WHITE HEATHER.

BY WILLIAM BLACK,

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And perhaps, for one feeble moment of indecision, he asked himself what had ever tempted him to put his hand to the plough, and to go away from this quiet security and friendliness and peace. But it was only for a moment. Of course all that had been argued out before. The step had been taken; forward, and not backward, he must go. Still, to be sitting in this quiet little room, with the strange consciousness that Meenie was so near, watching the nimble, small fingers busy with her knitting, and wondering when she would raise those beautiful, deep, tender, clear eyes; and to think that on the morrow hour after hour would be placing a greater and greater distance between him and the possibility of any such another evening, nay, that it was not only miles but years, and perhaps a whole lifetime, that he was placing between her and him, that was no joyful kind of a fancy. If it had been Meenie who was going away, that would have been easier to bear.

"Call her back, Clebrig: Mudal call;
Ere all of the young spring-time be flown,"

he would have cried to hill and river and loch and glen, knowing that sooner or later Love Meenie would come back from Glasgow Town. But his own going away was very different, and perhaps a final thing.

By-and-by he rose, and begged to be excused. Maggie might stay for a while longer with Miss Douglas, if she liked; as for him, he had some matters to attend to. And so they bade him good-by, and wished him well, and hoped to hear all good things of him. Thus they parted; and he went out by himself into the clear moonlight night.

But he did not go home. A strange unrest and longing had seized him, a desire to be alone with the silence of the night: perhaps some angry impatience that he could not make out so much as a few trivial verses for this beautiful girl-friend whom he might never see again. He could write about his dream-sweetheart easily enough; and was there to be never a word for Meenie herself? So he walked down to the river, and wandered along the winding and marshy banks, startling many wild fowl the while, until he reached the lake. There he launched one of the cobles, and pulled out to the middle of the still sheet of water, and took the oars in again. By this time the redshank and curlews and plover had quieted down once more; there was a deadly stillness all around; and he had persuaded himself that he had only come to have a last look at the hills and the loch and the moorland wastes that Meenie had made magical for him in the years now left behind; and to bid farewell to these, and carry away in his memory a beautiful picture of them.

It was a lonely and a silent world. There was not a sound save the distant murmur of a stream; no breath of wind came down from the Clebrig slopes to ruffle the broad silver sweeps of moonlight on the water; the tiny hamlet half hidden among the trees gave no sign of life. The cottage he had left—the white front of it now palely clear in the distance—seemed a ghostly thing; a small, solitary, forsaken thing, in the midst of this vast amphitheatre of hills that stood in awful commune with the stars. On such a night the wide and vacant spaces can readily become peopled; phantoms issue from the shadows of the woods and grow white in the open; an unknown wind may arise, bringing with it strange singing from the northern seas. And if he forgot the immediate purpose of the verses that he wanted; if he forgot that he must not mention the name of Meenie; if he saw only the little cottage, and the moon-lit loch, and the giant bulk of Clebrig that was keeping guard over the sleeping hamlet, and watching that no sprites or spectres should work their evil charms within reach of Meenie's half-listening ear—well, it was all a fire in his blood and his brain, and he could not stay to consider. The phantom world was revealed; the silence now was filled as with a cry from the lone seas of the far north; and, all impatient, and eager, and half bewildered, he seemed to press forward to seize those visions and that weird music ere both should vanish and be mute:

The moonlight lies on Loch Naver,
And the night is strange and still;
And the stars are twinkling coldly
Above the Clebrig hill.

And there by the side of the water,
O what strange shapes are these?
O these are the wild witch-maidens
Down from the northern seas.

And they stand in a magic circle,
Pale in the moonlight sheen;
And each has over her forehead
A star of golden green.

O what is their song?—of sailors
That never again shall sail;
And the music sounds like the sobbing
And sighing that brings a gale.

But who is she who comes yonder?—
And all in white is she;
And her eyes are open, but nothing
Of the outward world can she see.

O haste you back, Meenie, haste you,
And haste to your bed again;
For these are the wild witch-maidens
Down from the northern main.

They open the magic circle;
They draw her into the ring;
They kneel before her, and slowly
A strange, sad song they sing.

A strange, sad song—as of sailors
That never again shall sail;
And the music sounds like the sobbing
And sighing that brings a gale.

O haste you back, Meenie, haste you,
And haste to your bed again;
For these are the wild witch-maidens
Down from the northern main.

"O come with us, rose white Meenie,
To our sea-halls draped with green;
O come with us, rose white Meenie,
And be our rose white queen!

"And you shall have robes of splendor,
With shells and pearls bestrewn;
And a sceptre olden and golden,
And a rose white coral throne.

"And by day you will hear the music
Of the ocean come nigher and nigher;
And by night you will see your palace
Ablaze with phosphor fire.

"O come with us, rose white Meenie,
To our sea halls draped with green;
O come with us, rose white Meenie,
And be our rose white queen!"

Ben Clebrig heard; and the thunder
Down from his iron hand sped;
And the band of the wild witch-maidens
One swift shriek uttered, and fled.

And Meenie awoke, and terror
And wonder were in her eyes;
And she looked at the moon white valley,
And she looked to the star-lit skies.

O haste you back, Meenie, haste you,
And haste to your bed again;
For these are the wild witch-maidens
Down from the northern main.

O hear you not yet their singing
Come faintly back on the breeze?—
The song of the wild witch-sisters
As they fly to the Iceland seas.

O hark—'tis a sound like the sobbing
And sighing that brings a gale;
A low, sad song—as of sailors
That never again shall sail!

