, I believed on that wretched fifteenth of April you made me your lawful wife. I have never had any other thought. If I am not your wife, what am I?”

“My mistress,” answered Cameron scornfully, “and you know it, and have always known it.”

“That is not true and you know it is not! If I had not believed myself your wife, do you think I would have borne your beastliness when drunk, your blasphemies when you lost your money with the cards, your constant quarrelling, your pinging greed, your mean little cruelties? These things a wife must bear, and I took them patiently as lawful punishment for my lying and my disobedience to my mother.”

“I say, that you have been my mistress, and that knowingly.”

“I have been your wife, sir. Had I considered myself your mistress, I would have made you spend your last sovereign on my pleasure. You would have given me a fine house, carriages, and servants, dress without stint, *real* jewels, and money — plenty

of money — in my purse. And you would have done my will in everything, run my errands, and been my flunkey, and I would have wiped the soles of my shoes on you.”

“ I never was your husband — not for a moment.”

“ Then what are you doing here? If you are not my husband, what are you doing here? I do not recognize the other relationship — leave my room instantly, or — I will make you.”

“ Make me!” and he snickered, and began to sharpen a pencil.

“ Yes, make you! If I had not believed myself your wife, I would have made you do many things you ought to have done and did not do. And even now, if you twiddle that pencil any longer, and laugh or grin once more in that insulting way, I will give you such a trouncing that you will not find your way to that yacht to-night — nor yet for many other nights.”

She spoke with such intensity of passion that he could not help but raise his eyes and look at her. Then he saw the elemental woman of her magnificent race. For it was not only her own wrong that roused her vengeful indignation, it was the sin itself in any case, she loathed and hated. As for the small handsome man who had perpetrated it, she despised him so intensely that he shrunk and withered under her fiery scorn. Indeed, as she stood regarding him with

flashing eyes and hands resting on her hips, he recognized his danger. He knew the kind of woman he was badgering, knew that if her tongue failed her she would at once fling the quarrel into her hands, for a more persuasive settlement. He feared the throttling and the trouncing she had half promised him, and he said in his most persuasive voice:

“There is no use in our quarrelling at this hour, Jessy. I am willing to do all I can to make the parting easy for you.”

“It is easy enough to part with a poor creature like you. What decent woman, if she wasn’t your wife, would live with you? And I only hope it is a God’s truth that you are not my husband. It is a mercy I can hardly believe in.”

“I think you can leave God’s name out of this discussion.”

“It is the very name I need. He is the father of the fatherless. I am His bairn, and I am going to Him with my wrong.”

Then Cameron was bitterly angry. “I tell you, woman,” he cried, “that you are as bad as I am. You knew our marriage was a pretense. You knew Mr. Barbour was no clergyman — that he was only a chemical student. You —”

“I’ll find the man out. I’ll go to Edinburgh tomorrow.”

“Barbour is now in America. The other witnesses

to our little farce were women you never saw before and will never see again. You might as well look for a needle in a haystack."

"You are forgetting. You cannot send God Almighty out of the way. He was present when we were married. He is present now. I'll trust my case to Him."

"I declare positively, that you have never been my wife — not for one moment."

"I am your wife at the present moment. I have been your wife since the fifteenth of last April."

"Prove it — if you can. Further, I declare positively, that in the matter of the mock marriage you were equally guilty with me."

"Say those words once more, and I will drive them back through your mouth to your black heart. For your own sake —"

"Jessy, I think we might try and part pleasantly. What is the use of making such a trouble about what was sure to come?"

"Trouble! No, no! I'm glad — I'm real glad to be rid o' you! Now I'll never more be forced to dress and make a show o' mysel' for your honor and glory. I'll never more be made to eat things I don't want to eat — caviare, olives, spoiled game and the like — because you thought it stylish to pretend to enjoy them. I'll never more be corrected and lectured day in and night out, about everything I do and every

word I say. My heart is my ain again! My hands and my hair, my feet and my tongue are my ain again! And I am going to speak as I want to speak. I'll say 'my ain' if I choose. I'll say 'ken' and 'canna' whenever I like to. I'll talk o' mysel' and the like o' that, and I'll not say myself, and the like of that. I'll use good broad Scotch all day long if I'm in the mind for it."

"I shall not object. I think however you might remember that I have given you many happy hours, and —"

"Not one. You scolded me the hour before we were married, and you have treated me cruelly ever since — forced me out driving when I had blinding headaches; made me dress and go to wearisome operas, and listen to men and women singing while they were pretending to be dying, and I feeling as if I was really dying. You kept me in countries where I could not speak a word to any one. If you had ever given me any money I could not have spent it, for I knew neither the tongue nor the coins and you would not teach me. I hated picture galleries, and the Kirks were all popish and I was feared to venture into them, and the shop windows only made me wish for what I could not get. It was as hard to bear as being in St. Andrews and longing for a dress like Lily Forfar's, and a chain round my neck and not having money to get them."

“I bought you a blue silk dress and a chain of sapphires like Miss Forfar’s, and I think I would not name Miss Forfar, if I were you.”

“Why not? It is just as lawful to name Lily Forfar, as Jessy Cameron.”

Then Cameron rose to his feet. He was hot with anger but before he could speak Jessy said imperatively—“Sit down. I have not finished yet. Lily Forfar’s chain was made of real stones, the chain you gave me was like yourself, a make-believe. The stones were glass. No wonder you told me not to wear jewelry, that I looked better without it.”

He could not lift his eyes. Jessy had come a few steps nearer to him. He was afraid of her. He dreaded some physical dispute which would call in the police, make him miss the time set for sailing, and demand his presence in a court room in the morning where Jessy would undoubtedly tell the whole story of their connection. At every point he felt himself in danger, and his best policy was to try and conciliate the furiously indignant woman. So he made another effort.

“Jessy,” he said, “I do not want to part with you in this miserable mood. I must know what you intend to do and help you as far as you will let me. This morning I met George Saville. He spoke at once about the picture he made of you and said he would be glad if you would give him some sittings.

He will pay you well — and you will be sure to meet many fine people in his studio —”

“If you are not my husband, what right had you to talk about me? But I know the wicked thought in your heart. It seems you know very little about Jessy Cameron yet, if you think that because she has thrown her love away she will throw her honor after it. If you are not my husband, it is none of your business what I intend to do nor where I intend to go. This much I will tell you — I shall go to my mother. I shall go to her to-morrow.”

“Your mother supposes you have been abroad with Miss Finlay. No one knows anything of our relation to each other. I am not cad enough to tell it, you are not foolish enough and there is no one else.”

At these words she threw herself with long, innerly sobs into a large chair, and, covering her face, wept with such extravagant heart-breaking bitterness that Cameron was unable to bear it —

“Do stop, Jessy,” he begged. “You will break a blood vessel, or something terrible will happen. What is the matter? What have I said? I only reminded you that the last four months was a secret between us — there is no one else to speak of it and surely we can keep silence.”

“There is some one else — some one that will cry the news far and wide.”

“But who?”

“Your ain child.”

A pistol shot at his ear could hardly have startled Cameron more. He struck the table with his fist, and muttered savagely “O curse it!”

“Will you curse your child before it is born? How dare you? You are cursing yourself twice over.”

He had indeed felt a moment's horror at the inadvertent exclamation and he added — “I did not mean it — in that way. But oh you stupid woman! Did you not know? My God to think of you letting things take their own way! Why did you not see to it? send for a doctor — do something or other. I never heard of such folly, such wicked, ruinous folly. You ought at all risks to have prevented such an accident.”

“I am not wicked enough to do that.”

“Well, you have ruined yourself and me also.”

“It is but fair we share the ruin. I am glad it turns out that way, once in a while.”

“It is a simply dreadful affair. If it gets known, I can give up politics. Both parties will make a capital out of it. Jessy, stop crying and tell me that you will prevent this.”

“It's beyond my say-so.”

“You must help me out of it. You must, you must! It can do you no good to talk of me. My name must not be mentioned. Jessy, you have a ter-

rible revenge in your hand, but you are too good, too kind, even yet too fond of me to use it."

"I am neither good, nor kind, nor fond, as far as you are concerned. And I must think of myself and do what I can for my own good name. From the minister down to the Town Officers, I will be asked the name o' the child's father. If I don't confess it to the Minister, I'll be read out o' the Kirk. If I, or the poor bairn was hungry I couldn't get a mouthful from the poor Guardians, unless I gave up your name."

"But, Jessy, I'll take care you never want for anything."

"I would not eat your bread if I was perishing with hunger — nor let the child eat it — Nor shall it ever know the name o' its father. You'll be safe for that reason — if facts are not o'er strong for me."

"Yet promise me. Give me your word to keep our secret, then I know you will never break it."

"Promise you what?"

"That under no circumstances you will tell anyone I am the father of your child."

"No! I will make no such promise! I never want to see your face, or hear your voice again, as long as I live — I am clean done with you. But I will make no promise on such unknown ground. It might be against the child's interest."

184 THE HEART OF JESSY LAURIE

“ Jessy, here is fifty pounds. I brought it with me for you.”

“ Take it away with you. If fifty pounds was Matthew Barbour’s price, it is not Jessy Cameron’s.”

“ But you must have money to pay your fare to St. Andrews? ”

“ I’ll not have a half-penny from you. Now take yourself to Norway, or to anywhere else you like.”

“ I shall be unhappy everywhere unless you promise to shield my name from all suspicion. To get into parliament is my dearest hope, do you wish to shut the doors against me? ”

“ Yes. You are not going to parliament. Try to speak for that end, and I will speak too. A nice lawmaker you would be — you, who have mocked at, and broken the most sacred law of God and man.”

“ You have ruined my life.”

“ But you cannot ruin mine. It is not in your keeping now, thank God! ”

“ Jessy — ”

“ I don’t want to speak another word to you.”

“ Just one favor, Jessy. It can’t help you to ruin me. Keep my name out of this trouble, and I will be your friend as long as I live.”

“ I would not have your friendship. Oh man! man! Your mean little soul has come out o’ the bottomless pit o’ selfishness! Go instanter, or I’ll ring for the landlord and tell him the whole story:”—

and as she spoke, she rose, walked to the hearth and took the long bell rope in her hand.

Then Cameron lifted the rejected money and walked slowly out of the room. And in his exit he looked so small and insignificant to the excited woman that she could not help a disdainful laugh at the humbled creature; a pitiful laugh sadder than any outcry, full of a hopeless woe. To its hysterical wail she locked the door, and dragging herself to the bed fell upon it utterly weary and forlornly miserable. Nature mercifully limits such suffering. In ten minutes Jessy had escaped all physical consciousness of it, and for six hours she slept as if she would never wake again. White as marble and still as marble she lay; there was not the movement of a hair, and her breathing was invisible. Where was her spirit, while its dwelling place lay thus prone and useless? Who can answer? We only know that the night season has strange comforts and illuminations, and that angels are waiting in every Gethsemane.

When she opened her eyes it was with a deep sigh, but she sat up instantly and intently awake. The dawn filled the unhappy room, and she looked round it, and remembered. Then she put her hands to her uncoiled hair, and looked at her evening gown, and at her shod feet. A faint smile parted her lips.

"I can do as I like," she said softly, and she knew in a moment what she wished to do.

Early as it was she emptied her trunks, and then began to repack them; putting all her silk and satin and velvet gowns and cloaks, into the larger one, and with them laces, scarfs, veils, handkerchiefs, embroidered parasols, silk hosiery, French shoes, fans, trinkets, white gloves, perfumes, and all the paraphernalia of a fashionable wardrobe. With a decided snap she closed and locked this trunk, and then in a smaller one placed a few of the plainest of her travelling gowns, and the linen and other articles she could wear in the life to which she was returning.

“Mother will have put my linsy petticoats and jerseys carefully away;” she thought, “and I’ll be none too proud to wear them, though I am Mrs. Logan Cameron.”

As soon as her packing was finished, and she herself ready for a journey, she ate her breakfast and then walked towards St. Paul’s Cathedral. Not far from it she met a constable whose open kindly face she thought might be trusted.

“Sir,” she said, “I am a stranger here without friends and in a sore strait. I wish to sell my watch and ring, will you direct me to a place where they will deal fairly with me?” And he very courteously took her to a shop in the Yard, and the owner of it looked at the watch and chain, and at the sapphire and diamond ring Cameron had tied around her neck during

their last interview at the Blair Hill House, and then he glanced at Jessy.

“They are but second rate—all of them,” he said. “I cannot give you more than twenty-three pounds for the whole.”

“That will do,” she answered, and she took the sovereigns and left the shop without one regretful glance at the trinkets which had once seemed to her so beautiful and so precious. For Jessy was not in any degree sentimental. Her feelings were real feelings, she hated these gifts of Cameron; she was glad to be rid of them, for they were only part and parcel of a life she was determined to forget.

In an hour she was on her way to Glasgow, but on her arrival there she did not go to Mrs. Gilhaize’s hotel. She had business to do which that lady would wonder over, and very likely write to Margot Macintyre about. There was a little place in the heart of the city that would suit her purpose better, and there she went and rested herself for that night. The next morning, while it was yet early, she had notified several Jewish ladies dealers in fine cast-off raiment, of her bargains; and the afternoon and far into the evening was spent in chaffering over her discarded fineries. She had thought to realize at least one hundred pounds, but the laces were cheapened, and the general goods and making discounted, until

she finally was thankful to receive eighty-two pounds, and see the trunk, so laden with miserable memories, go out of her sight forever.

After the battle was over, she walked to Miss Finlay's house and saw that it was still closed; but she carefully, and almost instinctively, avoided the Square and the streets where Camerson had walked with her, and planned for her a life he never intended her to realize. She would not think of him. She kept her mind busy with calculations concerning the money she had managed to procure:—

“It will see Mother and myself well past a year, and by that time I'll be o'er the great trial and able to live the work o' life again;” she thought.

All the way to St. Andrews she was considering this work — they would sell their cottage — they would go to some town where they were quite unknown — her mother would care for the child, and she would work night and day to make money — plenty of money. She had no idea that she would love the child but she would at least do her duty to it. In the midst of such dreaming she reached her native city.

It seemed incredible that she had only been nine months away. And yet she might have left the place the day before, all was so unchanged. Though after sunset it was quite light, and she walked down the familiar streets with her old up-head carriage and

light, quick step. She met no one to whom she was intimately known, for the fishers' families were generally at that hour taking tea before the men went off to the night's fishing. As she neared her home she threw a quick glance all round —

“Not even Annie Tulloch is on the watch! Poor Annie! She is missing something about me; she'll not be able to tell Rule just the way I came home.” She laughed softly to this reflection as she put her foot on the Laurie threshold. The next moment she lifted the latch and stood upon the sill. And in that moment Janet Laurie, sitting motionless on her hearth, looked up, and all the motherhood in her heart leaped to her face, and she cried out joyfully —

“It's hersel'! thank God!”

And then the fair young face was laid against the thin brown one, and Jessy sobbed out on her mother's breast the sorrow that for three long days she had kept close within her heart. All its waves and its billows went over her.

CHAPTER X

THE VALLEY OF HUMILIATION

The interest in Jessy's return home was not great, and her own indifference quickly dissipated what there was. Every one felt the change that none knew how to express. Some called it pride, others love trouble, a few more observant divined a physical cause, which as yet they were chary to give a name to. But this, or that, all saw that the old stirring aggressive, busy woman was no longer there. She resumed her fisher costume in the house, and she never left the house unless on some necessary errand. For this seclusion her mother's health was a sufficient excuse. Janet had long been ailing, and after Jessy's return her decline was rapid. The two women had been unhappy apart and were still more unhappy together.

For though Jessy had been two weeks at home she had given her mother no confidence. The elder woman was suffering so much physically, that it seemed to her daughter cruel to add mental distress; any hour might be her last hour, perhaps she could go away without direct knowledge of Jessy's condition, and on the other side of Time she would under-

THE VALLEY OF HUMILIATION 191

stand better, and doubtless be satisfied with the outcome.

In reality Jessy was much disturbed by the immanence of Rule's return. She had not written to him since her marriage, and she knew that no letter she could write would prevent his coming to St. Andrews to find out the reason of her silence. And she feared this visit. It was likely to bring all things hidden to light, and to the weary-hearted woman every day's respite was welcome. The bitter stagnation of days in which she hoped for no joy was better than active misery — just yet.

The day feared came at last and without the slightest intelligence. Janet was asleep after a bad night in the inner room, and in the living room, Jessy was beating oat cakes in a listless fashion. Then Rule entered, his handsome face alight with love, his arms full of the offerings he had brought Jessy from far off India and China. He laid them on a chair while he put his arm round her waist, and lifted her face to his own and kissed it. His eager love had been so quick, that for a moment she was able to make no resistance; yet even as he kissed her she thought "I'll make no put-offs — I'll have it out with him, this very hour."

The first words Rule uttered made her resolution easy to perform. "Jessy, my sweet Jessy!" he said, "I am home with a happy heart. I have money

192 THE HEART OF JESSY LAURIE

enough, and a little to spare. The house can be paid for, every shilling down, and while you knead the cakes, just tell me o'er again what furniture you would like best of all." And he looked in her face, and smiled like a man in a dream of heaven.

She stood upright and rubbed the meal off her hands as she answered with a dour positiveness — "You'll no require to furnish a house for me, Rule. I shall never, never be your wife. It is not possible."

At the last words her voice faltered, she sat down on a low rush chair, and covering her face with her apron began to cry passionately. Rule was shocked, stunned, and for a few moments speechless. He trembled through every nerve. His mouth felt dry, he could not move his tongue, but he roughly pushed a chair opposite Jessy, and taking her apron from her eyes he looked at her until his anger snapped the spell that bound him, and he cried out in a loud voice:—

"Jessy! Jessy! You are lying, my lass! You cannot mean what you say! It is beyond believing!"

"I mean every word of it. Oh Rule, Rule, don't be angry with me. I am a very miserable woman."

Then he began to plead with her. His words burned, his eyes flashed, his large hands held her with a strength that she could hardly bear. An eloquence undreamed of — torrents of tender words unbidden, unchecked — tears, passionate kisses, swayed the

wretched woman till she cried out in an agony of reproach —

“Why did you never speak this way before? If you had! Oh Rule if you had, you would maybe have won us both happiness! I didn't think you cared for me in this like way.”

“I have told you a thousand times that I loved you. Did you think I was lying to you?”

“No, no! But you never told me this way — and it's o'er late now — It's o'er late now!”

