

# A Tillyloss Scandal

By J. M. BARRIE

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(Continued)

"What are ye doing, Christy?" I says with misgivings.

"I'm to iron a dicky for ye to wear to-morrow," she cries, and she kicks my foot off the fender.

"I'm no going to the kirk," I warns her.

"Are ye no?" she says; "ye gang twice, Tammas Haggart, though the Auld Licht minister has to drive ye to the door with a stick."

"Ay, when I heard she had joined the Auld Licht I kent I was done with lazy Sabbaths. Weel, she ironed away at that dicky with tremendous energy, and then all at once she lays down the irons and she cries:

"Keeps us all, I had forgotten!" She was the picture of woe.

"What's the matter, Christy?" I says.

"She stood there wringing her hands.

"Ye canna gang to the kirk," she moans, "for ye have no clothes."

"No clothes!" I cries. "I have my blacks."

"They're gone," she says.

"Gone, ye limmer!" I says, "wha has them?"

"David Whamand," she says, "has the coat, and Hender Haggart the waistcoat and the hat."

"Ay, lads, I can tell ye this composedly now, but I was fuming at the time. Christy's passion for genteelity was such that she had imitated grand folk's customs and given away the clothes as had been worn by the corpse."

"That came of taking a wife frae Balribbie."

"Ay, and it's not the only proof of Christy's vanity, for, as ye all ken, she continued to wear her crape to the kirk long after I came back."

"Because she thocht it sut her?"

"Ou, rather, just because she had it. But it was aggravating to me to have to walk with her to the kirk, and her in widow's crapes. It would have provoked an ordinary man to the drink."

"It would so, but what said ye when ye heard the blacks was gone?"

"Said? It wasna time for saying. I shovd my feet into my boots and flung on my bonnet, and hurries to the door."

"Whaur are ye going?" cries Christy.

"To demand back my blacks," I says, dashing open the door with my fist. Ye may mind there was some of ye keeking in at the door and the window, trying to hearken to the conversation."

"Ay, and we flew frae ye as if ye was the Riot Act. But we was thinking by that time as ye might be a sort of living."

"Maybe, but I wasna thinking about you. Na, it was the blacks as was on my mind, and away I goes."

"Ye ran."

"Yes, I ran straight to the Tenements to David Whamand's house. Lads, I said the pot was very near the boil when I marched down the Roods, but my humor was getting cold again. Ay, Christy Todd had suddenly lifted the pot off the fire."

## CHAPTER VI.

"David's collie barked at me," Haggart continued, "when it heard me lifting the sneek of the door, but I cowed it with a stern look, and stepped inside. The wife was away cracking about me too. Lizzie Linn, but there was David himself with a bantam cock on his knee, the which was ailing, and he was forcing a little butter into its nib. He let the beast fall when he saw me, and I was angered to notice as he had been occupied with a bantam when he should have been discussing me with consternation."

"It was the greater surprise to him when in ye marched."

"Ay, but my desire to be thocht a ghost had gone, and I says at once, 'Dinna stand trembling there, David Whamand,' I says, 'for I'm in the flesh, and so you'll please hand over my black coat!' He hardly believed I was human at first, but at the mention of the coat he grows stiff and hard, and says he, 'What black coat?'

"Deception will not avail ye, David Whamand," says I, "for Christy has confessed all."

"The coat's mine," says David, glowing.

"I want that coat direct," I says.

"Think shame of yourself," says he, "and you a corpse this half year."

"The critter tried to speak like a minister, but I waved away his argument with my hand."

"Back to the cemetery, ye shameless corp," says he, "and I'll mention this to nobody; but if ye didna gang peaceably we'll call out the constables."

"Dinna haver, David Whamand," I retorts, "for ye ken fine I'm in the flesh, and if ye didna produce my coat immediately I'll take the law of ye."

"Will ye?" he sneers; "and what might ye call yourself?"

"I'll call myself by my own name, namely, Tammas Haggart," I thunders.

"Yea, yea," says he; "I'm thinking a corp hands on his name to his eldest son, and Tammas Haggart being dead without a son the name becomes extinct."

"Lads, that did stagger me a minute, but then I minds I'm living, and I cries, 'Ye sly critter, I'm no dead.'

"Are ye not?" says he; "I think ye are."

"Do I look dead?" I argues.

"Look counts for nothing before a baillie," says he, "and if ye annoy me I'll bring witnesses to prove ye're dead. Yes, I'll produce the widow in her crapes, and them as collud ye."

"Ay," I cries, "but I'll produce myself."

"The waur for you," says he, "for if ye try to overthrow the law we'll bury ye again, though it should be at the public expense."

"Lads, that made me uneasy, and all I could think to do was just to fling out my foot at the bantam."

"Ye daur look me in the face, David Whamand," I says, "and pretend as I'm no myself?"

"I daur do so," he says; "and not only are ye no yersel', but I would never have recognized ye for such."

"So, so," I remarks; "and ye refuse to deliver up my coat?"

"Yes," he says, "and what's more I never had your coat."

