

**Selected Story.**

How I Won the Laird's Daughter.

By DANIEL GORRIE.  
CHAPTER II.  
(Continued.)

Next day I did not forget to mount my horse, which I had christened Prince Charlie, and ride over to the Haugh. It was more the desire to meet again the handsome and black-haired Jessie, than the expectations of a good dinner,—in which the Laird was said to excel,—that made me keep my appointment with scrupulous care, although two or three of my distant patients thereby missed an expected visit. I found a goodly company assembled in the laird's old-fashioned mansion. Several neighboring lairds with their wives were present, my excellent friend the minister of the parish, and some of the "chief men" of St. Dunstan. A few young ladies graced the company; but it struck me as something singular that I was the only young gentleman who had been honored with an invitation. Does the Laird really think, I asked myself, that he will keep away the dangerous disease of love from his charming daughter's heart by excluding chivalrous youths from his dinner-table? What intense selfishness there may be in the warmest paternal affection! Nor was selfishness altogether absent from my own heart. I began to feel a kind of secret satisfaction that the coast was clear, and that undivided attentions could be given and received. Jessie was all smiles, grace and beauty; and before dinner was finished, I was more than charmed—I was bewitched with her manners and conversation. When the ladies retired from table I endeavored, as on the former occasion, to keep the Laird of the Haugh in good humor, being now determined, for a particular reason, to rise rather than fall in his estimation. When the minister introduced polemics I flung out a shower of puns; when oxen became the topic I spiced the talk with some racy stories. The ruse succeeded. Between the strong waters and the stories, Laird Ramsay was elevated into a hilarious region, and he would have forgiven his worst enemy on the spot. He was not aware that I was playing with him and upon him for a purpose. When my stock was getting exhausted I started the minister on his everlasting trip to Rome, and managed, at the commencement of his narrative, to escape from table unperceived. I was not particularly anxious to "join the ladies;" but I was excessively anxious to have, if possible some private conversation with Jessie Ramsay. There could be no denying the fact that I—the young medical practitioner of St. Dunstan—had fallen in love, how or why it boot not to inquire, with the beautiful daughter of the Laird of the Haugh. I felt it through every vein in my body, and every fibre of my heart, and I fondly imagined from sundry stealthy glances and sweet suggestive smiles that the dear creature had perceived and reciprocated my attachment. The golden silence of love is the highest eloquence, and the most entrancing song. As good luck and favoring fortune would have it, I had no sooner left the dining-hall than the object of my adoration came tripping down stairs alone. In looking over the drawing-room window a rich flower from her lustrous hair had fallen to the ground, and the lovely creature was now, hastening to secure the lost treasure. Here was an opportunity little anticipated but long remembered. It was impossible that I could be so ungallant as to allow her to search for the fallen flower by herself, and we therefore went out into the open air together. There was no moon, but the stars were shining full and brilliant in the firmament. Tall holly bushes and other shrubs surrounded the house within the outer circles of the trees. The only two sounds I distinctly heard were the beating of my heart, and the humming sound of the minister's voice as he narrated the incidents of his pilgrimage to the Eternal City. I blessed the good man for his unconscious kindness in granting me this opportunity. Jessie and I proceeded to the place where the flower was supposed to be. I saw it at once, and she saw it at once; but both of us pretended that we had not seen it, and so the sweet search continued. Need I describe O amiable reader! how in searching and stooping I felt the touch of her ringleted hair, the warmth of her breath, the delicate softness of her cheek, and imbibed the honey-balm of her lips? At last the flower was found,—I bless it unaware,—and, under the starlight, replaced it on that lovely head from which it had not been untimely plucked, but had most opportunely fallen.

Concluded in our next.

A wise man, who evidently speaks from experience, says nobody can tell how many disputes for the front side of the bed have been settled by moving the bedstead to the centre of the room.

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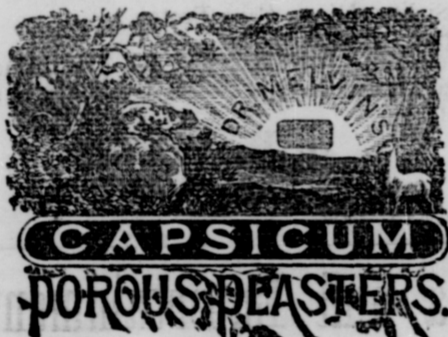
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