“What is it you mean, Jessy? Have you been fooling with any other man? You couldna? Oh you couldna do the like o' that! Tell me the truth. Do you hear me? Tell me the truth, woman.”

“Ay, I will tell you the truth. It is best to speak plain, and get it over. There is another — yes, there is another — and he has stronger claims than you can have — I have been false as false to you — I'm not worth your thinking of — put me clean out o' your heart and memory, Rule.”

Then Rule turned deadly white through all his seatan — he shut his eyes — the world slipped away from his consciousness — he swayed to and fro — and then fell like a log to the floor.

At that sight Jessy forgot that she had quarreled with Annie Tulloch. She flew to her like the wind. “Rule is dying,” she cried, and Annie and Annie's mother went instantly back with her.

194 THE HEART OF JESSY LAURIE

“He is beyont himsel’, but it isna the death-swoon;” said the elder woman. “Give me the harts-horn, and open the window, and get him a drink o’ water.”

It was long however before Rule recovered himself. He seemed loath to come back to life, and when he did so it was with a passion of weeping and sobbing that shook his big frame with agony. When it was over, the man was like a sea that has been swept by a hurricane, his face was dark and ominous, his voice hard and changed.

He spoke to Annie first — “Go away,” he said, “I must know the worst that is coming to me.” And as soon as he was alone with Jessy, he faced her sternly, and asked:—

“Who is he?”

“I’ll not tell you, Rule. You don’t know the man. You never saw him. It is all my fault. You must take the wrong — if there be wrong — out on me. There’s none else.”

“Where is he then? Why are you not with him? No wrong indeed! There must be wrong, or you would be with him.”

“I left him.”

“What for?”

“He was cruel to me.”

“I must have his name.”

“I cannot tell you. I have told none but you —

THE VALLEY OF HUMILIATION 195

not even Mother. Folks may think as they like — I'm not caring."

She was weeping, but he did not offer to comfort her though his eyes were full of infinite pity. The sound of her sobbing filled the room, but he could not bring himself to speak. After a few minutes' silence he rose and stumbled heavily towards the door. She followed him and put her hands on his arm —

"Rule, you will be my friend? Rule I have suffered more than I can tell you, or anyone. Pity me! Don't go against me! I shall soon have enough to bear without that sorrow."

"I'll never hurt you, Jessy, by word or deed, or even a look. But I cannot stay in St. Andrews. I shall go away, far away. I must get out o' the sight o' your face, and the sound o' your voice, and the hearing o' the clask and clavers there will be about us. God help you my dear lassie! God O' the fatherless help you!" and with the words he gently lifted her detaining hands and shut the door hopelessly between them.

Without a word to any one Rule left St. Andrews, and there was plenty of talk in consequence. Jessy's little world was moved to its outermost circle, and then some woman whispered the word that turned cruel critical eyes upon her, and she made no further effort to put off the evil days. Down into the Valley of Humiliation she went alone and uncomforted, and

truly she found that Apollyon straddled over all the way through it. There was no covert, no hiding place for her, not even in her own house; for there her dying mother sat with mournful interrogation in her eyes. There also came neighbors affecting kindness for Mistress Laurie, in order that they might wound her daughter.

And through it all Jessie held her peace, no one could get from her word or sign. And this dour silence was felt to be in some way a great wrong to the little community of which she was a member. They wanted to know the father of her child. He ought to be punished, and Jessie was shielding him; therefore it was evident Jessie was unrepentant. Jean Monteith, who had had trouble with her own lasses, ventured the supposition that "Jessie was a married woman" but all laughed the idea to scorn. "Was it conceivable," Mrs. Tulloch asked, "that a girl should be married and not talk of the occasion?"

The coming and going of Rule Macintyre was also remarkable. The kindly sailor man had stopped to greet none of his old companions. He had gone straight from the train to the Laurie cottage and from the cottage straight back to the train. And over and over Mrs. Tulloch told how he lay insensible at Jessie's feet, and described the difficulty of bringing him back to life, and his one stern request as soon as he could speak "to be left alone with Jessie."

THE VALLEY OF HUMILIATION 197

These things could only be explained on the supposition of some unhappy relationship between them. Rule had been Jessy's acknowledged sweetheart, they had gone to Glasgow together, and Jessy's letters home — always read to all who wished to hear them — had spoken frequently of Rule's visits to her when on shore. At this time Rule fared badly in the opinion of all who knew him. The fathers among the fishers said "he ought either to have cleared himself, or else confessed his fault and submitted his cheek to the smiter." The young men shook their heads, and gazed with wide open eyes away to the furthest horizon.

And Jessy said not a word, either for, or against Rule. No one ever found her off guard. She kept the key turned in the door, and if any one knocked, she opened it and then sat down with her elbows on the table and her face resting in her hands. To their conversation she paid no more attention than if she were deaf. Even when Deacon Wabb called "in the way o' his duty" she preserved the same apathetic attitude until he said angrily:

"You ought to be thinking bitter shame to yourself, Jessy Laurie, and be glad to confess your sins to your old Bible teacher; and what are you doing instead?"

"I am taking great credit to myself, Deacon, that after going to your class for four years I am still a

Christian; and my name isn't Jessy Laurie. You can chew on that fact awhile, it is a knock you-down truth if you will have it."

"Then why not tell the whole truth? I'm not believing a word of what you say!"

"Of course! So I'll say no more. I'll do as King David did when his enemies were tormenting him — I'll keep my mouth, even from good, while the wicked is before me." After which statement she rose and went into the inner room, for she heard her mother calling and the Deacon went wrathfully away muttering:—

"A Deacon o' Doctor Graham's Church to be called the Wicked! Most awful!"

It was a strange, sorrowful, silent life that these poor women lived together. The mother was dying daily of some painful heart trouble, and if Jessy had had no other work, her hands would have been full with her mother's hourly necessity for loving kindness and tender mercy. But it is in such times of suffering that souls grow compassionate, and good, and fondly affectionate. Jessy took her mother to her heart as if she were a little child; she watched over her through the long nights and days with the gentle tenderness and patience of a mother over her suffering babe. No labor was too great, no trial too sore to bear if it was likely to give ease or rest to the dear one. And with such self-sacrificing love to

THE VALLEY OF HUMILIATION 199

lighten it, no life is altogether miserable; besides which, on one stormy night when the winds howled round the house, and the rain fell in torrents, Jessy found at last the strength and grace, to open her heart to her mother.

She had been very ill all day, the pains of death had seemed to get hold of her, but as the night came on she had fallen into a stupor of sleep, and gradually into sleep more life-like and hopeful. Jessy sat and watched the shrunken frame of the once rosy, robust woman. How pitiful were the large gaunt hands, always so ready to labor for her, now lying limp and almost useless! How pitiful the thin, brown face on which Death had so visibly set his seal! And her heart reproached her. She had done much, but she had left undone that grace of confidence which would make Janet Laurie's last days a little brighter, and more hopeful for her child.

"But I'll tell her everything now," she promised herself. "I'll tell her everything, just as it happened. Oh Mother, Mother! If you can listen to me once more, advise me once more! Oh but I have hungered and thirsted for the comfort you could give me!"

There was however this excuse for Jessy's attitude toward her mother. She knew that it was out of her power to keep anything secret. Whatever Janet Laurie knew, she talked of, speculated about, and

discussed with all her acquaintances. So Jessy having resolved, for a number of reasons good in her own sight, to keep Cameron's name from the public, could not give it to her mother — to any one — and the silence first imposed as a security, became finally a habit of self-defense, neither wise nor pleasant to break. But now! *Now* that all was so nearly over, she could trust, she must trust. She was even terrified lest the opportunity for confidence and comfort would not be given her.

But after ten hours immobility, the sick woman opened her eyes, smiled, and asked for a cup of tea. And as she drank it, Jessy told her everything, from first to last. And as she talked the night waned, and the dawn grew, and the storm went seaward in low sobbing gusts. But the two women sat clasping each other's hands, and they were mother and child again, freely and fully, mother and child again!

After this confidence they rarely sat silent. There was always something to tell, or something to consider; the marriage ceremony being in itself a never finished subject of discussion and speculation. And when they put their knowledge and experience together, it seemed daily to gather tangibility and truth. Anyway there was hope in the confidence, and comfort inexpressible. So the trouble was talked into some sort of promise and the winter days wore themselves away.

THE VALLEY OF HUMILIATION 201

It was on the eighteenth of March, that this chapter of Jessy's life came to an end. All day the little cottage was full of strange Presence and influence; for the angels of both Life and Death waited there. Just as the clock struck midnight, two emigrants passed each other on the threshold. One went outward, with the smile of those bound for the rest of the Land very far off; the other passed inward, and with a sharp, wailing cry, took up the burden of the body of its reincarnation.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE HARD WAY OUT

It was the dawn of a hot day in July, and Jessy stood in the open door of her cottage. She stretched out her arms to the sea, she tasted its brine on her lips, she drew in long breaths of air coming cool and fresh from its heaving tide. She had been awake nearly all night, she had slept little for many nights, for she had come to a place where life seemed tied in a knot. To sit still and try to unravel it was a despairing effort, to cut it was the only alternative that presented itself. Her money was almost gone, she had an offer for her cottage, but if she sold it, the price would only prolong the restless uncertainty; and at the end, the child would still be too young to allow her freedom to work. And the natural independence of her character, aided by the health and strength of her youth, pleaded for an opportunity to *do*, as well as to suffer.

The child cried, she waited a few minutes and then went listlessly to it. It lay open-eyed in the box-bed, and she turned it over, threw off some of the cover, and gave it a drink of cold water. Then the

large black eyes closed and it slept again. But Jessy stood with a face full of speculation looking at it. She was by no means a fond mother. She did her full duty to a creature so helpless, but of mother love in its pure intensity she knew nothing. The child was the incarnation of too much shame and sorrow and suffering and loss. It had been unloved and unwelcome before its birth, and it brought little love with it.

Even its appearance was against it. Jessy recognized no kindred in its sharp black eyes and thin angular face. The babies within her knowledge had been rosy, dimpled, round-faced little ones, with eyes blue as heaven looking out on the world with boundless good humor. Her baby never smiled, and he fretted and complained as if he were thoroughly dissatisfied with his surroundings.

“His father must have looked just like him,” she mused, “and it would be better—aye and kinder too—to let him go to his ain. I’ll do it. I’ll swither no longer about it. I’ll do it this very day. It is his right anyhow, and righting him will right others also.”

But she was not perhaps as eager to follow out her intention as she supposed, for a thunder storm coming up in the afternoon, she put it off for that day. And the next morning she remembered it was Saturday, and o’er near the Sabbath to bring up the subject,

and during these days she was more affectionate to the little lad, and felt his father tugging strangely at her heart through him.

“But I would think shame o’ myself if I could fret for a man like Logie Cameron,” she said bitterly. “I am o’er good a woman to want the love of a bad man. Thank God for that!” and then she laid the child back on the box bed — the poor little one was a temptation.

That night she privately sold her cottage for one hundred and twenty pounds, with the right of ten-anting it for the balance of the year — and with this money in her hands, she might have hesitated much longer. But Destiny does not hesitate. The hour had struck for Jessy’s return to the struggle of life, and when the undisputable whisper in her heart was paltered with, and put off, she sent a messenger that would do her will.

It was Rule Macintyre.

Rule had just returned from a long voyage, and was a prosperous man now, showing no sign of the heart-wound he had suffered. There is a past after wronged love that seems wholly past, and though to weep into stones is a fable, such sorrows do often induce callosities of the heart. Rule believed himself to be quite cured of his love for Jessy, and as he had a few days of leisure he resolved to go to St. Andrews. For he had been in tropic seas, and the

thought of the North Sea with its fishing fleets, stirred his heart. He longed for its wide, cool spaces; and the mystic language of the great winds that blew there was sounding in his ears.

He had finished his business in Glasgow, and was crossing Stockwell Bridge to these thoughts of his native town, when some subtle instinct made him look forward; and he saw Willie Ged, his old ship mate, approaching. He sent a shout of welcome to greet him, but to his amazement Willie shirked his recognition and crossed the bridge as if to avoid him. For a moment he was confounded by the incident, then he hastened forward, but Willie had mingled in the crowd and disappeared. He was much troubled, though he kept assuring himself, that Willie had certainly not known him.

A few hours later Willie came into a sailor's restaurant where Rule was eating. He saw Rule at once, hesitated a moment, then went to a table and ordered some oat cakes and whiskey. Rule lifted his own glass and carried it to Ged's table.

"I'm thinking you didn't see me Willie," he said cheerily. "How's all with you?"

"I saw you. Don't sit down at my board, Rule Macintyre. I'm no caring to drink with you."

"There is some mistake old mate. What wrong have I ever done you?"

"For the sake of the nights we have sailed to-

gether against death, you might have spared me that question, Rule. But if you ask me, I'll tell you plainly that I think you the biggest scoundrel in Fife, or out o' it."

"My God Willie, them are awful words!"

"They are none too bad for the thing you have done. A poor fatherless, brotherless lass! *Dod Man!* There are no words ill enough for you! What for did you run away from your wrong-doing and its righting? What for did you leave St. Andrews?"

"I left, because I had more sorrow than I could face."

"To be sure. And poor Jessy had to face it alone. Man! Man I-didn't think the Auld East Neuk, held such a despiseable coward!"

"Coward!"

"Coward a thousand times. You are bigger, and stronger, and younger than I am, and you can knock the word down my throat if it suits you; but if I was choking, I would still say you are a measureless coward."

"I am not going to fight a blunder, and there is a big one here. What is wrong with Jessy Laurie?"

"'Most everything. Her mother was sick when she came home, and she never lifted up her head again. She was in her bed many weeks before Jessy's child was born, and its first cry was Janet Laurie's

death cry. Then Jessy had a fever, and hardly pulled herself back to life again; maybe it would have been better if she had gone away from it. She is a very sorrowful lass these days."

"Jessy's child!" It was all Rule could say. Great drops of sweat stood on his brow, and his large face was a map of grief and anger. "Jessy's child! I am not understanding."

"You ought to."

"Do you think I wronged Jessy? Not by a word! Not by a thought! God is my witness!"

"Folks say you did."

"Does Jessy say that?"

"Her very silence says it. Neither her mother, nor her friends could get her to open her mouth, to blame any one. But every man and woman put the sin on you, and she never denied it. Besides, it is well known that you were the lassie's only sweetheart."

"She lets me take the blame o' it?"

"She does. And there's none among our set doubt it if it be not Annie Tulloch and her mother. But Annie has been long in love with you and her 'think' isn't worth a bodle."

"You, at least Willie, ought to have known me better. Did I ever wrong you, or any other man?"

"No. I could trust you with my siller, and my life, and have no fear of either; but there's plenty o' men that wouldn't wrong their fellow-men for any

thing in this world or the next, that will wrong a lassie without rhyme or reason, but their own selfishness, and think no shame o' it."

"I am going straight to St. Andrews. I did not wrong the poor lass, but maybe I can find out the miserable wretch who did. And I must put myself right in the sight of my mates and friends. Take my word before God, Willie, that I am as innocent of this wickedness, as you are."

"I am ready and happy to believe you, Rule. And it is but just to yoursel' and every Fife fisher, that you should go home at once, and put yourself right. God go with you!"

Both men lifted their caps reverently at the Name, and then Rule went out into the crowded, rainy street with a heart so hot and heavy, that for some minutes he knew not the way he took.

Before he reached St. Andrews however he had considered calmly the whole position and made up his mind as to the course he would pursue. He knew that hour that he still loved Jessy, but there was bitter sense of wrong and indignation mingled with his love, for he understood that she had wilfully slain his good name in order to shield from popular indignation the real culprit. About him he had no uncertain feeling. Nothing should prevent his exposure if possible, and late as it was he should do Jessy the justice he ought to have done long ago. These were

the ends Rule put before himself and he was possessed by a fierce impatience to accomplish them.

But when he reached St. Andrews it was Saturday evening, and the Sabbath peace was already over the grave old city. He therefore resolved to stay in St. Andrews until Monday morning, and he went to his Aunt Margot's house. She had gone to a hydro-pathic home for the cure of her rheumatism, and there was only a strange old woman there, who reminded Rule that it "was vera near the Sabbath" and so shut the door in his face. A small inn was reluctantly more hospitable, and in one of its bare quiet rooms he slept until the good wife awakened him with a reproof, for being "so late on the holy day."

Then he dressed and went toward the old Kirk. His heart swelled with solemn love and pride as he walked the pleasant paths of South Street — for the holy charm of the Sabbath day filled them — ministers, professors, and great congregations walking sedately Kirkward; every man, woman and child having The Book in their hands.

The greatest crowd was verging to the old Kirk and there Rule also went. He knew that Jessy and others from his own village worshipped there, but he resolved not to let any human being trouble him on that day. He saw no one but Annie Tulloch and she was not aware of his presence. Indeed he forgot all earthly things as soon as the minister read tenderly

210 THE HEART OF JESSY LAURIE

the Psalm "Such pity as a Father hath" and the whole congregation took up the loving words and sang them to the pathetic strains of Martyrdom. The sermon was logical and theological; but it was such as the hungry sheep of Scotch training find good spiritual food in; and Rule was comforted and satisfied.

In the afternoon he again went to Kirk, but in the gloaming he wandered away to the beautiful Pends and the old Abbey, and listened to the changeless voice of the North Sea in the roofless fanes—the same sad, mighty voice that had spoken to Eadmer and Saint Margaret, to Beaton and Queen Mary, to Robert Bruce in the priory, and to John Knox in the besieged castle. And he was counselled and strengthened by the stillness and holiness of the day and by the familiar face of the sea and the land he loved. So he was glad that he had not been able to go about his own affairs while his heart was hot with passion.

The next morning was an exquisite one. He knew the hour at which the fisher women were back from their morning sales, and he waited until it arrived. Then he went to the Laurie cottage. The door that had always stood open in fine weather was shut, the windows were dusty and without the flowers that Janet had loved, the very walls had an air of discontent and unhappiness. He knocked sharply on the door, reflecting as he did so that he had never be-

fore knocked for entrance to that house; and he wondered at himself for the ceremony which yet he had instinctively felt he ought to observe.

Jessy answered the summons with a quick "Come in" and he went in. She was sitting on the hearth braiding her long hair, and when she saw Rule she laughed hysterically and said —

"You were the last o' my thoughts. What brought you here?"

"Yourself, Jessy. I heard in Glasgow of all that has happened to you, and I have come back to sort things, as far as you will let me. I am your true friend always, you know that, Jessy."