"Lads, that was his cautiousness in case twa lines of defense was needed before the baillie; but I said no more to him, for now the house began to fill with folk wanting to make sure of me, and I was keen to convince them I was in the flesh before David prejudiced them. Ay, Robbie, David was one of them as conveyed me to Hender Haggart's."

"I was, Tammas, and when ye shut the door on me a mask of folk came round me to hear how ye had broke out."

"I daursay that, but their curiosity didna interest me now. Ye mind when we got to Hender's house it was black and dark, him pretending to be away to his bed? Ay, but the smell of roasting potatoes belied that. As we ken now, Hender had been warned that I was at David's demanding back the coat, and he suspected I would come next to him for the waistcoat and the hat."

"Ay, but he had to let ye in."

"Ou, I would have broken in the door rather than have been beat, and in the tail of the day Hender takes the snib off the door."

"He pretended he thocht ye a ghost too, did he no?"

"No, no, that's a made up story. Hender and his wife had agreed to pretend that, but when Hender came to the door he became stupid-like, and when I says 'Ay, Hender,' he says 'Ay, Tammas,' I've heard his wife raged at him about it after."

"Nanny," I says to the wife, "it's me back again, and ye'll oblige by handing over my waistcoat and my hat."

"I've forgotten to tell ye that when I walked in, Nanny was standing on a stool with a poker in her hand, the which she was using to shove something on the top of the press out of sight. She jumped down hurriedly, but looking bold, and says she, 'These mice is very troublesome.'"

"Weel, I had a presentiment, and I says, 'Give me the poker, Nanny, and I'll get at the mice!' Says she, 'Na, na,' and she lifts away the stool."

"All this time Hender had been looking very melancholy, but despite that, he was glad to see me back, and he says in a sentimental way, 'You're a stranger, Tammas,' says he."

"I am, Hender," says I, "and I want my waistcoat, also my hat."

"Hender gave a confused look to the wife, and says she, 'The waistcoat has been sold for rags, and I gave the hat to tinklers.'"

"Hender Haggart," says I, "is this so?"

"Hender sort of winked, meaning that we could talk the thing over when Nanny wasna there, but I couldna wait."

"I think, Nanny," says I, pointedly, "as I'll take a look at these mice of yours."

"Ye'll do no sich things," says she.

"I'm thinking," says I, "as I'll find a black waistcoat on the top of that press, and likewise a Sabbath hat."

"Hender couldna help giving me an admiring look for my quickness, but Nanny put her back to the press, and says she, 'Hender, am I to be insulted before your face?'

"Hender was perplexed, but he says to

me, 'Ye hear what Nanny says, Tammas?'

"Ay," I says, "I hear her."

"He hears ye, Nanny," says Hender.

"But I want my lawful possessions," I cries.

"Hender hesitated again, but Nenny repeats, 'Hender, am I to be insulted before your face?'

"Dinna insult her before my face," Hender whispers to me.

"I offer no insult," I says, loud out, "but I've come for my waistcoat and my hat, and I dinna budge till I get them."

"Ye've a weary time before ye, then," says Nanny.

"I wonder ye wouldna be ashamed to keep a man frae his belongings," I said.

"Tell him they're yours, Hender," she cries.

"Ye see, Tammas," says Hender, "she says they're mine."

"Ay," I says, "but ye canna pretend they're yours yersel', Hender?"

"Most certainly ye can, Hender," says Nanny.

"Ye see that, Tammas," says Hender, triumphant.

"And how do ye make out as they are yours?" I asks him.

"Tell him," cries Nanny, "as ye got them for helping in his burial."

"Tammas," says Hender, "that's how I got them."

"Maybe," I says, "but did I give ye them?"

"Say he was a corp," Nanny cries.

"Meaning no disrespect, Tammas," says Hender, "ye was a corp."

"How could I have been a corp," I argues, "when here I am speaking to ye?"

"Hender turned to Nanny for the answer to this, but she showed him her back, so he just said in a weak way, 'We'll leave the minister to settle that.'

"Hender, ye gowk," I says, ye ken I'm living; and if I'm living I'm no dead."

"Lads, I regretted I hadna put it plain like that to David Whamand. However, Hender hadna the clear-headedness necessary to follow out sich reasoning, and he replies,

"No doubt," he says, "ye are living in a sense, but no in another sense."

"I wasna the corp," I cried.

"Weel, weel, Tammas," says he, in a fell dignified voice, "we needna quarrel on a matter of opinion."

"I was just beginning to say as it was more likely to be the waistcoat we would fall out about, when in walks Christy in the most flurried way."

"Tammas Haggart," she pants, "come hame this instant; the minister's waiting for ye."

"Which minister?" I asks.

"None other," she says, looking proudly at Nancy, "than the Auld Licht minister."

"Lads, I shook in my boots at that, and I says, 'I winna come till I've got my hat and my waistcoat.'"

"What," screams Christy, "ye daur to keep the minister waiting!" and she shoved me clean out of the house."

