Selected Story.

How I Won the Laird's Daughter.

BY DANIEL GORRIE.

CHAPTER II.

(*Concluded.*)

We returned to the house undiscovered. The Laird, I knew was in that pleased and placid state when he could have listened for many hours to the Man in the Moon describing the incidents of his celestial travels and the wonders he had seen from his specular tower. I parted with Jessie at the foot of the staircase, pressed her soft white hand and reentered the room which I had rather unceremoniously left. The minister had got upon the Pope, and all the symptoms of "tired nature" were apparent on the faces of most of the listeners They had the look of a congregation when the thirteenth "head" was being propounded with due deliberation from the pulpit. The Laird had not seen me depart but he had seen me enter. He evidently placed in me the most implicit reliance, and there was no suspicion in his look.

"Hae ye been snuffin' the caller air, doctor?" he inquired.

I answered in the affirmative with a look of perfect innocence, and then the Laird added, apparently wishing to cut short the minister's harangue, "Ay, weel, let's join the leddies noo."

After that evening I was a frequent and welcome visitor at the Haugh. Prince Charlie soon knew the way to his own stall in the Laird's stables. Some golden opportunities occured when the Laird was absent for interviews and conversations with Jessie. We plighted our mutual troth, and were devoted to each other heart and soul. The one grand difficulty in the way of our happiness was the removal of the Laird's scruples with regard to the marriage of his daughter. At last, when jogging leisurely homeward to Oakbank one evening, I hit upon a scheme which ultimately resulted in complete success, and gave me possession of the being I loved dearer than life.

A wealthy and winsome widow lady resided in the neighborhood of St. Dunstan, and the project entered my brain to make her believe that Laird Ramsay had some notions of her, and also to make him believe that she had the warm side of her heart to him. If I could only get the Laird to marry the widow, I know that Jessie would soon hereafter be mine. The Laird was open to flattery; he was fond of what Mr. Barlas called "butter;" and I did not despair of being able to make him renew his youth. Tact was required in such a delicate undertaking, and I resolved to do my spiriting gently. I began with the Laird first one evening when he was in his mellow after-dinner state. I praised the graces and winsome ways of Mrs. Mackinlay, and drew from the Laird the confession that he thought her a "very gude and sociable leddy." I then tried a few dexterous passes before hinting that she had a warm side to the Laird o' the Haugh.

"Ye dinna mean to say that Mrs. Mackinlay is castin' a sheep's e'e at me, do ye doctor?"

"I can assure you Mr. Ramsay," I rejoined, "that she speaks of you always with great respect, and seems to wonder why you do not honor her with a visit occasionally."

"Ay' docter' it's queer what way I never thocht o, that. She,s a sensible leddy after a,' Mrs Mackinlay. I think I cauld do worse than look ower at her hoose some o, these days."

"It's the very thing you ought to do Mr. Ramsay," I replied "You will find her company highly entertaining. She has an accumulated fund of stories and anecdotes."

"Has she, doctor?—has she? Weel I'll gang; but what would Jessie say, I wunner?"

I had now put the Laird on the right scent, and I tried my best also with Mrs. Mackinlay. I made her aware of the Laird's intended visit, and hinted tenderly its probable object. After a lengthy conversation, in which I exercised all the ingenuity I possessed, I left her with the impression on my mind that Laird Ramsay's addresses when he called would be met half-way. The meeting did take place—it was followed by another and another—and the upshot of the matter was that the eccentric Laird and the wealthy widow were duly wedded, to the astonishment of the whole district. I allowed six months of their wedded bliss to slip past before I asked the Laird's consent to have Jessie removed from the Haugh to Oakbank. A sort of dim suspicion of the whole affair seemed to cross the Laird's mind when I addressed him. A pawny twinkle lit up his eye as he replied, "Ah, ye rogue!—tak her, an' my blessin' alang wi' her. Ye ken whaur to look for a gude wife, an' I daursay ye'll no mak the warst o' gudemen." Thus I won the Laird's daughter, and the paradise of Oakbank, in the village of St. Dunstan, was complete in happiness.

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