"I will not have you meddle in my affairs, so you have come on a fool's errand."

"Jessy, tell me then, what for you let folk blame me for your wrong? Your mother has gone out o' the world thinking ill o' me. I do not deserve the like o' such treatment from you."

"My mother knew the whole truth. She is not blaming you, far from it. As for the blame o' others, you often said, that you would give your life to pleasure or help me, if I wanted it — just silly words it seems — like the rest o' them."

"My life is a little thing, Jessy. My good name, and my honor is beyond all price."

"Perfect nonsense! Nobody asked you for your life, but when I just let you stand in the place o' an-

other, you come all the way from Glasgow to fight about it."

"I will not stand for a scoundrel and a liar — not even for you, Jessy."

"You may keep such ill names for yourself. They may suit you better than they suit the lad I love."

"Who is he? Tell me, Jessy. If there be a minister in St. Andrew's he shall make you his wife."

"Tell you who he is? No, no! I'll never tell you. As for making him do aught, you have not the power. He is none o' your kind."

"Do you really love him yet, Jessy? How can you?"

"Rule Macintyre, I will not be put to catechism by you. No one but God knows the matter, and whatever wrong there is, He will sort it. What are you doing in my house anyway? Just think of what people will say. And who sent for you? Who wants you? Not myself, I'll swear to that."

"You did love me."

"That is a bygone."

"And I love you yet. I would —"

"You have no right to say such words to me — and I have no right to listen to them. Go away."

"I came purposely to help you."

Then she rose in a flame of passion. "I don't want your help," she screamed. "You are like the rest — you must see and hear and meddle. You don't care

how much you pain and humble me. Do you think a woman sore wounded as I am, can be helped by making her more of a town's talk than she is? Do I want a husband dragged to the Kirk to marry me? You, at least, ought to know me better. You came here to help me? Not so. You came here to make yourself out a very angel, and to soothe your ain disappointment by a sight o' my misery. Think shame o' yourself! Think shame o' yourself!" and at this moment her loud voice and, heartbreaking sobs woke up the child, who had been sleeping in the box bed beside her.

She lifted it in a defiant manner, shook it crossly, and laid it back with a peremptory order to "be off to sleep." The babe's wailings, mingled with Jessie's accusations, were more than Rule could bear — besides, he saw that Jessie was on the point of breaking down, and as he was unable to reason with her, he put her gently back into her chair saying — "Whist! Whist Jessie! I'll vex you no more. I came here to comfort you — to be your friend.—"

"Go away!" she sobbed, "go away. Have you no pity in your heart? Go to Annie Tulloch. She knows my business better than I do myself — go anyway, Rule! I cannot bear you longer."

Then sadly and reluctantly Rule left the cottage, and Jessie was instantly and anxiously unhappy. For in her jealous dislike of Annie, she had sent Rule

to the only person able and likely to give him the information he wanted. For a moment she considered her position, then she said in a determined voice and manner —

“ I must do at once, what I ought to have done long since;”—and she hastily dressed her hair, threw a little shawl over her head, and lifting the child in her arms went rapidly toward the west end of South Street.

She stopped at a large stone house set in a fine garden full of stately trees, and carefully kept flower beds. The blue heaven was above her; the green earth, the soft wind, and all the soul of summer around, but she noticed none of these things. Her heart was hot with a desperate emotion, and at that hour the whole world was in her arms. After entering the iron gateway she hesitated a moment, then she walked boldly up to the front door, and impetuously knocked with the large brass knocker that shone on its snow-white surface. In a few minutes a young woman threw it open, but when she saw Jessy with the child in her arms, she said angrily —

“ What did you call me here for? You saucy hizzy, go to the back o’ the house!”

“ I’ll not do it. Put me in the best room, and go tell Miss Cameron she is wanted to speak with me. Dinna stare at me lassie, but do as you are bid. Have you fairly forgotten your business?”

She was in the wide, cool hall by this time, for she had pushed past the girl; and seeing the door of the parlor open, she went in there and sat down. For a few minutes she was alone, and she looked with a kind of awe on the pictured Camerons, and on the silver service piled in shining tiers above the mahogany sideboard. Under ordinary circumstances she would have been impressed by the stillness and splendor around her, but the child nestling against her breast gave her in place of every other sentiment a desperate courage.

In a short time Miss Cameron entered the room. She looked with clear, calm eyes into Jessy's flushed, anxious face, and said softly: "I am Miss Cameron. Who are you?"

"Folks call me Jessy Laurie."

"Is not that your name?"

"It will do — at present."

"What do you want with me?"

"I want to tell you, that if Logie is at home he must get out of St. Andrews before sunset."

"What have you to say about Mr. Cameron's going or staying?"

"You need not 'Mister' Logie to me. This is his child, and it is long past 'Mister' between us two. He lied his soul to hell for me; for him, I have suffered the worst a woman can thole, and he has been cruel enough, God knows! But I don't want to see

him fall into the hands of the Rath fishermen, with Rule Macintyre to lead them on."

"I do not understand."

"I was promised to Rule, and for Logie's sake I deceived him; and then Logie deceived me. I am right served."

"Are you telling me the truth?"

"God's truth, every word."

"How can I know that?"

"I am a fisher lass. Lying isn't our sin."

"But why has there been no danger to my brother before this?"

"I sent Rule away from me before he knew the worst. Folks all believe the child is Rule's child."

"And you let them think that?"

"I did. I wasn't caring to put Logie to shame and trouble."

"So you let an innocent man bear the shame and trouble. You are a bad girl. You are a liar of the worst kind. You have lived a lie, lived it with every sense you have — for how long?"

"All of a year."

"And you would have gone on living a lie, if this old lover of yours had not come back?"

"I am going away myself. I had all ready to leave, when Rule came back."

"That would have been still worse. Do you know what you ought to do?"

"I am going away;" she answered dourly.

“ But before you go, you must clear Rule.”

“ Rule can take care of his own good name.”

“ You have wronged him, and you must right him.”

“ I did not come here for a sermon anent Rule Macintyre. I came to tell you, that Logie must get out of the way till the ill blood flows past; if he does not, he may get all young Muir got about the Geddes lassie. You heard tell o’ that? ”

“ Yes.”

“ Then send him away if he is here. If he is not here, tell him to stay away. I don’t want folks laughing at the lad I once loved, and I’m not caring to be the talk of our women far and near.”

“ My brother is not in St. Andrews. He is in London at present.”

“ Look here at Logie’s son. Is he not his very image and likeness? ”

She uncovered the child, and held him out in her arms, and Christine Cameron rather reluctantly let her eyes fall upon him. Then her face lighted, she touched his hands, then his cheeks, then she stooped and kissed him.

“ You are right;” she answered, “ the boy is very like my brother.”

“ Well, you can write and tell your brother, that his son will be on the town to-night. I shall send the bairn to the workhouse. I can’t care for it any longer.”

“ You shall do no such thing. Come, I will make

a bargain with you. This afternoon at four o'clock I will drive to your house, and in the presence of your neighbors I will take the child for my own. And you shall then and there tell the whole truth about it."

"You may have the child — but I won't say a word to hurt Logie."

"You must tell the truth, or I will not take the child."

"As I can do no better, I will do as you say."

After some inquiry about the location of Jessy's house, the conversation ceased. Miss Cameron was troubled, and Jessy could not force the reserve with which she had surrounded herself. So she went rather sullenly away, half-inclined to draw back from her part of the bargain. But the hot walk home, and the weight of the infant, decided her.

"I can do nothing, either for myself or the poor little lad," she thought. "And he ought to be well clad, and cared for. I must think o' him before myself; and then also, I'll give the women something to talk about. Set them up the cutties! They are no better than I am — maybe not as good."

She stopped an old woman she met at this point in her reverie, and said to her — "Babbie, you tell the wives and the lassies to come to my house at four o'clock this afternoon, and they will get their eyes and their ears filled."

“What’s to be Jessy? What’s to be?”

“Come and see for yourselves.”

So when the Cameron carriage with its fine horses and liveried servants stopped before Jessy’s door, there was a quick movement of a number of women from their own houses toward the Laurie cottage. Miss Cameron went inside, and stood silently upon the hearth, watching the little room fill with the white-capped women, who looked as solemn as if there were a minister present. When it would hold no more she stepped to the bed on which the child lay. Jessy stood beside it. She spread out her arms and motioned Jessy to lay the sleeping babe in them. The mother did so. Her eyes were feverishly bright, her cheeks red, and she trembled at her task; but she shed no tears, and made no outcry.

“Friends,” said Miss Cameron, “I am Christine Cameron, the daughter of Buchan Cameron. You all remember or have heard tell of him?”

There was a low murmur of assent, for which Christine waited, and which she acknowledged by a faint smile.

“This little laddie,” she continued, “is the son of my brother Logan Cameron and of your friend Jessy Laurie.”

A louder murmur and some indignant glances at Jessy followed this announcement.

“ I have agreed to adopt this child for my own, and in God’s presence I promise to bring up the boy in His fear, to present him for baptism and to give him a good education. I promise to be kind to him, and patient with him, in all the ills and follies of his bairnhood and boyhood. And if in anything I fail in my duty, or break the promise I now make, let one of you come and tell me my fault. You are the witnesses between God and me, and his mother and me.”

Then she turned to Jessy and said: “ Come Jessy, you have now something to say. Be honest, so that no future trouble come out of this.” Then Jessy, who had been standing with her eyes cast down upon the child, lifted her head, and with a touch of resentment, almost reckless in its vanity of filling the eyes and the ears of her often unfriendly neighbors said:—

“ I promised Miss Cameron to tell the truth, and the whole o’ it, and I’m not the lass to break my word. You’ll mind, it was yourselves, and not me, who put the bairn on Rule. I never said this nor that anent the father. It was none o’ your business and I wasn’t going to tell you anything till I was good and ready to do so. Well I’m ready now, for I’m going away from St. Andrews— where I’ve been treated vera badly — and so I want you to know, that my bonnie bairn is no fisher bairn it is the son of Logan Cameron.

Those of you who have blamed Rule Macintyre, can call themselves all the names they deserve. As far as I know, Rule Macintyre is as big a saint as any in the old Kirk. So I hope you'll give the lad all the respect that's his due. This is all I have to say, but it will keep the tongues of you wagging for a little while."

"It is enough, Jessy," interrupted Miss Cameron, for the girl having loosed her tongue seemed inclined to go on talking. Then a maid who had accompanied her unfolded an opera cloak of white satin and swan's down, and wrapping it around the child carried it to the Cameron carriage. Poor Jessy! she kissed it with a sorrow none there understood, but even in its sore pang she was somewhat soothed by her pride in the beautiful garment, and the carriage waiting for her little lad. Most of the women touched one of its hands, or gave it a blessing as it passed them, and then it was out of sight and the crowd stood talking in whispers about the self-bereaved mother, who had sunk into a chair and sat intently listening to the receding wheels.

It was not long however until they began to assail her with questions and then the girl's temper, so hardly restrained, gave way; and she drove them from her house with an eloquence they all understood and appreciated. In the morning she was gone. The

222 THE HEART OF JESSY LAURIE

curtain across the little window was drawn. The door was locked. The fire on the hearth was dead. There was no life left in the house, and the woman who had so nobly borne the chastisement of her folly in its humble covert, had escaped its bounds. She would know them no more forever.

CHAPTER TWELVE

THE CALL OF DESTINY

After Jessy had driven out her neighbors with reproaches none of them were likely to forget, she fell upon her bed and wept as only youth can weep; wept until exhaustion brought relief in a sleep beyond the touch of shame or sorrow. From this sleep she did not awake until it was quite dark; indeed from the close lippering of the tide and the absolute absence of all human sounds she judged it to be after midnight. For a little while she lay still and considered what was yet to do ere she could leave St. Andrews forever. She had "been sore wounded in the house of her friends," and she was conscious of that spiritual and physical lassitude which follows excessive feeling especially if the feeling had been one of injustice and unkindness.

And at this hour she derived the needed strength and hope from a very, very old sufferer. For as she lay thinking over the cruel advices and reproaches that had been so freely given her, she suddenly remembered the perfect man of Uz, and the oblique counsels and warnings he had felt to be a deeper wrong than the

downright blows of the devil. It had been the last Bible lesson she had studied and she recalled it with a kind of triumph:—

“There was Maggie Tulloch and Jean Todd, and Sarah Baird and the rest o’ them,” she thought — “they came round me just as Job’s ill-natured friends called at his dunghill to read him lectures on his misery. They were as sure as Job’s friends were of their own righteousness and my wickedness, but”— and she sat upright with a quickening pulse — “it was the poor leper on the dunghill God listened to and talked to, and those very respectable people had even to get poor Job to pray for them.”

Then she smiled at the memory and lifted up her heart in hope for the future. For she had frequently told herself during the past sorrowful weeks that she must not lose life, because she had lost love. All the uncanceled powers of youth were strong within her, and she felt their potency, though she did not yet know in what direction she must exercise them.

Her first step was, however, certain — she must bury the old life before she began the new. With this thought she rose, closed the wooden storm shutter and in solitude and silence made her last preparations. They were not many, nor yet difficult. Her trunk had been sent to a small station on the London road ten days previously. The weekly carrier had taken it, and as his call had been at the supper hour no one

had noticed its departure. The cottage and its furniture belonged now to old Peter Tallisker, and she could trust Peter to look well after every tittle of his own. There was only her mother's personal belongings and the child's few garments to attend to. The latter were her first care; she could do nothing until they were out of her sight. So she carried the small bundle into the garden, and in the dim starlight dug a little grave and buried them in it. And as she did so she tried also to bury the memory of those bitter hours in which she had taken every stitch in them with a tear.

Her mother's drawer was her next care. She took out of it Janet's linseys, her one merino kirk gown, her bits of coarse linen, her white caps and checked aprons, and put them into a small box which she directed to "Ann Merrilees from Janet Laurie." Ann had been Janet's familiar friend and they had loved and helped one another in all their troubles. Ann had not opened her lips to Jessy since her mother's death for she blamed the girl in many ways, but Jessy did not resent this attitude. "She was true to my Mother," she thought, "and I know Mother would like her to have the clothes." There were so few of them that Jessy's heart ached as she put them together.

"She was fifty-two years old," she sighed, "and she worked hard all the days of her life, and that wee

bundle is all she had for herself out of her labor." Jessy cried out at the sight, and stooping she kissed the wee bundle and wet it with sad, regretful tears.

Lying in the corner of the drawer was her mother's housewife and a string of blue glass beads. The housewife was only a roll of coarse cloth in which Janet had kept her thimble, scissors, needles and thread, ever since Jessy could remember anything. Janet had always carried it in her pocket and Jessy now transferred it to her own. The beads touched her more than anything else. They were the one simple ornament Janet possessed. They had in their poverty a pathetic look, and Jessy thought of her mother wearing them when she was "young and bonnie as herself"; and then, as her wifely duties grew and she became older and more homely, of her hiding them away out of her sight. For a few minutes she held them uncertainly then she slipped them into her breast.

Her own linseys and house garments she left hanging in a closet. "Peter will take them," she decided, "and nobody gets anything out of Peter's hands. They will fall to pieces in his store-room or the moths will carry them away. I'm not caring what becomes o' them. They are full o' sorrow and heartache — there's few would care to put them on. Sorrow's catching, they all know that."

These things finished she kindled a fire and made her last meal in her home. She was tired and hungry, and the tea and scone and bit of broiled fish tasted good. And as she ate she talked to her mother as if she was present — and who dare say that she was not present? — And because she knew her mother would like her to leave all clean, she washed the dishes she had used and swept up the hearth, and went through the house to see that everything was “just as Mother would want it to be.”

“The bit cottage has sheltered three generations of Lauries,” she said softly, as she dusted the chest of drawers that was Janet’s pride, “a poor little place enough, but as I have heard father often say, ‘the portion which the Lord God gave the Lauries in the land of the living.’ Poor father! Poor father! Poor Mother!” She stood still, and looked round the little place with one of those soul glances that photograph scenes for eternity.

It was then half-past three and there were already signs of the dawning. So she washed and dressed herself, and then carefully stepped, right foot foremost, over the threshold she would never cross again. Her walk was unhesitating and she took no backward look, but kept her heart and eyes steadily fixed upon the new life she was going to frame to better purpose than the life she had just buried. All went well

228 THE HEART OF JESSY LAURIE

with her plans. She met no one she knew. She found her trunk easily, and was just in comfortable time for a south-bound train.

She was going to London. She had chosen that city for several reasons; none of them apparently very cogent but in the absence of all others not to be rejected. First, London was a long way from St. Andrews. Second, it was the only city, apart from St. Andrews, with which she had any familiarity. Third, the only person in the world who might feel disposed to help her lived there. Fourth, if London failed her, still from that city she could easily find a way to America, which was her secondary hope.

The train she had taken was a slow, parliamentary one and it was night when she reached the metropolis. But the guard had directed her to a small hotel in Sassex Street, and there she found a clean, simple room suitable to her finances. That night she put all thought away from her; she slept well and long, and in the morning awoke with a strange new sense of responsibility — the necessity of making money. But first of all she had to buy some necessary and proper clothing, and also find out the address of George Saville's studio. She knew it was in Bond Street, but had no remembrance of its exact location. Presently however she came to a large picture shop, into which she went and made the necessary inquiry. She was

much pleased to learn that the studio was in that very building.

"It is a good sign," she said to herself, "that I walked straight to the very place I wanted to find. To-morrow I will see what Mr. Saville can do for me."

The next morning she went early to the studio. She found it on the top floor of the building, and as she stood a moment before the closed door Saville began to sing. Jessy smiled, it was another good sign, and she knocked for admission. Then the singing ceased and a voice in rather peremptory tones said,

"Open, and come in."

But when Saville saw the vision he had summoned, he was for a few moments full of wonder. The face had a certain familiarity, but the tall figure robed in black cashmere with a graceful black silk scarf across the shoulders, and a large black chip hat on the grandly poised head, puzzled him for a moment. However, as Jessy advanced she smiled, and then he knew her.

"Why, Jessy! Why, Jessy! Why, Miss Laurie!" he cried.

"If you please sir, Mrs. Cameron."

"Mrs. Cameron, certainly. I saw Mr. Cameron's name the other day in the list of Lord Gilmour's dinner guests. I hope he is well."

"I do not know. My husband left me ten months

230 THE HEART OF JESSY LAURIE

ago. I am poor, and my kin are all on the other side. I must work for bread to myself, and I thought o' you."