What the minister said to Haggart is not known, for Tammas never divulged the conversation. Those who remained on the watch said that the minister looked very stern when walking back to the manse, and that Christy found her husband tractable for the rest of the evening. The most we ever got out of Tammas on the subject was that though he had met many terrifying folk in his wanderings, they were a herd of sheep compared to the minister. He had sometimes to be enticed out of the reverie into which thought of the minister plunged him.

"So it was next day he dandered up to the grave!" we would say craftily, though well aware that he did not leave the house till Monday."

"Na, na, not on the Sabbath day. When I wakened in the morning I admit I was terribly anxious to see the grave, as was natural, but thocht of the minister cowed me. I would have ventured as far as the grave if I had been able to persuade myself I wasna going for pleasure, but pleasure it was, lads. Ay, there was no denying that."

"Christy was at the kirk?"

"She was so, and in her widow's crapes. I watched her frae the window. Ay, it's no everybody as has watched his own widow."

"Na, and it had been an impressive spectacle. How would ye say she looked, Tammas?"

"She looked proud, Robbie."

"She would; but what would ye say she was proud of?"

"Ah, Robbie, there you beat me. But I can tell ye what she was proud of on the Monday."

"What?"

"Before porridge-time no less than seven women, namely, three frae Tillyloss, twa frae the Tenements, and twa frae the Roods, chaps at the door and invites her to a dish of tea. That's what she was proud of, and I would like to hear of any other woman in this town, single or married or a widow, as has had seven invitations to her tea in one day."

"The thing's unparalleled; but of course it was to hear about you that they speired her?"

"Oh, of course, and also to get out of her what the minister said to me. Ay, but can any of ye tell me what's the memorablist thing about these invitations?"

"I dinna say I can, but it's something about the grave."

"It's this, Snecky, that before Christy had made up her mind whether to risk seven teas in one day, I had become a humorist for life."

"Man, man, oh, losh!"

"Ay, and it's perfectly appalling to consider as she was so excited about her invitations that when I came down fare the cemetery she never looked me in the face, and I had to say to her, 'Christy Todd, do ye no see as something has come over me?' At that she says, 'I notice you're making queer faces, but I dinna ken what they mean.' They mean, Christy Todd," says I, "as I am now a humorist, to which she replies, 'Pick up that dish-clout.'"

"Keep us all! But oh, man, a woman's mind does na easily rise to the sublime."

"It doesna, Pete, and I'll tell ye the reason; it's because of women, that is to say, right-minded women, all having sich an adoration for ministers."

"I dinna contradict ye, Tammas, but surely that's fearsome statement. Is min-

isters not hearer the sublime than other folk?"

"They are, they are, and that's just it. Ministers, ye may say, is always half road up the sublime. Weel, what's the result? Women raises their een to gaze upon the sublime, when they catch sight of the minister, and canna look any higher."

"Sal, Tammas, you've solved it! But I warrant ye couldna have said that till ye became a humorist?"

"No more than you could have said it yersel', Robbie."

"Na, I dinna pretend I could have said it, and even though I was to gang hame now and say it in your very words, it wouldna have the same show as when you say it."

"It would not, for ye would just blurt it out, but them as watches me saying a humorous thing notices the mental struggle before the word comes up. Ay, the mental struggle's like the servant in grand houses as puts his head in at the door and cries, 'Leddies and gentlemen, take your seats, for the dinner is all but ready.'"

Early on Monday morning Haggart, the non-humorist, woke for the last time. The day was moderately fine, but gave no indication that anything remarkable was about to happen. Lookaboutyou, it is true, says that he noticed a queer stillness in the air, and Snecky Hobart spoke of an unusually restless night. It is believed by some that the cocks of Tillyloss did not crow that morning. But none of these phenomena were noticed until it became natural to search the memory for them, and Haggart himself always said that it was a common day. The fact, I suppose, is that an uncommon day was not needed, for here was Haggart and there was the cemetery. Nature never wastes her materials. Haggart was elated no doubt, but so would any man have been in the circumstances. For the last time Haggart, the non-humorist, put off cleaning his boots for another day. For the last time he combed his hair without studying the effect in the piece of glass that was glued to the wall. Never again would the Haggart who briskly descended his outside stair forgetting to shut the door, enter that room in which Christy was already baking bannocks. It was a new Haggart who would return presently, Haggart of Haggart's Roods, Haggart of Thrums, in short, Haggart the humorist.

The last person to speak to Haggart, the non-humorist, was James Spens, the last to see him was Sanders Landels, Jamie met him at the foot of Tillyloss, and Sanders passed him on the burying-ground brae. Both were ordinary persons, and they never distinguished themselves again.

It was not his grave that made Haggart a humorist, but the gravestone. Two years earlier he had erected a tombstone to the memory of his relatives, but it had never struck him that he would some day be able to read his own fate on it. The grave is to the right of the entrance to the cemetery, and almost exactly under the favorite seat known as the Bower, and being at the bend of the path it walked eagerly along the path, an ordinary man upon the whole; then all at once. . . He looked . . . He looked again. This is what he read:—

This Stone was Erected by  
Thomas Haggart  
To the Memory of Peter Haggart,  
Father of the said Thomas,  
Who departed this Life, Jan. 7, 1825.  
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