"I am very glad you did; surely Mr. Cameron supports you?"

"He offered me fifty pounds when he left me."

"And you did not touch it?"

"I would have thought black burning shame o' myself, if I had put a finger on it."

"Right! That you say is ten months ago?"

"Yes, I went straight home to my mother. She died last March. I am quite alone. I have not an acquaintance here, except yourself."

"I am your friend, Mrs. Cameron. I have a just call to be your friend, and to help you in every way I can. It was your face that brought me recognition, that opened the door of fame and fortune to me. I owe you as a just debt, whatever it is in my power to do for you, and moreover, it will give me great pleasure to pay what I owe."

Jessy smiled divinely, and held out her hand. "Thank you," she said, "I know that I can trust you. But there are many things I ought to tell you." She took the chair which Saville placed for her, and then in her own strong Doric — always ready on her tongue when she was greatly moved — she told him the wrong and shame and sorrow she had suffered.

He was on fire with sympathy ere her story was

finished, and even while she was speaking he was busy with plans for her help and righting.

“Where are you staying, Mrs. Cameron?” he asked. Jessie named the hotel, and he continued, “You must go to my sister Alice. She will be glad of your company and you will do each other good.”

In five minutes he was ready to accompany her, and as they walked together, he said, “I am going to tell you a little secret, Mrs. Cameron; such a happy secret! What do you think? I am going to be married in three months — going to be married to the sweetest girl in England.” And on this topic they conversed until they arrived at Russel Square, and Jessy understood that he had given her this confidence in order to assure her of the sincerity of his friendship. He wanted her to feel that it rested on gratitude and not on any passing admiration for her own physical beauty.

They entered a large brick house in Russel Square, and Saville led her into a room opening from the main hall — a bright, sunny room full of flowers, and furnished and painted in the lightest shades of pinks and blues. There was a wide couch before one of the windows, and upon it, among piles of gaily embroidered cushions, lay a little creature that seemed but the shell or shadow of a woman. Her face had that seraphic expression often seen on the faces of

those suffering from a deformed spine, her golden hair was scattered in exquisite beauty over a white satin pillow, her form robed in white cambric, was small as that of a child eight years old and her whole appearance one of extreme fragility.

"Oh, George!" she cried, "So you have brought me company! I knew she was coming. See! I have had her place prepared." And she pointed to the table which had been laid for three instead of two.

There was hardly any need to introduce the women. Alice paid no attention to the form. "Come and sit beside me, Jessy," she said, stretching out her tiny hand, and laying it with a smile on Jessy's large capable one. "I know you," she continued. "Your picture is in my heart. Now I see you with my eyes. How strong! How straight! How beautiful you are! You have a story — it is in your face, your mouth trembles with it. Come and tell it to me."

So they sat down by her side, and Saville told her Jessy's story; and as she listened, her blood spoke so eloquently in her cheeks, it was as if her body thought.

"You must find that Matthew Barbour, George," she said definitely when Saville ceased speaking.

"That is the first step of course, Alice; but how can I find him?"

"I suppose there are clergymen of the Kirk of Scotland in London?"

"I know of one — there may be others."

“Go to the one you know of. He will surely have a list of all the clergy. Ask where Mr. Barbour is placed.”

“But Alice, he had left the church to study chemistry.”

“Cameron said so. Do you believe that statement? If Barbour ever received orders, it would not be very easy to get rid of them. He was likely at that time what the Scotch call ‘a Stickit Minister,’ and while he was ‘stuck’ he was studying chemistry. He may have received a living since, I feel sure he has.”

At this point lunch was served, and Jessy lifted Alice and placed her in her seat as easily as she would have lifted an infant. They smiled into each other’s eyes, and Jessy moved her own chair nearer to Alice, waiting on her with an affection which needed no words — it could be felt. This pitying love for anything weak or suffering was the dominant quality of Jessy’s nature. It was the appeal that always met a response. Never had she loved her mother so tenderly as during those last weeks when she had her to care for night and day; and if her own baby had been crippled, or sickly, nothing would have induced her to surrender it to others. So there was at once a fundamental tie between the women, and Jessy readily agreed to remain with Alice Saville until something suitable for her future could be determined on.

However events did not lag, for those whom Destiny

calls find all doors open to their touch. That afternoon Saville visited the Scotch minister known to him, and asked the simple question Alice had suggested. Without a word, he took a book from its shelf and after running his finger a very short way down a page said:—

“Matthew Barbour, Minister of Strathmaylin, Rosshire.” Then lifting his eyes he added, “He was only placed there last New Year. He must be a very young man. He has had no other charge.”

So far the information was reliable and valuable, and Jessy received it gratefully. But she pointed out the possibility of Barbour having only been ordained when he accepted the living. She was sure Cameron had told her he had given up theology for chemistry.

“But an ordained minister could be a chemical student,” said Alice. “Scotsmen are prudent bodies, and while he was waiting for a Kirk, why should he not be studying chemistry, or medicine, or law, or anything else he had a liking for?”

“I will go and see Mr. Barbour,” said Saville. “Jessy will mother and brother and sister you while I am away. A few words from him will settle the matter, and then we shall know what ground we have to stand upon.”

In pursuance of this resolve Saville left for Scotland the next day. He had a happy disposition, and

was disposed to take all the pleasure possible from every event that came to him, and his artistic love of the beautiful was well pleased with the prospect of this little incursion into the wild valleys of Rosshire. So he made no hurry, but took with leisurely enjoyment the grand scenery of the Ross coast — the sun and the sand and the uproar of the sea among the basaltic caves. The little journey of fourteen miles inland he made on foot, singing with the birds as he went.

So it was not until the afternoon of the fourth day after leaving London that he reached the small town of Strathmaylin. He found the little Inn easily, had a dinner of fish and grouse, curds and cream and oat cakes, and then asked the landlady about the minister.

She pointed to a house standing in a grove of decaying trees, a small house, square and grey, surrounded by a field of corn and a yard in which kail and potatoes were growing. "That is the manse, Sir, and you'll be finding the Minister in it at this hour o' the day. When it's later he'll be on the hill-sides, talking to himsel', or else in the cottages scolding folk."

"Scolding?"

"Aye Sir, just scolding and frightening folk. We have been without a Minister a year, or maybe two years, and young and old are a bit thoughtless.

You should have heard him disciplining Maggie Laggan, the poor old wife, for setting her hen with twelve eggs! He told her it was a mystical appeal to the twelve signs o' Heaven — clear divination and no less — a fair bribing o' the Fiend and the bottomless pit."

"He must be a very strict minister."

"We are a vera strict in this part o' Ross, but we didn't think o' the Hallowe'en players being 'priests o' infernal rites' till he told them so. Maister Barbour is a vera faithful minister. His housekeeper was telling me, that he has likewise a gunpowdery temper, not safe to trifle wi'."

"He's weel enough," said the landlord, who had been listening to his wife's appraisal, "weel enough as a minister — but a poor body, just a poor body outside the Kirk walls. He canna shoot at all. He lets off his gun promiscuous like, and he talks of his ancestors a deal — them as was before him — just so!" and the kilted giant lifted his gun, and with an air of disdainful disapproval went off to the hills.

With these two frankly spoken estimates of Matthew Barbour in his mind Saville walked up to the forlorn looking house which he occupied. A slatternly old woman answered his knock for admittance, and opening a door just inside the threshold, he found himself in Matthew Barbour's presence.

“ I am George Saville, the artist, Mr. Barbour. Perhaps you have heard my name before? ”

“ I have, Sir. I suppose you have come here for marine studies. There are fine ones on this coast. Can I do anything for you? ”

The two men were standing facing each other, and Saville noted the strong, placid look in the Minister’s spectacled eyes, and the air of resignation, even of melancholy, which infected his appearance and the tones of his voice. “ Sir,” answered Saville, “ I came to question you concerning a marriage you performed on the eighteenth of April last year. It was in Edinburgh — ”

“ I remember the occasion, perfectly. ”

“ The contracting parties were — ”

“ Logan Cameron of St. Andrews and Jessy Laurie of the same place. ”

“ Cameron has denied, and deserted his wife. He says you had no authority to perform such a ceremony, and that you knew you had no authority — that you were at the time a chemist, not a minister. ”

“ He says, in fact, that I connived with him to deceive Miss Laurie? ”

“ Exactly. ”

“ Then he lies. Miss Laurie was not deceived. She was lawfully married by me a licensed minister of the Kirk of Scotland. If there was any deception in that affair, Logan Cameron was the victim. He

deceived himself. The wicked are often taken in their own craftiness."

"He believed you to have given up theology, and to be studying chemistry."

"He may have so believed. Cameron had a way of believing his desires to be facts."

"Ought you not to have told him that you were in full orders?"

"No Sir. That was not my business. If he had asked me the question, I would have made him a straight, truthful answer. He took for granted his own wish."

"You thought then that he intended to deceive Miss Laurie?"

"I did not act upon Cameron's supposed thoughts, but on his spoken words."

"And how far did he explain himself?"

"I would not enter into explanations with him. He tried — in a dubious, winking, inferential way — to explain the situation to me, but I stopped him. I said, there are only two points for me to consider, Mr. Cameron, one is, that you want me to marry you; the other is, that you will give me fifty pounds for the service."

"But you suspected that he intended to deceive Miss Laurie?"

"My suspicions had nothing to do with the facts. I knew Miss Laurie would *not* be deceived. I had no

heart-ache about Cameron deceiving Cameron. When men dig a pit for others I like to see them fall into it themselves."

"It is surely strange that Mr. Cameron did not know you had been ordained?"

"It would be more strange if he had known. We were in different classes and sets when he went in and out — and mostly out — of St. Andrews; and the year I finished my course and was licensed, he was travelling on the continent with a German tutor. When I met him on the street in Edinburgh he did not remember me, and I had to recall my nickname on the links before he did."

"Then his sin against Jessy Laurie was not premeditated, at last as it touches yourself."

"His sin was fully determined on; he was only waiting for the opportunity and the tool."

"The tool?"

"Ay, the tool. But in this case, the tool was sharpened for the evil doer. For always behind the Orphan stands invincible justice. Often I have wondered over the events of that afternoon, all unforeseen, yet all working for one righteous end."

"I do not quite understand."

"I will explain. That afternoon I wanted money very, very badly, and when I saw Cameron coming towards me, I resolved to ask him to lend me five pounds. It was the bitter want of money made me

see him at all. As I told you before, he did not remember me until I said 'you have forgotten Long Matthew, I see Mr. Cameron.' Then he laughed and asked me what I was doing, and I told him I was studying chemistry and needed money for books and materials. He answered, I thought it was Divinity. I said it does not pay these days, there are over many of us, and beside I have no call that way. I am going to be a chemist. If my words deceived him, I did not intend them to do so. At that hour they were true words."

"Then?"

"He asked me to walk further with him and he made me the proposal anent the marriage. He said Jessy Laurie had seen me when I was in the Divinity Class, and so would feel more confidence in me for that reason. And it came into my mind, that Providence intended two things in this offer — perhaps indeed three — and I gave myself freely to the furtherance of events evidently ordered by wiser and higher Powers. First, my unsuspected ministerial authority would enable me to defeat a great wrong intended against a woman poor and friendless. Second, the doing of this good deed would supply me with money I needed sorely for the furtherance of my studies.— Third — well it is better not to exalt myself over the thirdly."

"Yet I should like to hear its mission."

“Well, then,” and his face flushed, and he spoke with hardly restrained anger, “I owed Logan Cameron for many a snub and heartache hard to thole, and not possible to resent in college. He made fun of my tailor — and my tailor was my mother — God bless her! and I could not forget that insult. My shoes, my spectacles, everything I had was food for his mirth. On the links I was more than his match, but it was my long arms, or my long legs he gave the credit to. So my life was bitter to me when Cameron was in the college halls, or on the links, and then mind you, the man had forgotten all about his insults to me! Never made an apology or remark about it. I tried to remind him as he talked about the marriage, but he just ignored all my observations.”

“Probably he *had* forgotten.”

“No doubt he had. But I had not forgotten. And when I saw that the Lord had delivered my enemy into my hands, I was thankful and glad of heart, and I watched eagerly for the notice that I was wanted. Whiles I feared greatly it would not come. But it came. After three days it came! And I married Jessy Laurie to Logan Cameron. She is his wife, and I’m thinking there is not a law in Scotland to break my words.”

“Would you object to give me a written certificate to that effect?”

“I would like to do so. I will write it here and

then we will go to the Inn and Dugald Bonar and his wife will witness the paper. There is a notary public at Argall if you wish to see one."

"Is it necessary?"

"I think not, as I took good care on the day following the marriage to give the proper notice to the Town Clerk of Edinburgh. You will find it in the City Records."

"Oh! That indeed! That entry covers everything. Cameron must have seen it."

"*Him!* He sees nothing but what he wants. He would never dream of such evidence. I am sure that he is unaware of its existence. Cameron of Glenlochart is not subject to the customs which control common people. He went to London and the Continent as soon as the marriage ceremony was over. He tired of his wife, sent her adrift and dismissed the whole subject from his mind. He thinks also that I have removed myself to America. I told him I should do so and at the New Year I shall keep my promise."

"Then he does not know of your charge here?"

"He was somewhere in the South of Europe when the little Kirk was offered me. At the same time I met the lady whom I shall marry at Christmas. She is highly accomplished and mistress of a very fashionable girls' Boarding School. She will close this school and marry me, and we are going to Chicago

to open a Ladies' College in which we shall both teach. Her brother has made a fortune in that city; he says my title of Reverend will be of great value. We shall do very well together. And I am glad to put this affair in your hands before I leave the country. It has been a burden on my conscience. When I can pay Cameron his fifty pounds back I shall feel myself a respectable man again. And if he is home before I go to America I will throw the wages of his iniquity in his face. Then, it will be good for him to keep out of the reach of long Matthew's long arms." So speaking, Barbour sat down and wrote the following declaration:—

"This is to certify that on the eighteenth of April, One Thousand Eight Hundred Fifty-Two, I Matthew Barbour, a regularly ordained minister of the Kirk of Scotland, empowered to administer her rites and sacraments, did unite in holy matrimony, in the city of Edinburgh, at the house of one Mary Malcolm, Logan Cameron and Jessy Laurie both of the town of St. Andrews. The same marriage was duly witnessed, and notice of it given to the Town Clerk of the city of Edinburgh, One Thousand Eight Hundred Fifty-Two.

(Signed)

"MATTHEW BARBOUR,
"Minister of Strathmaylin,
"Ross."

"There is one favor, Mr. Saville," said the minister, "that I shall ask in return — it is, that this acknowledgment be unused in any way for six months. I have now cleared my soul concerning it, and I do

not wish ever to hear the circumstance named again — unless it were in some way vitally necessary to give right and wrong their due. Six months will see me in a new world and a new life, and I ask so much grace from you.”

“Indeed, Mr. Barbour, it may be many years before your authentication is required. Mrs. Cameron has no wish to press her claim — unless there was such urgent necessity as another marriage in contemplation.”

“That, of course. Cameron cannot marry again until he has divorced his present wife.”

“There is a son also.”

“A son! I am glad to hear it! His sin will find him out through two lives. Good! It is retribution, as the lawyers say, ‘with a double aspect.’ A son! So after all, the son of the fisher girl will be heir to Glenlochart! Truly there is a judge in the earth who doeth right.”

He then handed the certificate to Mr. Saville and soon after they went to the Inn together. There they spent the night, and the next morning Saville took the Southward road and in his happy leisurely way so managed his travel that he found himself close to the home of the sweetest girl in England on Friday night; and then it was the most natural thing in the world for him to spend the week-end with her. Alice had predicted this arrangement and no one was

troubled by his delay, although the two short notes received from him dealt only in assuring generalities. For, he told himself, he could not write the details of his mission without enormous labor, and that any letter would be followed immediately by his far more satisfactory personal explanations.

But however much we loiter and worry among events of the past, Destiny still looks forward, and busies herself in the shaping of the future. Indeed Jessy's private sorrows were fast becoming to her old and far-off things, compared with the ever-present, ever-fresh recurrence of the heart-breaking sorrow and suffering of Englishmen in the terrible trenches and fiery ways of the Crimea. It was all new, and cruelly vital to Jessy. In her isolation, the sound and sough of war had not consciously reached her. But Alice knew every item, felt every item, insisted on Jessy reading every word of every day's tale of incredible heroism, under incredible hardships and difficulties. The two women read and wept, and wept and read. They were on fire with anger and pity, and when they were in this mood one morning, Destiny sent her messenger.

This time it was Alice's physician, an alert, clever man of middle age, with a big brain and a big heart, and a wonderful power of bringing things to pass. He watched Jessy with admiration quite undisguised, for it was quite innocent. Her splendid vitality, her

great strength, her fine spirits, the aura of health and hope in which she moved were just the things he was looking for. And he lingered and watched her and talked to her until lunch was ready, and then his pleasure in her presence received an amazing climax, when she lifted Alice, and with a light and facile grace carried her into the next room, placing her without effort in her seat. The act was so natural, so loving, so matter-of-course, that the conversation was hardly broken until the Doctor with exclamations of enthusiastic delight cried out:—

“Mrs. Cameron! What are you doing here? You ought to be at Scutari! England is calling you! You must go to her suffering boys! You must! You must!”

“O Doctor, can I go?”

“Can you go? You are the woman I want. The very woman. I am at this hour raising a contingent for Miss Nightingale. I want women like you — women that can turn a poor lad on his pillow and lift him in their arms; women with muscles and red blood who can bear the sight of wounds. I hope to God you have no one to cry after you — no ties — no nonsensical love affairs, eh?”

“Only little Alice.”

“And to give *you* up, is Alice’s part. It is all she can do,” said Alice cheerfully.

“You are a brave, unselfish little woman, Alice.

And your part is the hardest. Which of us would not rather *do* something, than suffer and lie still?"

So while they ate lunch the matter was settled. Jessy was to go to Scutari with the rest of the contingent in a few weeks, and in the mean time she was to be with the Doctor in his hospital, day or night, as he wanted her. And there she astonished him still more. He found her quite able to put on a bandage, or clean a sore, or open an abscess, or even put into its place some joint that had slipped from its socket. How had she learned these things?

They were the household accomplishments of fishers' wives and daughters. After a stormy night at sea many men came into port injured. Salt water sores, wounds, bruises, strains, dislocations and very frequent abscesses were ordinary events. For generations the women of the sailor folk had attended to such troubles and Jessy had always been counted clever in their management. She was a natural healer of the sick. It was her vocation. And Doctor James Fleming had given her 'the call' to it.

Going between the hospital and Russel Square she had never been so happy in all her life. Talking with Alice about the events of the day and discussing its news from the seat of war, gave her little time for consideration of her personal trials. She forgot she had any, and there was small wonder that Saville thought his reception wanting in interest and excite-

ment. To him this irregular marriage of Jessy to Cameron seemed such an important thing. Jessy had thrown it and her false husband as far out of her memory as she possibly could. Her work, and her future work usurped her thoughts and even her feelings. She read Mr. Barbour's testimony with a supreme satisfaction but without much enthusiasm; and Saville could not understand her. To him it appeared the establishment of her honor, to Jessy it was only a proof of the honor she had never doubted. Her conscience had always defended and acquitted her in the matter of her marriage, and until her husband had declared it false she had never had a doubt of its legality.

“ I was untrue and disobedient to my good mother and I got the punishment I deserved; but I was never false to my honor, or my womanhood — not for a moment!” So much she frequently confessed to herself; and it was this sense of internal personal purity that made her regard the evidence of strangers as corroborative, rather than essential.

Yet she was undoubtedly proud and pleased to be assured of her position; her cheeks flushed, her eyes shone, and quite unconsciously she gave her handsome head a little defiant toss that was her natural expression of satisfaction with herself and her circumstances. That she was under a promise of silence

for six months was a matter of no consequence; she laughed scornfully at the inhibition:—

“ I’ll never speak of the unlucky circumstance, if he goes quietly, and keeps his mouth shut,” she said. “ I know well, that if I claim my right as his wife, I shall have to live with him; and I would fly to the uttermost parts of the earth before I would bide under his roof. I’ll not put myself in his power—no, not to be Queen of England. There are only two circumstances that would make me speak. One he can prevent, the other is beyond him. He’ll have to settle with ‘ the other ’ some day.”

“ What are they, Jessy? ”

“ If I hear tell o’ his trying to marry any other woman, I shall have to put a stop to that proceeding; and the other is the child. When he is a man grown, he must know his rights and guard them himself.”

“ Don’t you think he ought to know them before that time? ”

“ No. He’ll be a better man if he is held in by the thought o’ poverty and dependence. I don’t want him told that he is Cameron, heir of Glenlochart, until he can face his father with the paper you have just brought me. I hope he’ll be a minister by that time, and his father was aye a bit feared for a minister.”

“And you can wait, Jessy? I’m amazed.”

“Aye, I can wait — with the work I have found to do.”

Then she gave him back Mr. Barbour’s acknowledgment. “You must keep it for me,” she said. “I am going where life and death are only questions. God has given me a charge for my hands and my heart. I forget all else.” She lifted her hands upward as she spoke, and her voice held in its tones the very ecstasy of faith and love.

And so she speedily went into the red lanes of war and the lonely white aisles of death, to make trial of her steadfast soul; this daughter of labor and heart’s ease. For though of lowly birth, she had not come into life without God; so brave of heart, so strong of limb, her face shining with love, her hands ready to help, her words full of consolations.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

FULLY JUSTIFIED

For three years Jessy's life was wholly spent in the enormous barracks of Sultan Mahmud which were used by the English troops as a hospital, the army being encamped on the adjacent plain of Haidar Pasha. She left England with Miss Nightingale and her corps of nurses on October the twenty-first, eighteen hundred and fifty-three, and arrived on the eve of the battle of Inkermann. In the wards of the hospital there were already two thousand three hundred wounded and sick men, mainly the victims of the battle of Alma, which had been fought on September the twentieth, and it was the miserable condition of these ill-cared-for sufferers which had filled the whole English nation with pity and indignation, and sent bands of her noblest born women into the loathsome hospital wards of Scutari for their help.

There is no necessity to write here of events so well known to all interested in such deeds, and those not interested would only pass it over. But it was a grand three years' education for any woman, and its influence upon Jessy was of the loftiest and love-

liest character. What was the society of Rose Finlay, with its cheap simulance of fashion, to the constant association with women of the highest breeding and noblest ambitions. Day by day she learned instinctively their habits of restraint, their gentle ways, their low speech, their never failing courtesy.

And to these qualities, gradually acquired, she brought her own enthusiasms, her wonderful health and strength and her joyous, hopeful temperament. The wounded men of the Scottish regiments idolized her, and the wise and kind leader of all this gigantic work of mercy, generally managed to send her among them. Twenty hours at a stretch she was often in their suffering ranks, encouraging them under cruel operations, soothing them in delirious terrors, talking softly to them of the heathery hills and of the mists of blue bells in the corries, and the little cottage by the Hebridean Sea, where their mother was perhaps at that moment spinning and praying for them. Or you might hear her crooning "*The Land o' the Leal*," or "*Lochaber No More*" to some sturdy mountaineer lying on her arm, weak as a baby, with closed eyes listening and smiling.

Or very often, in that cold still hour just before dawn she might be found kneeling by the side and holding the hands of some voyager across the Unknown River. In those hours she remembered Deacon

Wabb gratefully. Psalms and verses she had felt it to be a task to learn came back to her memory like the cries of Faith and Hope from Spiritual Watch towers. Yes, even some that at the time of their acquirement seemed to have but very little reference to the life of the present.

Thus she knelt one morning by the side of the young lord of Strathnevin. He was but nineteen, but his feet were in the cold, dark waters which were rising, rising, every moment to overwhelm him. All night long she had been talking to him, either from King David's heart or her own; and she knew it was nearly time to give him the last strong words of faith:—"Father, into Thy Hands I commend my spirit;" when suddenly the sun rose above the horizon, and his beams fell over the death bed and Strathnevin smiled. "It is morning," he said gladly, and instantly Jessy answered:—

"You are going 'over Jordan in the morning light.'" And he whispered "Over Jordan in the morning light," and so went away forever. But Jessy remembered at that moment how Deacon Wabb had told them to notice the circumstance, because some day they would all wish to "cross Jordan in the morning light." She had scoffed at the man's foolishness then, but *now!* Now, with the sunshine on the dead boy's face, she was glad the change had come in the morning light.

Such a life as this life in Scutari barracks was full of opportunities, and the soul and the heart that did not grow in them would have been a dead soul and a cold heart. Not once did she regret the warfare on which she had entered. It seemed to her to be the noblest work that woman could do, and she thanked God many times every day for shaping the life she had so sorely mismanaged, to ends so useful and so consonant with the deepest and truest wishes of her nature.

In July, eighteen hundred and fifty-six the war was over, the soldiers left the Crimea, and the noble army of nursing women returned to England. A great crowd met the ships which brought them and many of the convalescent home, a crowd mostly composed of those anxious to show by their frantic applause and greetings their appreciation of what had been done, but also including relatives and friends, eager to take charge of some loved one barely yet out of the reach of relapse or death.

Among this latter crowd was Cameron. He had seen Captain Grant's name among the expected arrivals, and he thought kindly of this old classmate who had covered himself with glory. He remembered that Grant had no near relatives; surely therefore it would be only decently patriotic to offer him a room until he was better. And having told himself so much, he never dreamed of any interference with his

plans. But when Grant made his appearance at the gangway, he was attended by a woman who even at the distance between them looked strangely familiar, and as soon as his feet touched English earth he was instantly hand clasped by an old gentleman who took entire possession of him. On this little company Cameron fixed his attention. He saw Grant placed in a handsome carriage, he saw the woman and the old gentleman follow, and then the vehicle passed quickly out of sight.

He was faint with amazement. First, he felt indignant with the old gentleman who had interfered with his friendly intentions. Then he lost his anger in the rush of feelings with which he recognized Jessy as Grant's companion. In a kind of stupefaction, not devoid of passion, he went to his hotel and ordered wine to help him in solving the circumstance.

Nothing but blank stupidity came of his bibulous efforts, and he finally resolved to go and tell Christine. He had long wished for a conversation with his sister about Jessy, but Christine had always pointedly ignored his desire. He felt now, that the hour had come for a more particular confession than he had ever made, and he was determined to delay no further an explanation he had weakly put off far too long.

He waited, however, until the next morning. Christine was staying with Lily Forfar, who had a

pretty house near Hyde Park. The women were not early risers, and he gave them until noon to finish their breakfast and the various consultations on the duties and engagements for the day. These happened to be of great interest to Christine and her brother's early visit was not quite welcome.

"Why, Logie!" she exclaimed, "You are surely very impatient. Lily is not dressed yet. Are you going to ride?"

"I came to see you, Christine. I am a little upset, and I want your advice."

"What is the trouble now, Logie? Not money, I hope."

"The trouble is an old one — that girl, you know — the mother of the child."

"Oh! What about her?"

"Yesterday I saw her among the Crimean nurses. She seemed in authority. She had Captain Grant in charge. She went away with Grant and an old gentleman who met Grant. Their carriage was in first class style, finely appointed every way."

"Well! Is that circumstance of any consequence to you? The girl is out of your life — is she not?"

"I looked over the list of nurses arriving yesterday, and I find she is using my name."

"What! You are dreaming!"

"No. She is called Mrs. Cameron on the list. There is no other Mrs. Cameron named, and I saw

her among the crowd. She went away with Grant.”

“Perhaps Grant has married her.”

“She is called Mrs. Cameron.”

“Or is going to marry her—”

“I don’t think so. I never saw a man more particular about women than Grant.”

“Suppose she nursed him. Suppose he asked her what Cameron she married. She would not dare to say Logan Cameron.”

“She might.”

“What nonsense you talk! That woman makes a fool of you if she comes within your sight. If she could ever dare to claim you as her husband she would have done it that day she brought the child to me. She was in a passion of love and perplexity. She did not care much what she said. But neither to me, nor yet to the crowd of her own people gathered in her own house to witness my adoption of the child, did she make any such claim.”

“You are sure of that?”

“As sure as I can be. On the contrary, she permitted the inference that she had been your mistress, and even spoke somewhat strongly of the general idea, that Rule Macintyre was the father. A woman that wished to be considered your wife would never have permitted friends and neighbors for many months to father her child on some other man.”

“I have often wished to ask you what she said.”

“I have no wish to repeat her words. I can positively assure you, however, that she was very far from giving the idea that she was your wife. She asserted you to be the father of her child, but she made not the slightest claim on you as her husband.”

And Cameron was so satisfied with this assurance that he put down his resolve to tell Christine about the mock marriage. He felt it to be a shameful thing and he feared Christine's passionate sense of justice. He believed that she would insist upon his redeeming every word of that ceremony, or else in casting him out of her heart and life. And now the necessity for a confession seemed chimerical. Christine's words were always the very truth.

He left her with a heart much more at ease; for added to his sister's confident belief was the fact that his confederate had practically disappeared. On his two last visits to Edinburgh he had called at Mary Malcolm's house, and on both occasions heard that Mr. Barbour had gone to America. He had even been told the name of the ship on which he and Mrs. Barbour sailed, and the date of their departure; information which had been verified by a letter from the Anchor Line Office in Glasgow.

Well then, suppose Jessy had married Grant, or was going to do so, and suppose she told Grant the whole story of their life together, all he had to do was to avoid the presence of the Grants. For their

own sake they would keep silence, and it was hardly probable they would babble the story to any one likely to tell Lily Forfar. For Lily was now the aim and object of his life. She was the assurance of all the good things he desired. And he loved her quite as much as he was capable of loving any one. Also she loved him. She had confessed her love and their engagement was understood, if not yet publicly acknowledged. So the sight of Jessy had made him fear and tremble, and he told himself that there was no time to waste in sentimental advances and retreats; he must buy the wedding ring, and make Lily his own, beyond all doubts or peradventures. And such a public marriage as they would be compelled to have must also finally crush to death any false hopes "that girl Jessy" might be cherishing.

In the mean time Jessy was not giving him a stray thought. She had found changes in the Saville home that compelled her to consider her future outside of it. Little Alice had gone away; her incurable thirst for escape from life, had been satisfied; and the sweetest girl in England had taken her place in the household. Jessy felt the sweetest girl might need the whole house to give her sweetness space, and she took some rooms near Doctor Fleming, so that she might be ready for his call, whenever he needed her assistance.

No idea of relinquishing the work she had taken up ever came to her; she had vowed her life to it, and

was only waiting until Miss Nightingale's plans for a training college were completed. Then her place was sure by the side of her Leader, and in the meantime, she was wanted on every hand. Patients whom she had nursed to convalescence had suffered relapses, and from all parts of England and Scotland came urgent appeals for her help. These were mostly lucrative calls; money and rich tokens of gratitude were showered upon her. She had a bank account; she had a little box at her bankers holding gemmed ornaments of every kind. She was a woman with a vocation in which she delighted and which was amazingly profitable in its results. She had many true friends. She was in fine health. Her cruel husband did not trouble her; she had ceased to love him long ago, and from Memory's drifting ships cast all the gall and the wormwood of the past into the sea. She would not remember anything but her mother's tender love — and the little child. He was now heir of Glenlochart, and she told herself she must not forget that. These were the thoughts which brightened the very few hours she was not busy, and they satisfied her, although they generally ended with a sigh and the softly audible exclamation:

“ If only my Mother knew! ”

So the winter passed happily away, each of the personalities connected with this story being busy with their special hopes and plans and loves and dreams.

Jessy's all tendered into the future; she shrunk from inquiries that came from the past. Generally she put them peremptorily behind her. But the hour at length struck for her to face the question she dreaded, and there was no release from its demand. She was, too, in a peculiarly unfit mood for its consideration — a mood of tearful tenderness, full of gentle thoughts and vague impressions. It was a spring evening. She had finished her tea and was sitting restfully in the twilight. A servant came in and lighted the gas and she asked her for the day's newspaper. It lay limply in her hand till the woman disappeared; then she drew her chair into the light and cast her eyes upon the page. Her own name arrested her, and the next moment she was reading the following item of fashionable news:—

“It is now definitely settled that the marriage of Mr. Cameron of Glenlochart, and Miss Forfar of Forfar Castle, will be solemnized on the morning of April the eighteenth inst.”

She let the paper fall from her hands. It was an incredible thing. Her mind ran up and down the statement, finding at every turn of thought some new grievance. It was a crowning proof to her that Cameron really believed that he had deceived her — that he had planned this deception at the very time she thought him to be most devotedly and honorably in love with her. What lies he had told her in Glas-

gow! She tried to recall his passionate promises and hopes, and she could not sit still under such stings of memory. She lifted the paper and read the item again as she walked about. Then with a sharp cry she noticed the date — the eighteenth of April. On that very date he had married *her*. Was it in scorn, or in defiance the eighteenth of April had been chosen? She refused to believe it was an accident. She concluded that he had told Lily about his mock marriage, and that out of a very bravado of contempt for her claims this special anniversary had been selected.

The new Jessy was barred out, the old Jessy took entire possession. She could do nothing that night — but in the morning! What would she not do? All her old jealous hatred of Lily Forfar rose up to a vigorous and vehement life. She could pay back all she owed her now and she would do it. The scorn and hatred she had seen on Lily's face that afternoon at the Principal's gate, was only there a few moments, but scorn and hatred if they exist for a few moments exist forever — unless some mightier passion slay them. She recalled Lily's face with all its disdain and dislike, but she said passionately — “she was feared of me even then, and tomorrow I'll give her something to be feared about! I will that!” and as she made herself this promise, she tore the paper into a dozen pieces, and flung it away from her.

Little sleep came to soothe her passionate feelings, and she rose with the fierce determination of a wronged woman to whom Fortune has given competent reprisals. She dressed with extraordinary care, giving all possible emphasis to her beautiful hair and superb figure. Then she went to her lawyers for Mr. Barbour's statement and he advised her to take only a copy of the original, and refer any who doubted it, to himself:—

“It is best to think the worst of men like Mr. Cameron,” he said, “and you might possibly meet him at Miss Forfar's.” So Jessy signified her acquiescence in this opinion and waited for the copy.

Yet in spite of this delay it was early when she reached Miss Forfar's house; “too early for Miss Forfar to see any one,” the servant who admitted her averred.

“Miss Forfar will have to see me,” was Jessy's reply, “and the sooner, the better. Tell her I cannot go, until I have spoken with her.”

After some delay Miss Forfar's maid wished to know the visitor's name.

“You may tell her it is — Cameron,” answered Jessy. The girl's further questions she utterly ignored.

More than half an hour elapsed and Jessy was about to ring the bell, when the door was softly opened and Miss Forfar entered. Her morning

gown of soft blue silk, her richly embroidered petticoat and blue morocco slippers, were in striking contrast to the plain, black trailing garments of Jessy, with their small bands of snowy linen; but Jessy was incomparably the lovelier woman of the two. A moment's glance at each other was sufficient. Lily Forfar turned pale, gasped, and then in a voice set to loftiest scorn, said:—

“ You! What do you want with me? ”

“ I read a report of your marriage to Mr. Cameron —”

“ My marriage is none of your affair. If that is the subject you wish to discuss, you can leave my house at once;” and she placed her hand upon the bell, as if to summon a servant.

“ Stop!” Jessy's voice was the voice of one used to authority. “ Your marriage is very much my affair. You cannot marry my husband.”

“ You are lying out of pure hatred. In what did I ever wrong you? Why do you hate me? ”

“ Why did you hate me, and scorn me and fear me, the first moment you saw me? ”

“ I hate no one. I scorn no one. I fear no one. You must be insane. I will not listen to you.”

“ You cannot leave me until I have told you the truth. Logan Cameron married me in Edinburgh, on April the eighteenth, eighteen hundred and fifty-two. I had a son to him in March, eighteen hundred

and fifty-three. The boy was adopted by Miss Cameron."

"Hush! I will call Miss Cameron."

Pending her arrival Jessy tried to speak, but Lily answered everything with a shake of her head and a wistful, miserable, urgent watch for her friend. It was but a few minutes' wait. Somehow, the whole household had divined trouble, and Miss Cameron was trying to get an adequate description of Jessy when Lily sent for her. The moment she entered the room she knew the trouble maker. In a voice full of anger she asked,

"What are you doing here, Jessy Laurie?"

"Ask that woman," and she looked significantly at Lily. Then Lily stood up and went to Miss Cameron, and leaned her head against her shoulder.

"Christine, she says that Logie is her husband."

"What do you mean, Jessy, by such a wicked statement? You acknowledged yourself his mistress to me."

"Not I! You inferred it, and I was not ready then to contradict the lie."

"You wicked woman! Did I not take your child out of pity for your desertion by my brother? If he had been your husband, you would have told me, and I would have made him support you and the boy. Yes, surely, I would have seen to that."

Then Jessy took out Mr. Barbour's certificate, and

gave it to Christine, and she and Lily read it together. They were both for a few moments quite speechless. Then Christine asked, "Where is this Mr. Barbour now?"

"In Chicago; he is president of a ladies' college there."

"Oh, indeed!" and the two words expressed a world of reserved unbelief. "He is at the end of the world, it seems. You should have your witnesses closer at hand, Jessy Laurie."

"You are calling me out of my name, madam. That is an insult Scotch folk don't take. I have as much right to the name of Cameron as a woman can have. He gave it to me with the ring I wear," and she pointed to the plain gold ring on her left hand.

"If my brother is your husband, why are you not living with him?"

"He told me to leave him and I needed no second bidding. I was thankful for the mercy. He is an ill man to live with. If I hated Miss Forfar — as she thinks — I could wish her no worse fate than to be his wife. I would have let her marry him and then given her the shame o' it. It is kinder to give her the grief, and save her the shame. If I had let the marriage go on, and she had had a child, you ken it would have been — a bastard."

"Oh, hush, you cruel woman!"

"I am a kind woman. Write to the Town Clerk

of Edinburgh. He will tell you the noted truth. And here is the address of Mr. Barbour. He is a minister and teacher very much respected; he has no object in deceiving you — if you cannot believe me.”

Her voice broke, her eyes became limpid and tender; she was filled with pity for her enemy who seemed ready to fall to the floor. She went close to her, she touched her dress, “You had better lie down,” she said softly, “I am very sorry to give you such suffering.” For a moment Miss Forfar opened her eyes, and made an effort to speak; then she slipped into unconsciousness. Quick as thought, Jessy caught the limp body and laid it down, and her ready skill soon brought back the soul so reluctant to suffer, that it tried to slip away from the sorrow given it to bear.

Then Jessy left the room. She made no pretense of adieus, and yet ere she closed the door, she glanced at Lily, and something of pity and understanding passed between them. Miss Cameron quickly followed, and stood with her in the vestibule. “Jessy,” she said, “if your words are true, why did you not speak to me before? I made you clear the name of Rule Macintyre, and I am just as resolved to clear your name, if your statements prove correct.”

“I am not troubling about my name. The few folks whose good opinion I care for, know the facts.”

“But if you are my sister, I must see to it that

you are justified. Did you intend to keep this secret all your life? ”

“ No, I intended to keep it until I heard of marriage, and if that contingency did not come, I intended to keep it until the child was twenty-one. He could have judged fairly then. I suppose you have had him baptized? ”

“ Certainly. Mr. Graham took the promises with me.”

“ I am thankful to the Minister. What did you call the little lad? ”

“ I called him David.”

“ That pleases me well. My father was called David, and my eldest brother — the bairn is guarded right and left:”—and with these words she went away.

Anger, hatred and jealousy were all slain. The new Jessy was in full possession again. In fact there was in her heart a great pity for Lily Forfar. She knew what she was suffering, and she told herself remorsefully “ I was over cruel. I should have remembered the poor lassie had no mother to go to, God help her! for Christine Cameron isn’t much of a help to a woman whose heart some man has just broken. She’ll do right, yes, she’ll do right if the heavens fall; but whiles right isn’t enough:—” and as she walked her footsteps kept time and step to the melody of the words in her heart:—

“There sometimes comes to soul and sense
The feeling which is evidence,
That very near about us lies
The realm of spiritual mysteries;
That all our sorrow, pain, and doubt,
A great compassion clasps about.”

“Then Duty leaves to Love its tasks,
The beggar Self forgets to ask,
With smiles of trust and folded hands
The passive soul in patience stands,
To feel, as flowers the sun and dew,
The One True Life its own renew.”

“Christine would do right!” That was certain as that two and two make four. In fact she was restless and yet straitened in her soul until she began to do right. And Lily urged her to make haste in the doing. To both women delay and uncertainty was the unbearable sting of this sudden sorrow:—

“You must speak to Logie at once,” said Lily.
“If this is the truth, I can never see him again.”

So Logie was surprised and not very well pleased at his sister's early visit to his hotel. He was in the lachrymose, repentant, headachy phase that generally followed a night's debauch, and he was ashamed to meet Christine's clear, inquisitive eyes.

“You have been drinking again, Logie, and you promised me —”

“I'm just a promise breaker — a poor, weak creature that cannot —”

“You are nothing of the kind. You have

strength enough to keep any promise you want to keep. You do not wish to let wine alone; if you did —”

“ I tell you, Christine, I cannot let it alone. Did you come here so early in the morning to scold me about the wine I drink? ”

“ No. I came here to ask if you were married to Jessy Laurie on the eighteenth of April, eighteen-hundred fifty-two? ”

“ Who sent you on such a piece of tom-foolery business? ” He lifted a white, sodden face as he spoke, and shot from its red eyes a gleam of angry fear at her.

“ Lily sent me. ”

“ Lily! Impossible! Who can have told her such nonsense? ”

“ The woman who says you married her on that date — the woman who says she is your wife. ”

“ You mean Jessy Laurie? ”

“ Yes — the mother of little David — your son. You acknowledged the laddie to me. ”

“ I’ll acknowledge the marriage, in its way. It was a joke, a make-believe marriage, all a joke, Christine! I had forgotten the play altogether. The girl was in it as deep as I was. We both knew it was a pretense, a bit of child’s play. ”

“ You are lying, Logie, and you know you are lying. It was a true marriage in every respect, and

Jessy never doubted it until you turned her adrift. See here —” and she handed him the declaration of Matthew Barbour.

His amazement was genuine, his passion equally so. He was about to tear it to shreds, when Christine said,

“That is only a copy. The original is in the hands of Jessy’s lawyer.”

“Jessy’s lawyer! My God, Christine! has the woman gone to law?”

“She has told Lily everything. Is there any necessity for her to go to law? She was determined to prevent your marriage with Lily, and she has succeeded.”

“The selfish, greedy creature! She may go to law if she wishes. She will never force a penny out of me.”

“Shame, and double shame on you! Did she ever ask, or take a penny from you? I called at George Saville’s studio as I came here, and I heard from him the whole story of your wife’s treatment at your hand. Do I not know the poverty in which she brought your child into the world? Does not all England know how she has lived since?”

“She is not my wife. Barbour was not licensed when he pretended to marry us. He was studying chemistry.”

“He had been licensed the previous summer. He

was waiting for a call, and studying in the meantime."

"The villain! The robber! The infernal sneaking thief!"

"On the contrary he is, Saville says, a most conscientious man. He saw through your miserable scheme —"

"And pretended to be willing to forward it for fifty pounds."

"He wished to frustrate it. Listen," and she told him every word of Saville's explanation. Logie laughed bitterly at it.

"What insensate, unfathomable conceit!" he almost screamed. "Because I laughed at the creature's breeks and goggles, he thinks the Lord delivered me into his hand. I'll go to Chicago and frustrate his little schemes for him."

"Logic, you have hemmed yourself in, on every hand. There are not twelve men in England who would not be glad to send you over the seas to hard labor. Be eternally grateful, that Jessy only interferes with you to prevent such a consummation of your conspiracy."

"I swear to you, Christine, I never intentionally married Jessy. If she is my wife, it is by fraud. I thought I was perfectly free to marry Lily."

"You do not mend your case, Sir, by any such oath. You intended to debase one of the most sacred

rites of the church, and of human society, to further your own wicked ends. You dared to call in the Almighty to witness your sin, and then you expect no retribution."

"I know now it was wicked, Christine. I am sorry I did it. I have been sorry ever since it was done. The woman has been a fear and a torment to me. You don't know what I have suffered. It has driven me to drink. I could never escape the thought of her. Is there anything I ought to do, Christine?"

"One thing you must do, and that this very hour. Write out a notice of your marriage to Jessy Laurie, giving date and place particularly, and send it to all the papers in St. Andrews, and near-by towns. Write Mr. Graham your Minister, and ask him to give it all the publicity he can among his people."

"I will do nothing of the kind. I'll see Graham and the papers in — at the back of Beyond first. How can you ask a man to publicly disgrace himself? It is a shame, a wicked shame!"

"If you will not do it, then I shall attend to the matter. The woman you married must be justified. She has waited over long for her right. Give her it now, this day, this hour,— or I will see to it."

"You are bitterly cruel to me, Christine;" and he covered his face and began to cry softly. Tears

were always his last appeal and they were generally successful, but they failed in this extremity and he turned them into temper.

"Of course if I do this," he said with a stamp of his foot, "I lose Lily."

"Of course! Could you possibly hope for one moment now, that you might keep her, in any case?"

"I am utterly ruined. I was sure that at last, through Lily's influence, I should get into parliament." Christine did not speak, and after a moment's thought he added, "perhaps the announcement of my marriage to Jessy Laurie might turn popular feeling in my favor, and give me the election."

Christine looked at the readily complacent man with scorn. "I think not," she answered coldly. "You are too late. People would more likely be stirred to the memory of Jessy's lonely suffering and poverty. They would ask why she has been serving the sick and dying at home and abroad, while you were dancing and drinking and living alone — or less creditably."

"And by St. Andrews they would be right. If I am forced to acknowledge Jessy as my wife, she is going to come to me and wait upon me, and serve me, and I'll let Madam know her duty as soon as those advertisements are written."

"Do not make a ten-fold worse fool of yourself

than you already are. You sent Jessy away from you. You sent her away with a miserable lie that darkened her own, and her mother's life, and surrendered her to the tongues of cruel and envious women. You have done nothing at all for her, since you sent her away."

"I offered her fifty pounds when —"

"Fifty pounds! For God's sake never mention that offer again. It is stupendously shameful, and indecently mean. Cameron of Glenlochart offers the woman whom he has fraudulently married and who is bearing his child — fifty pounds! Your father would have knocked you down if you had told him the circumstance. He would have ordered you out of his presence, and he would have courteously invited Jessy to his home.

"Why did *you* not invite her?"

"You are forgetting yourself. I was prevented by your lie, Sir. I shall do my full duty to my sister-in-law in the future."

"Is there anything remaining for me? Is my life utterly ruined?"

"There are three things you can do. Join your father's and grandfather's regiment and seek active service. It may be, God will give you an opportunity to make some atonement for your wickedness. Men are merciful and like to wipe out an evil score with a noble action."

“I have no strength left for military service. I have no desire for it.”

“Grant has won his promotion. He is now Captain Grant. Surely you —”

“I tell you, I have not strength for long marches and long watches; and the mere noise of military life would be intolerable, not to speak of the company of such men as Lieutenant — I should say — Captain Grant. What is your second outlet for me?”

“Retire to Glenlochart. Try and take an interest in your land and stock, and do your duty to your tenants and neighbors. They will meet you half way — if only for your father’s sake.”

“I have lost all interest in Glenlochart since I have been compelled to mortgage it — I looked forward to Lily’s money for release from that bondage.”

“Glenlochart mortgaged! Oh, Logie, you are surely exaggerating. It cannot be.”

“It is,” he answered dourly, and offered no further explanation or excuse.

“Then Logie, my final advice to you is, make up your quarrel with your wife. You must have loved each other once.”

“That advice is absolutely impossible in every aspect.”

“She is a wonderfully handsome woman.”

“She hates me, worse still, she despises me. In

our last interview she even threatened me with physical punishment. I was afraid of her."

"You love the water, why not go into the navy?"

"Yes, I love the sea. I can do as I like on my own boat. No debts and duns and letters to trouble me. No pretended friends to rob me, no enemies to fright me. If I had been at sea I should not have got entangled with Lily Forfar and brought on myself this open disgrace. Christine, for God's sake, let this advertising business alone. Lily will quietly disappear — Jessy will make no further move."

"Until Davie is twenty-one perhaps, then she will demand his recognition and his rights."

"I shall be out of every one's way long before David wants my place. He is welcome to it."

"It is a good place and a great place, if you had used it well."

"Oh bother! The past is gone by. I am too late for the future. Christine, let those advertisements alone. Jessy will not thank you for bringing up that old shame and sorrow."

"I am not considering either Jessy or yourself. I must do the right thing no matter whether it is liked or not. Are you ready to write them now?"

"No. Wait until tomorrow."

"And in the meantime you will go to sea. They must be written now."

"If not?"

“I will send for Doctor Chalmers, and when he has heard the story he will cry the news in the market-place and from every house top. You know what his anger will be. Do you wish him to take your place in justifying your wife?”

“I am surrounded on every hand. Do what you like with me, and then I will do what I like with myself.”

The threat did not move Christine. She dictated the advertisements for the newspapers, and the request to Mr. Graham and took the letters away with her to mail. She left Logie in a towering passion and beneath her own calm exterior her heart was like to break. She knew the passion was simulated to cover his real cowardice. She had even a suspicion that he was glad to be released from all social ties — and *she* had been both mother and sister to this weak, wicked criminal! How could she accuse him without accusing herself? Somewhere, she must have been to blame.

Filled with remorseful thought she reached Lily's house, wondering how she was to break to the sorrowful girl the certainty of Jessy's claim. There was no necessity of words, they looked at each other and understood; and then the only question was the quickest and quietest way of burying the whole subject. In the end, it was to Christine and the family lawyers this business was delegated, for Lily fled to her Aunt Melville; and Cameron, after directing his

sailing master to victual the yacht for six months and take her to Amsterdam, went off at once to that city to await her arrival.

“I give you a free hand,” he wrote his sister. “I dare not address Lily in any way; make what excuse is best for me.” And he still understood his wife so imperfectly as to add, “offer the other woman whatever money is necessary to keep her quiet.” This direction made Christine indignant. For the first time she lost all hope of a man with moral senses so oblique and pernicious.

It was a weary business altogether, unrelieved by any word of love or gratitude except a letter from Jessy on the receipt of the newspapers containing the announcement of her marriage. For Jessy felt that this justification, however tardy and partial, was due entirely to Christine; and she wrote so simply and feelingly to acknowledge her justice and kindness that Christine cried out on reading her words —

“What splendid possibilities were in this woman! Oh, if Logie had only brought her to me! If he had only told me I would have done right! I would have done right when right could have availed. It is too late now. Alas! Alas for that sin that *will* come to harvest! that will not die or even wither, but persists in growing with every event to sorrowful ripeness. Oh Logie, Logie, my dear, dear Logie!”

Jessy had not expected Christine's interference

with Logie's proposed marriage to bring any recognition of her own. But she was not ungrateful, nor ill-pleased at the result. As she sat with the St. Andrews' papers lying on her knees, she let her thoughts go back to the old town, and to the almost forgotten people who had been her associates in it. All seemed so far away, so long ago, that it required an effort to put herself in the old surroundings. But as she mused they became familiar. She knew how the Minister and his wife would speak of the event — with what caution and respect and agreeable generalities — how Deacon Wabb would shake his head, and wonder "what the upshot of such beginnings would be" — how Margot Macintyre would laugh and jeer with her cronies about "the new mistress of Cameron House" — how the women of her own set would gather in each other's cottages to discuss "the wonderful come-out of it all."

"I shall have filled their eyes and ears and mouths once more;" said Jessy softly to herself, and she laughed and tossed her head a little, in her old proud, defiant way.

"Yes, I am glad," she continued. "I can go back to St. Andrews now. I can look every man and woman in the face now; but I'll not go yet a long while. They would say, I had come for their compliments and laugh in their sleeves at "the upstart pride o' the woman." Then she rose and took the

papers to the window, and read the notice over again.

“It is a wonderful setting right,” she cried with reverent joy, “I was brought low and He helped me!”

Far into the night she sat, and the daylight became moonlight and then starlight, while she went over the marvellous mercies of her solitary life. And yet, though her soul was singing within her, there was a great and unsatisfied longing in her heart. She was openly justified to the world — but she lifted her face to heaven and whispered,

“If only my Mother knew!”

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

BACK TO ST. ANDREWS

It was a lovely evening in May, and under the clear sky, full moon, and brilliant stars the white, flat-roofed houses near the Chowringhee Road, Calcutta, were crowded with people enjoying the cool airs of the night. One of these houses was much larger than the others. It gleamed whiter behind its bamboo hedge and under its shadowing peopul trees; and there seemed to be among its roof crowd a number of British officers. It was, in fact, a favorite hotel or boarding house almost entirely devoted to their occupation.

Alone in one of the large, lower rooms Jessy Cameron lay upon a couch at the open window, softly breathing herself back to life again. She was as white as the long white robe she wore, she was much emaciated, her large capable hands were dropped listlessly at her side, and her fine hair, dull and uncoiled, scattered loosely over her pillows.

She had been in India for five years, amid the horrors of the Sepoy insurrection, and the subsequent horrors of famine and pestilence; binding up wounds

even under dangerous fire, assisting surgeons in the most primitive of improvised hospitals, organizing bands of nurses, training them for service, and fearlessly going into villages or cantonments where cholera raged on every side of her. And at length, after a long fight with this dread disease, she herself had fallen a victim and escaped with life only by a hair's breadth. But she *had* escaped and she was now on her way to England. An English transport was waiting outside the bar. Tomorrow, if she were able, she would be taken on board and she was longing for the morrow to come. When the journey had first been spoken of, she had begged not to be sent; her heart was in her Indian work, and she had almost, as she thought, forgotten her native land.

Indeed she had been in circumstances that had frequently for long periods made forgetfulness the very best attitude for her. Letters could not be written and received with any certainty or regularity, and then also, as she reflected with a little pang, there was no one who particularly cared whether she wrote or not. Christine made a duty of her quarterly correspondence but frequently it never reached her. It is true she had a certain address at Calcutta, and as she lay that evening in the mystical light that enshrouded her she was wondering if it was worth while to send for her mail.

There were plenty of servants at hand, she was even

worried by the constant stealthy entrance of some ayah or jemedar to see if her glass was empty, or her awning at the right angle to catch the breeze, or that no insect was presuming to trouble her rest. But finally she brought herself to an attitude of indifference, and lay with closed eyes only half aware of the furtively opening door, and the soft, gliding steps of her watchers. Suddenly a clearer consciousness came to her. She felt, she knew, that some one was at her side, was gazing steadily into her face, was at last touching her hand. Then very slowly she lifted her heavy eyelids, and saw Rule Mac-intyre.

It was as if she had seen a spirit. Her voice failed her. It was in a whisper, that went like a sword to Rule's heart, that she at length said with a sob: "Oh Rule! Rule! Dear Rule!"

Then he was kneeling at her side. They were telling each other the most startling events without pausing to make inquiries. They were talking as two souls might talk who met for a few moments, and knew not if they might meet again.

"I have been nearly dead, Rule."

"You know that your husband is dead?"

"Christine wrote me — a year, or more ago."

"Thirteen months, and nearly three weeks since."

"Poor Logie! He was ill guided."

"He has gone to the mercy of the Merciful One."

“He was drowned, Rule.”

To which statement Rule only shook his head solemnly.

“I am going to England tomorrow, Rule.”

“I shall be quickly after you, a week or two at the most.”

“You are not wearing your uniform?”

“I am sailing my own ship now.”

“I never heard. Tell me.”

“When I see you next. You can’t talk much now.”

“I’m very weak, Rule.”

“My dear one, strength is coming to you. Don’t try to walk. Listen, Jessy, only listen to what I say. I don’t ask you to speak. Just take my words into your heart, that is all I ask. I love you! I love you better than ever — ten thousand times better! I think of you as I walk the deck at night. I think of you as I sail the ship all day. My life blood runs to your name. I see through you, I hear through you, and I live through you. While *he* lived, I durst do nothing but pray for you, but now, Jessy! Now, you are free to love me, Jessy. Now my love, my dear sweet love. Now give me just three words to live on, till we meet again.”

“What must I say, Rule?”

“I love you.”

“You are like my own kin. I love you, Rule.”

"When you are well, you will marry me? Say only one word — Yes."

"No. I can not marry. I am vowed to my work. I shall never marry."

"I have no rival but your work?"

"None, but my work has my whole life. You shall be my friend, my brother."

"Your lover, your husband?"

"No, no, no. This is final. Do not weary me. I am faint."

"Dear soul, I will go."

She clung to his hands, she said in low broken whispers, "you are first of all — you *are all* I have — you are father and mother, sister and brother. Rule, be satisfied."

"Yes dear;" he answered, and then he lifted her in his strong arms, kissed, and laid her back upon her pillow. She felt his tears upon her face. She was herself weeping. But she had a strange new strength, a wonderful sense of comfort. She was no longer alone. There was one soul whose love was wholly hers. One soul to whom her life meant joy, and to whom her death would be desolation.

After he had gone away she roused herself to remember him. "His beauty" — she paused at the word, and then used it again deliberately — "he was beautiful," she averred, "and his white suit became him wonderfully. Nothing of a seaman was

about him, but his blue cap with the little gold cord. Oh yes! he had the air of the sea, and the smell of the sea, and the true heart and gentle ways of the men of the sea; and if I could ever dream of marriage I would marry Rule, and no other man in the world. But marriage is not to be thought of. It is out of my life forever. I'm not fit for marriage now. It hurts me to hear the word. I have my work. I cannot, cannot leave my work. It is my joy, my portion, the love to which I solemnly gave myself. Rule be to understand that. I will tell him, plain and sure, that our marriage is beyond all hope or wishing for. It can never, never be! Never! — and Jessy Cameron isn't the woman to lie, either to her lover or her own soul!"

Rule certainly could not have suspected her determination for he appeared in the morning very early. He had found four letters waiting for her, two from Christine, one from Mrs. Saville, and one from her lawyer. She gave the latter to Rule to read.

"The man is worrying about my widow rights, and their investment;" she said. "I shall settle that business as soon as I reach home; it shall not trouble me much longer."

"Such things have to be looked after, Jessy."

"Well, I intend to give every penny that is my right to training schools in India. They need the

money, I do not; forbye, if I needed it to hunger-point, I wouldn't touch it. I said that years ago, and I think a deal of the promises I make. It isn't in me to break them, for anything or anybody."

Then she read Christine's letters, and Rule watched with all a lover's interest the changing color and changing expressions on her face. "Christine says I am to come to Cameron House; that it is my right, and that every one will wonder if I go elsewhere."

"Well, Jessy?"

"I'll not enter the place."

"I think you are right."

"He wouldn't hear of my going there when I was living with him in London. He told me it was impertinent to think o' the like. I am no better now than I was then. And if he did not wish me in Cameron House when he was living, I'm not going to slink into it when he is dead. He might know of the circumstance. There is a fine hotel in St. Andrews. I used to envy the folk that could afford to stop at it. I'll go there. It will be another dream come true."

She was stronger and brighter than she had been on the previous night, and she was on the watch for some opportunity to let Rule know her invincible determination never to marry. But Rule might have suspected her intention for he avoided giving her this advantage. All his tenderness flowed into service.

He went here and there for things she wanted. He helped her in all her preparations for the rather difficult ordeal of her removal to the transport; he saw her safely and comfortably on board, and bade her farewell with the joy of reunion in his eyes, but only the usual forms of affectionate parting on his lips.

He was too much in love himself to notice how coldly Jessy responded. That is the way with men, especially if they have been in authority and used to asking and having. Rule attributed her want of warmth to her physical weakness and the change in her life. He could understand that the forced resignation of her work must be a trial, and he saw plainly that she anticipated little pleasure in her return to England. But he had a great confidence in the power of Love. He could now woo the woman he loved. The great barrier had been removed. He would not doubt Jessy's final acceptance of the affection that had been hers for so many years.

In her heart Jessy had already refused it. The sudden and unexpected appearance of Rule just at an hour when she was feeling in a special manner her weakness and loneliness, had won from her an impulsive warmth of welcome which her judgment quickly disapproved. But not because of this self-committal would she make another matrimonial blunder. Her work filled her heart and her life. She was doing good not only for the present, there was

290 THE HEART OF JESSY LAURIE

help and comfort for thousands in the future, through the large far-seeing plans of her labors. She had the love and respect of those ready to perish, and also of those who stood afar off, and only helped and encouraged her efforts by praise and liberal gold and silver. Her opinions were observed, her advice taken, her methods adopted. She was the Heart and Brain and Hand that succored and cherished thousands beyond their own help. To give up all this source of blessing and honor for Rule's love! How could she? Would she not be a most unworthy guardian of opportunities? Would it not be shameful to relinquish occasions for succoring a little world of the helpless and suffering in order to pleasure herself and Rule?

Thoughts akin to these troubled her heart all through her journey, for do as she would Rule would not be exorcised by them. She went to sleep every night resolved never again to allow him anything like a lover's welcome. She awoke every morning with the whole question unsettled, and Rule in the ascendant. The struggle made her unhappy, even angry, and yet in spite of it, she grew stronger every day. Surely either unknown to her, or denied by her, there was some everlasting flower of Love in her heart giving to her renewed health and joyousness of renewed youth — a flower yet in the bulb, undesired and unobserved, yet pushing its first two or three leaves into the sunlight of Hope.

In this restless mood she reached her native land. The Savilles were waiting to welcome her, and she remained with them for a week before going to Scotland. During this week she divested herself of every penny that had come to her as the widow of the late Cameron of Glenlochart; diverting it into many channels of future usefulness for the sick and dying, especially such as were, for any cause whatever, prisoners:—

“There are so many innocent prisoners,” she said to her lawyer. “I have known them. I have seen them die unjustified. They had no one to defend their case, they had no money to keep them alive. Sick and in prison and no friend visited them.”

“You are thinking of India, Mrs. Cameron,” said the lawyer.

“Yes, but everywhere, even in England, you may go into any prison and find a heart ready to break for the want of friendly counsel, or an open purse.”

Having disposed of what she called “the o’ercome of her money” she resolved to spend a few weeks in her native town. She could not keep the thoughts of its fine sea-blown air out of her memory, and the scent of its lovely old-fashioned gardens drew her soul along the clearest of all spiritual avenues — the organ of smell. The sea and the roses! Their odor drew her like a charm. The sea went to the ends of the earth, and she had found roses everywhere, but

there was never a sea like that which girded St. Andrews, and no roses grew in the whole wide world like the roses in the old gardens of South Street.

As she had told Rule, Christine wished her, almost made it imperative on her, to stay in the Cameron House during her visit. She could not do this. She would have had gate after gate in her spiritual nature to force before her soul could enter it. That was a warfare she might lawfully escape; no form of Duty compelled her to it. Christine's only reason for its demand, was a fear of the evil tongues of those who must say evil or be dumb, and Jessy did not acknowledge their authority. She had dared it when utterly defenceless, it was now beyond their power to injure or even annoy her.

So she did not give Christine any notice of her intended visit; and no person recognized the tall woman robed in black, who stepped from the train and hired a cab to take her to the principal hotel. The best rooms in it were at her disposal, and she hired them and then ordered her dinner. After she had eaten and rested, she intended to write to Christine. But she did not fulfill this intention. A strange sadness took possession of her. She was weighed down by the memories of old griefs, and she could not rid herself of an unhappy sense of her dead husband. She had dared his environment, and found it heavy with his influence. She could not forget. She could not cease

wondering about him. And this woman who had faced death in every terrible shape, and known no fear, was afraid in the comfortable parlor of a public inn. Of what? She could not define her terror, and in that circumstance lay her fright.

When the morning came she wrote to Christine and the answer was in person. The letter had contained a wish to see David so Christine brought the boy with her. She had particularly requested Jessy not to reveal herself as his mother and the child did not appear to be drawn to her in any unusual way. Jessy had read of children being instantly and spontaneously attracted towards unknown parents, and she watched David curiously. Surely he would feel something of the love, making her heart throb wildly, and filling her eyes with tears. Ah no! He had forgotten that she had nursed him at her breast the first four months of his life. How could he remember? He rather resented the kiss she gave him. He felt himself too big to be kissed by strangers as if he were yet a baby. He was shyer and less responsive to Jessy's overtures because of the kiss.

Christine praised his cleverness and said pointedly: "David has faults, of course, but he never tells a lie."

And Jessy answered: "He had some truth telling ancestors."

The visit left a painful impression, increased by Jessy's positive refusal to accept the hospitality of

Cameron House. "How could I bear it?" she asked, looking from Christine to the boy, and this appeal was understood.

"It would be hard," she answered, "but good might come from it."

"It is good now. Had we not better let good alone?"

"As you will, Jessy. We only returned from Forfar Castle two days ago," she continued. "You knew Miss Forfar married Captain Grant?"

"No, I never heard of the occurrence."

"I told you in one of my letters."

"I did not get that letter."

"Yes, Lily and Captain Grant were married two years ago. They are very happy. I told her I expected you to visit me and both the Captain and Lily were delighted. He says you saved his life and Lily thinks she has an equal cause for gratitude. They want to see you at Forfar. I promised to advise them of your arrival here."

"I beg you not to do so. I am going away in a few days. I wish to be alone with the old town, and the old life."

"But such a short visit!"

"It is all I can bear. I want to get back to work again."

David looked at her sharply. "I shall not have to work," he said. "I am rich. I am Cameron of

Glenlochart. I am going to be a soldier like Captain Grant."

And Christine looked admiringly at the boy, and Jessy could not answer for the pity in her heart. She knew what a soldier's life was, and she saw that the pride of birth, and the confidence of gold had already cancelled the simplicity of the child heart.

She watched them sadly enough down the street, the boy riding a spirited little pony which he managed admirably; Christine in her Victoria which was filled with her voluminous black draperies and rugs. She looked so much older, that Jessy began to wonder at her changed appearance, and then it suddenly struck her, that their whole talk had been of David, and that David's father had never been mentioned. The circumstance gave her a shock.

She resolved to go to Margot Macintyre's in the afternoon — for Rule had assured her of a welcome — and whatever there was to tell, Margot was sure to know. But shortly after noon, there came up a cold rain, the hand of India was yet on Jessy, and she dared not venture out. Some long lonely hours followed, and Jessy was glad to see an old acquaintance bring in her tea tray.

"Maggie Merrilees, is that you?" she asked, and Maggie answered "'deed it is, Mistress Cameron. I asked if I might bring in the tray, being I wanted to thank you for the box you sent my mother. She

296 THE HEART OF JESSY LAURIE

was mightily pleased wi' the bit things. And I'm proud and glad to see you back in St. Andrews Ma'am."

"Maggie, do you know Margot Macintyre?"

"'Deed I ken her well, but you be to call her Mistress Macintyre the now. She's that stuck up these days, she wouldn't answer to Margot, nor any other baptized name."

"And what is she stuck up about?"

"It is *who* first, and then you may tag the *what* on to the *who*."

"Who then is she stuck up about?"

"Who, but her nephew Captain Macintyre? I'm not saying but she has reasons, plenty o' reasons, and none o' them will die for the want of praising."

"I used to know Margot well."

"She was a douce, tidy, well-to-do body then. Now, weel! weel!"

"What is wrong now?"

"Nothing wrong. Her nephew has just set her beside herself, that's all. She has a servant lass to wait upon her, a doctor to come reg'lar to feel her pulse. She goes to the hydropathy when she feels like it, and if the Sabbath is wet, and she wants a sermon, a carriage comes to her very doorstep for her — and you ken Ma'am, carriages on Sabbath days, arena thought religious or becoming in St. Andrews."

"And her nephew pays for these things?"

“He does that, and more too. You should see the dress o’ the auld creature. No more stuffs for Margot. It is silk, and the best o’ silk for her kirk dress — black silk ye ken, shining wi’ jet; and for the sociables and mair private occasions, it is purple, lilac-color mair like, and just wonderful bits o’ lace on her grey head, and round the neck o’ her — they say the Captain brings them from some place foreign — they bring a fine breed o’ cats from the same place.”

“Malta, I suppose.”

“That’s the name. And he brought her a set o’ cheena from another foreign country — The set o’ it is said to be a wonder. The minister’s wife went to see it, and there was also a wee box with it, full o’ spoons and likewise sugar tongs — real silver ye ken, no make believe about it. O Margot Macintyre is finely fixed in her last days!”

“Does her nephew ever come to see her?”

“Captain Macintyre? Come to see her? You’d think she was his sweetheart, he is that attentive. Whenever his ship touches London, he’s here for the next Sabbath, and then Margot can always walk to Kirk for the Captain gies her his arm. It’s not a bad sight to watch him lead her up the aisle o’ the auld Kirk. The minister and the minister’s wife aye make a point o’ speaking to them and complimenting the Captain, and the like o’ that. I’m going to see

my mother tonight, will I call on Mistress Macintyre and tell her you are here? ”

“ I have written her a letter, Can you take it to her? ”

“ ’Deed I can. I’ll be sure to get a big lump o’ cake, and a glass o’ aniseed cordial for it, and being such extraordinary news, maybe a sixpence itsel’.”

Then Jessy went for the letter and there was a crown piece with it, and Maggie looked at the money and then at Jessy, and Jessy nodded and the girl could not speak her thanks. But that was not necessary; words would have been dumb compared with the light in her eyes.

“ Wait a few minutes Maggie. I want to ask after some one else:—there was a girl I knew — her name was Annie Tulloch — do you know anything of her? ”

“ Aye, I know her, poor Annie! ”

“ Why do you say ‘ poor Annie ’ ? ”

“ She got a very poor man for a husband, and the wrastle and care o’ life and weans is hard on her. She was such a tidy lass, she’s just a poor trollop now, and she canna help it.”

“ Why cannot she help it? ”

“ She was married on Sandy Cromerty, and the prime and notable quality o’ Sandy is that he canna make siller. He is a narrow, ailing body, in stature of the lower order o’ men, no five foot high I would say.

Folks all wonder how Annie ever made up her mind to marry the creature."

"Perhaps he is a good man?"

"It isna impossible. He has no visible vices and no outstanding virtues that I ever heard tell o'."

"Poor Annie!"

"Just so. But I'll not tell Annie you are here. She wouldn't like you to take tent o' her dragged gown. And the creature canna help hersel' when she has no siller, and three bits o' bairns hanging on to her night and day."

"What does Sandy Cromerty do?"

"He's a fisherman when God makes a calm sea for him. He has no spunk, and not much skill and but a poor sumph every way you take him."

Jessy asked no more questions. She had heard plenty to give her thought for the long evening, but the end of every consideration was, poor Annie! For a rush of memories carried her back to that morning when Annie had volunteered to wash the dishes, and let her wander away on the sands with Rule. She had loved Rule so much, and so truly, why then had she married this poor feckless man, so unlike Rule? Was it an act of anger or desperation?

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

LOVE, AND CONTINGENCIES

In the morning Maggie brought from Mrs. Macintyre a hurrying welcome. "You be to go to the auld lady instanter," she said. "There will be no peace in the town o' St. Andrews, till Mrs. Cameron pays her respects. Fegs! I'd like to have the pleasure o' announcing you."

"What nonsense you talk, Maggie."

"'Deed it's a fact before divines. The servant lass announces all her old cronies at the parlor door, just as the footman announces visitors at Lady Beiths."

Jessy laughed softly. "You are joking, Maggie. I'm not believing such nonsense."

"Sarah Fraser told me so."

"Oh! Sarah had always a fine art of mockery."

"Well ma'am, go in a carriage, and you'll get the warmer welcome."

Quite unexpectedly the carriage was provided, for Christine called to see if Jessy would take a drive. And because Jessy knew that her sister-in-law was desirous that the town should see them amicably to-

gether she asked Christine to drive her to Mistress Macintyre's house.

Christine was delighted to do so. She professed to be much interested in the lady. She had heard so much about her and her wonderful nephew.

"I saw him in Calcutta," said Jessy.

Christine looked steadily at her, and there was an awkward pause; then she answered in a cold voice: "He was once your lover. Perhaps he is your lover now?"

"I am sorry if he thinks so. I shall not marry again."

"Thank you! It would be a come-down — a slight to —"

"No, no! Not that! Rule Macintyre is worthy of the best woman in the world — it is my work. I cannot give it up. If I were a Roman Catholic, I should say I had taken the veil and was vowed to it."

They were at Margot Macintyre's door at this point in the conversation but sufficient had been said to gratify and assure Miss Cameron. And her satisfaction made her exceedingly agreeable. Margot waiting in her purple silk to meet Jessy, was astonished and delighted to see the Cameron carriage at her door. She had often dreamed that such an occurrence was in the possibilities, now her eyes saw the desire accomplished. But she did not forget that she was

302 THE HEART OF JESSY LAURIE

Captain's Macintyre's aunt and was living like any other lady on her own money. So her greeting was perfectly restrained, though she soon became under the influence of Miss Cameron's genialities, her real self. And before the departure of that lady, they were on terms of such familiarity, as quite justified Margot in displaying the wonderful china, and carved ivories, and exquisite lacquer work which her nephew had brought her at various times.

After a visit of unusual length Miss Cameron left Jessy with her friend, and then Margot put away her most obvious gentilities, and became her true self. "Take off that darksome bonnet and veil, Jessy," she said. "I'm wearying to see your bonnie hair again. *Hech!* but it's a sair trial to put on widow's blacks. Still they arena unbecoming to you, if you had a thought more color in your cheeks. I was a rosy-faced widow-woman, every one used to notice it — yet God knows I had the long dree watching at poor Macintyre's dying bed. But you hadn't that tribulation to go through with,—and well for you!"

"Perhaps it was, Mistress Macintyre, but —"

"*Margot* from you, Jessy. I like my Christian name from my friends and equals — what do we have a Christian name for, if it isn't to make a privilege of it to them we love. As for the outside multitude the cognizance of your surname is good enough.

But, as I was saying, it was a signal and plenteous mercy that keepit you thousands o' miles away from your husband's dying bed."

"Margot, no one tells me anything about my husband, except the one word *dead*—I wonder why?"

"Maybe, they think it is kindness to you, and maybe it is a thought o' mercy for the dead. The man went to the deil before he died. God forgive me! I had forgotten to name Him that is surety for the sinner. And we are all born in sin and prone to evil as the sparks fly upward."

"After I went to India, I never heard a word about Logie—what can you tell me?"

"Didna Rule tell you? What did Rule say o' his death?"

"He said only, that he had 'gone to the mercy of the Merciful.' But he did not die for long after I went to India—do you know anything of his life?"

"Aye, I know. For that matter, I know more than most folk, for my cousin's son, Keith Gordon, was with him from the time there was talk of the Forfar marriage until a few hours before he slipped awa' to meet the Death waiting for him. Eh Jessy woman! I must speak first o' the big stramash you made, publishing your ain wedding. You took the town by storm and it was a sight to see and to hear the way Miss Cameron faced all the questions and

the congratulations she be to take. Nae apologies, nae belittling o' the marriage from her lips! She said, her brother and sister-in-law had their own reasons for keeping the marriage unknown. She thought it had been a mistake perhaps, but then no one knew every why and wherefore, and so on, and so on — no show o' temper, or anger, or the like — she made a kind of ordinary of it and folks had to take it at that value. But they talked, gentle and simple talked, I had my ain share o' it."

"No doubt, Margot."

"There never was as many genteel tea parties in St. Andrews and the Cameron wedding was the slogan. And down among the fisherwives you were a text, and a moral and a swagger. For a few days no one could get a fish for their dinner. The men were discoursing, when they ought to have been out with the tides, and the women were too busy stravaiging from house to house talking you over, to call the fish though the whole town was calling for them. It was a fine nine days' wonder, Jessy. I never came across a finer. There was mair arguing, mair blaming and defending, mair denying and proving, mair quarrelling and black words than you could hear even in the Edinburgh Law Courts. I must say I enjoyed it mysel'. I only wished your poor mother had been alive. *Hoot!* Jessy woman, but she would have called them to order! She would have made them all

testify to whatever she called truth. I missed Janet sorely."

"My mother knew the whole truth. She went away satisfied. Was there any talk about Miss Forfar at the same time?"

"I heard the sough o' a rumor that Cameron wanted a divorce from you in order to marry her, and that you had put a stop to that business and then made him publish your marriage. Some said 'Tush! Tush!' to the very idea. Others said the publication was for the sake o' the bairn's rights, and the Kirkers generally, hoped Cameron had found grace and intended to turn over a new leaf. But this or that, Miss Forfar was only a by-play as it were and her friends were full o' anger and contempt if it was named. For all that, Keith Gordon told me he saw the marriage of Miss Forfar and Mr. Cameron spoken of in the Court Circular; and Keith said Her Majesty would not allow anything but the truth in that paper. I'm doubting mysel' if her authority will go that length."

"Did Cameron come to St. Andrews soon after the publication of his marriage?"

"He never came again o' his own free will. Two years ago he was brought here by a famous London doctor; Keith Gordon, and a trained man nurse was with them. I don't believe mysel' he was ever left alone after that. The third floor of Cameron House

was given up to him, and the men who cared for him. There was three o' them at the lang end, and Keith forbye."

"Margot! Margot! What are you telling me?"

"The even-down truth. He had been racing through life at a pace no mortal could stand, and that on brandy, brandy, brandy, morning noon and night. He lived mostly at sea and drank himself blind every day. Well, well, the end had to come, and it came wi' epilepsy fits; at first now and then, anon every day or two. Keith said the very face o' him was changed, and his reason was not to be trusted. He was going awfu' fast to demented wreck and ruin. The end came on the eighteenth of April a year gone by."

"The eighteenth of April!" cried Jessy, "Oh Margot surely he did not die on that evil day?"

"He did. It happened this way. The oldest nurse was worn out, and went home for a month's rest, and a new man came in his place. His first duty began at eight o'clock and he was told to waken the nurse sleeping in the next room at midnight. The man woke himself at two in the morning and went in a hurry to his charge. The new man was fast asleep and Cameron was gone. He was not in the house nor yet near by it. As soon as dawn broke — and it breaks soon in April — fifty men were searching land and sea for him, but the clocks were chapping eleven when the body was found."

“The eighteenth of April! At eleven o'clock! Are you sure, Margot?”

“Sure? Yes. The body was found on the dreary sands of Tents Moor. Some fishers went there to spread their nets among the thistles and rushes and found it lying among them. He had little clothing on and his boots were filled with sand and water. By what miracle he won his way there no one can tell. He must have been out o' the body, and just dragged it himsel' to the burying he wanted.”

“But it wasn't suicide, Margot? I am thankful it was not suicide.”

“The papers called it an accident, and the nurses had the weight o' the blame. I'm thinking his friends called it mercy, and thanked God he died while they might hope at the last moment he asked the pardon we all need to ask at that hour. Howbeit, there were those who thought his sins had driven him to the water. Miss Cameron stayed by him till he was buried. Your little lad walked first at the funeral. He was put forward as chief mourner, which was right. And then every one made a point o' forgetting the circumstance.”

Jessy was walking about the floor when Margot ceased speaking. She was troubled and sorrowful, and in an awe struck whisper she murmured the date to which Margot attached no importance, but which to her was thronging with memories. She had heard the

truth, or at least part of it, and she was well able to fill in all the dreadful ellipses of Margot's recital. But she could not discuss the subject with any human being. It was only to be named on her knees. So she turned the topic of conversation by suddenly asking:

"When did you see Annie Tulloch? Maggie Merrilees told me a sad tale about her."

"Maggie Merrilees is an ill-bred, forwardsome hizzy. To think of her daring to open her mouth to you."

"I asked her about Annie. And Margot, I want to leave fifty pounds with you for Annie."

"Gie it to her yoursel'. I'll send for her to come here."

"No, she would feel as if I was showing off. Tell her it is a little present for the children. The Tullochs were aye kind to my mother."

"Well the fifty pounds will be a God-send. Sandy Cromerty is one o' those men, that are always what they call unfortunate in business—the feckless creature!"

"Annie is a good woman. I wished Rule had married her."

"That would hae been a blunder. Rule will never marry any woman but yoursel'; and I'm gasping to hear when the wedding is to be. In spite o' my

rheumatics I'll now begin practicing my steps for the bride dance."

"Don't talk foolishness, Margot. Marrying is out of my thoughts — in a way it is out of all possibilities." Then she went over all her arguments in favor of the great work she had a share in, and said she intended to go back to India, and live and die there.

Margot listened silently, until the explanation was finished, and then she stooped forward, gently touched Jessy's hand, and asked, "*What about contingencies?* Things won't stand still just as you put them and want them. What is wrong and impossible this year may be just the proper course next year — for instance there might be another war in India — or the people who have taken an interest in your work may die, or get married, or lose interest — the officials over you may be changed — you yoursel' may lose interest, or health, or get associates you can't work with — or you may find out the work is not working — or perhaps not necessary."

"Margot! Margot how can you?"

"I ken fine what you are wanting to say. It's no use. You'll not get the same water in the river two hours together, and the river of life is just like that — fix things as stable as gold and siller and willing hearts and hands can fix them, and after all

is done you may ask, *what about contingencies?* ”

“ There will be no contingency that will make me marry Rule, and I want you to tell him that, Margot. Make it plain and positive to him.”

“ I’ll not. You’ll marry Rule at the time appointed. I shall tell him to seek till he finds and so not lose his labor. Some way, some day, he will get yes instead of no, from you. Rule is making a deal o’ money now.”

“ I’m not thinking of money.”

“ He fell in with friends who bought the trading steamer he commands, and he has a third share in it, and he told me about a little cabin on her, furnished fit for a queen. And he is hoping some day you’ll make a honeymoon trip round the world with him. Certie! that would be a contingency, to put teaching, or nursing, out o’ any woman’s ideas.”

“ You forget the boy, Margot.”

“ You told me he didna even ken you were his mother.”

“ I let Christine have her way about that position, at this time. I’ll not do it, when the laddie is older.”

“ You gave the bairn to Christine. She took him when he was a burden and a sorrow to you. She has had the thankless task o’ his unkenning infancy, the worry o’ his first seven years; and when she shall hae brought him safe and sound to a reasonable youth

you think o' claiming him. I wouldn't have believed in such a bit o' meanness from you. By every right David Cameron belongs to Christine Cameron; and let him go at that. Do you think he will take to your ways after he has been brought up in their ways? Pasture is more than breed in any case, but in David's case, the breed and the pasture both, are Cameron. If you want sons and daughters you'll just hae to marry again — and who but Rule? Did I tell you, I was looking for Rule at the week-end?"

"I'll be away by that time."

"Away? Nonsense! You came here for longer and —"

"I cannot bear the place, Margot. It is full of sorrow. I should get sick if I stopped here. I wish I had never come. It was fair and sweet in my memory. Why did I come back? Tomorrow, I am going to have a little dinner party at the hotel, just Miss Cameron and Captain Grant and his wife, and I hope Mrs. Macintyre will join us."

Margot could scarcely keep her composure for the prideful satisfaction in her heart. But she promised "if the rheumatics would let her to join the company. I was perfectly pleased wi' Miss Cameron's friendly ways," she said, "and I'm fairly lost wi' wonder anent the Grants. The Forfars had gold and land mair than reasonable, and yet I have heard tell o' the Grants writing books — the baith o' them!

Mrs. Grant dealing wi' poetry and songs and the like foolishness and the Captain writing military treatises and books on what they call tactics. It fairly confounds me; the estated gentry are come to a low pass when they take to writing books."

"Very big people write books now, Margot. Military books are professional, and very respectable; and as for songs, you know you like a good song yourself. I have heard you used to sing '*Wha Wadna fight for Charlie*' in such like fashion, that even the sailor lads felt for their dirks or knives."

"Preserve us! Are folks talking o' that nonsense yet? Weel, weel, it's a great fact no doubt, Jessy, and I must say that even yet my heart flies to my head if I hear the pipes, or the wee fiddle going over a Jacobite song. I'll be wi' you tomorrow no doubt, and I'll wear my bits o' niceties. I know what's expected on such occasions."

And Margot kept her word. She looked handsome, and her homely conversation banished all restraint and was the salt that seasoned the rather strangely mixed company. But after all had bid her good night and gone away, Jessy was almost irritably weary of her surroundings. St. Andrews had sorely disappointed her; she had thought it was so much larger. Its houses seemed almost mean, its streets singularly quiet; for the splendor of Indian cities, and the multitudinous humanity and endless traffic of

London had so enlarged her ideas as to put St. Andrews out of comparison. She felt that she must get back to the larger life at once.

The next day she returned to London; the expected advent of Rule adding the last intolerable element to her dissatisfaction. He would want her to go to Kirk, he would take her to the Abbey, and the Pends, and the Links, and talk of love the whole time. She could not endure the thought of it. The whole environment from Cameron House to the lonely marsh of Tents Moor was full of tragedy, was full of *the Other One*. Even her child had the same aura.

So she left Annie Cromerty the fifty pounds promised, and wrote Margot a loving invitation to come and spend the winter in London with her. Then she turned her back on her native city, and as she took her seat in the train, she said to her heart —

“There’s nothing like work and the busy world to work in. I’ll go back to the work given me. I’ll put all thoughts of love and marriage far from me. If I am ever tempted that way I’ll only need to come to St. Andrews and get into the thoughts that must grow there. I’ll only need to think of Cameron House and that awful death bed among the thistles and rushes of Tents Moor!” and being quite alone in her compartment she cried out in her horror and suffering, and then lifted up her soul in those little prayers of two or three words that spring from the

divine within us, and so effectually find the Divinity above that can help and comfort us.

On her arrival in London she began eagerly to arrange the little suite that made her home. She was full of enthusiasm, and ready for any work either in training schools or hospitals, that was ready for her. And it did seem as if Rule could hardly have chosen a worse time to trouble her with talk of love and matrimony. But love has all times for his own and not infrequently lifts success out of the most unpromising surroundings.

Rule had indeed been dashed for a short time by Jessy's abrupt departure from St. Andrews but Margot's conversation enlightened him. He understood how the past would intrude, how it would darken the present, how a woman of Jessy's obstinate determination to cast failure of all kinds behind her would hate the back-flow of old forgotten troubles. He had felt something like it himself. He knew instinctively also, that St. Andrews would disappoint her girlish memories of it. Its beauty and importance could not be measured by size or splendor, or mere traffic, but these were the criterions Jessy would naturally apply. Upon the whole, this mood of depression might help the plea of love that could brighten all moods — at any rate he resolved to try.

He called at twilight and found her alone. More-

over she was disappointed and unhappy. Some of Margot's "contingencies" had snagged the river of her daily life. Her place in India had been supplied "temporarily" it was said, but some stress was laid upon the "efficiency" of the person in charge. Friends she had expected to find were away on vacations — plans she had inaugurated had been superseded for something considered either better, or more economical. There were some officious strangers present, people not known to her, who nevertheless regarded her as if she were an intruder. As a natural consequence she had been too assertive, and every one had looked queer and she was angry because her patience and modesty of place had failed her. Altogether, it had been a day of small mortifications when she had expected satisfactions, perhaps even rejoicings over her return.

Rule's smiling face, his loving eyes, his tender regards for her smallest comfort were soothing to her wounded feelings. Here was one soul to whom she was a crowned perfection. And before she knew she was complaining to Rule, telling him her trials and disappointments and taking his sympathy as a thirsty plant takes water. Jessy had never been discreet in such matters, and she had not yet regained perfect physical tone, so, as she talked she wept a little, and Rule dried her eyes and told her how all the Savors of mankind had always been treated.

“ If they rest or are sick,” he said, “ some one else steps into their place ; if they die, the world heirs their labors and then forgets them. You’ll be remembering, Jessy dearest, that He Himself said, ‘ One sows and another reaps.’ ”

After awhile Rule ventured to speak of his own hopes. He pleaded with all his soul on his lips, pleaded until the little room felt as if it were on fire with emotion. He clung to her hands, to her dress, he stood between her and the door lest she should leave him without a word of hope. Every argument Jessy brought to her aid, he demolished by the simple assertion of Love’s claims before all others. Right or wrong, he pleaded with an eloquence that only a man in life or death earnest could find. And at last, fairly worn out with his own feeling, he took her hands passionately and cried with tears in his eyes and voice,

“ Have pity on me, Jessy ! For Christ’s sake don’t send me to sea again, without a word of love and hope ! ”

She was much moved. She answered, “ I do love you, Rule ; but I can never marry you. Be my dearest friend, for there is none else like you in all the world and I have no friend but you.”

“ Friend ! I want you for my wife ! It is putting a man on dry bread and water when he prays for the feast and wine of love. No, I’ll go away, Jessy —

"I'll go away, if that is all — God help me!" and without another word he left the room.

Then Jessy felt as if her whole world was gone wrong. She was astonished, she was wretched, she could not let Rule leave her in such heart-breaking uncertainty. She must call him back, and she ran to the closed door. He was out of sight. Gone! Gone! Oh what a wretched day it had been! and she flung herself on the sofa too miserable, too lost in her sense of abandonment to find the relief of tears. Just then she could only give herself up utterly to the feeling of cold despair, that benumbed her senses.

In about half an hour the door opened and a voice steeped in sorrow said, "Jessy!" At the word she rose with a cry and sprang to her feet.

"I have come back, Jessy. Have pity on me! I cannot go to sea till you say a word to me."

She laid her head against his shoulder and he drew her within his arms — "Speak, my dearest," he whispered.

"Give me time, Rule. I must think — There is my work —"

"There is better work waiting for you."

"I love none better than you, Rule, but I cannot marry any one. I do not want to."

"Then darling, I must make you want to. I have not yet loved you well enough, but I will."

"It is not that —"

“ I will give you time, all the time you want, but you must love me at the end. I will come back, and back, to the last of my life, if you say so, but I must call you mine in this world that at least I may so tryste you mine in another. Oh Jessy! Jessy! Jessy! what can you say to comfort me? I'll be away six months, darling.”

“ Rule, I will never marry any one but you. It shall be you, or no one.”

“ Bless you darling, but life is short. I am thirty-five years old. I have missed ten years of your love. I may come again? ”

“ I should be a lonely woman if you did not.”

“ In six months, Jessy. Good bye, sweet woman good bye! I am taking hope with me — may I? Speak Jessy.”

She did not speak, but she leaned closer to him and he kissed the last good bye upon her lifted face.

* * * * *

This is all I know. The rest is silence. My own life suddenly changed. I went to the other side of the world, and the density of the globe was between me and Jessy Cameron. New scenes and plans, a new home and new friends, the cares of a household, the joy of children, put the old life far off. Yet for many a year, while I sat sewing on the sunlit piazza, or musing by the glowing logs upon the winter

hearth, I used to wonder how Rule had fared in his wooing.

If I was in a certain mood, I would assure myself that Jessy Cameron was not the woman to resign the work which had been her salvation, which had brought her the love of many, the respect of all, and a very comfortable share of financial success. But just as soon as I settled this supposition in my mind, Margot Macintyre's question would assail and demolish all its probabilities, and I would ask with a kind of triumph, "*What about contingencies?*"

Then it was easy to decide that contingencies had certainly been too strong for Jessy to resist; and following out this conviction to logical conclusions feel certain that even at this hour, Rule and Jessy are dwelling together in some fair home, their past unsighed for, their future sure; their sons sailing on every sea, their daughters married and living around them; and an old age serene and bright, leading them gently together to their second bridal, when the glory of immortal Youth shall be crowned with the glory of Love everlasting.