Slowly he pulled into the shore again, and fastened up the boat, and slowly he walked away through the silent and moonlit landscape, revolving these verses in his mind, but not trying in the least to estimate their value, supposing them to have any at all. Even when he had got home, and in the stillness of his own room—for by this time Maggie had gone to bed—he was writing out the lines, with apparent ease enough, on a large sheet of paper, it was with no kind of critical doubt or anxiety. He could not have written them otherwise; probably he knew he was not likely to make them any better by overrefining them. And the reason why he put them down on a large sheet of paper was that Meenie's name occurred in them; and she might not like that familiarity to appear in her album; he would fold the sheet of paper, and place it in the book, and she could let it remain there, or burn it, as she chose. And then he went and had his supper, which Maggie had left warm by the fire, and thereafter lit a pipe—or rather two or three pipes, as it befell, for this was the last night before his leaving Inver Mudal, and there were many dreams and reveries (and even fantastic possibilities) to be dismissed forever.

The next morning, of course, there was no time or room for poetic fancies. When he had got Maggie to take along the little book to the doctor's cottage, he set about making his final preparations, and here he was assisted by his successor, one Peter Munro. Finally he went to say good-by to the dogs.

"Good-by, doggies, good-by," said he, as they came bounding to the front of the kennel, pawing at him through the wooden bars, and barking and whining, and trying to lick his hand. "Good-by, Bess! Good-by, Lugar—lad, lad, we've had many a day on the hill together."

And then he turned sharply to his companion.

"Ye'll not forget what I told you about that dog, Peter?"

"I will not," said the other.

"If I thought the dog was not to be looked after, I would get out my rifle this very minute and put a bullet through his head—though it would cost me seven pounds. Mind what I've told ye, now; if he's not fed separate, he'll starve; he's that gentle and shy that he'll not go near the trough when the others are feeding. And a single cross word on the hill will spoil him for the day—mind you tell any strange gentlemen that come up with his lordship—some o' them keep roaring at dogs as if they were bull-calves. There's not a better setter in the county of Sutherland than that old Lugar—but he wants civil treatment."

"I'll look after him, never fear, Ronald," his companion said. "And now come away, man. You've seen to everything; and the mail-gig will be here in half an hour."

Ronald was still patting the dogs' heads, and talking to them—he seemed loath to leave them.

"Come away, man," his companion urged. "All the lads are at the inn, and they want to have a parting glass with you. Your sister and every one is there, and everything is ready."

"Very well," said he, and he turned away rather moodily.

But when they were descended from the little plateau into the highway he saw that Meenie Douglas was coming along the road, and rather quickly; and for a minute he hesitated, lest she should have some message for him.

"Oh, Ronald," she said, and he hardly noticed that her face was rather pale and anxious, "I wanted to thank you—I could not let you go away without thanking you—it—it is so beautiful—"

"I should beg your pardon," said he, with his eyes cast down, "for making use of your short name—"

"But, Ronald," she said, very bravely (though after a moment's hesitation, as if she had to nerve herself), "whenever you think of any of us here, I hope you will think of me by that name always—and now good-by!"

He lifted his eyes to hers for but a second—for but a second only, and yet, perhaps, with some sudden and unforeseen and farewell message on his part, and on hers some swift and not overglad guessing.

"Good-by!"

They shook hands in silence; and then she turned and went away; and he rejoined his companion, and they went on together. But Meenie did not re-enter the cottage. She stole away down to the river, and lingered by the bridge, listening. For there were faint sounds audible in the still morning air.

The mail-cart from the north came rattling along, and crossed the bridge, and went on toward the inn, and again there was silence, but for these faint sounds. And now she could make out the thin echoes of the pipes—no doubt one of the young lads was playing—"Lochiel's away to France," perhaps, or "A Thousand Blessings," for surely no one, on such an occasion, would think of "Macrimmon's Lament"—

"Macrimmon shall no more return,
Oh, never, never more return!"

It would be something joyous they were playing there to speed him on his way; and the "drink at the door"—the *Deoch an Dhoruis*—would be going the round; and many would be the hand-shaking and farewell. And then, by-and-by, as she sat there all alone and listening, she heard a faint sound of cheering—and that was repeated, in a straggling sort of fashion; and thereafter there was silence. The mail cart had driven away for the south.

Nor even now did she go back to the cottage. She wandered away through the wild moorland wastes—hour after hour, and aimlessly; and when, by chance, a shepherd or crofter came along the road, the left the highway and went aside among the heather, pretending to seek for wild flowers or the like; for sometimes, if not always, there was that in the beautiful, tender Highland eyes which she would have no stranger see.

CHAPTER XXV.

SOUTHWARD.

As for him, it was a sufficiently joyous departure, for some of the lads about were bent on accompanying him on the mail-car as far as Larig; and they took with them John Macalpine and his weather-worn pipes to cheer them by the way; and at Crask they each and all of them had a glass of whiskey; and on the platform at Lairg railway station the clamor of farewell was great. And even when he had got quit of that noisy crew, and was in the third-class compartment, and thundering away to the south, his thoughts and fancies were eager and ardent and glad enough; and his brain was busy with pictures; and these were altogether of a joyful and hopeful kind. Already he saw himself on that wide estate—somewhere or other in the Highlands he fondly trusted; draining and planting and inclosing here; there pruning and thinning and felling; manufacturing charcoal and tar; planning temporary roads and bridges; stacking barks and fagots; or discussing with the head keeper as to the desirability or non-desirability of re-introducing capercailzie. And if the young American lady and her father should chance to come that way, would he not have pleasure and pride in showing them over the place?—nay, his thoughts went further afield, and he saw before him Chicago, with its masts and its mighty lake, and himself not without a friendly grip of welcome on getting there. As for Meenie, where would she be in those coming and golden and as yet distant days? Far away from him, no doubt; and what else could he expect?—for now he saw her among the fine folk assembled at the shooting-lodge in Glensaik and charming all of them with her sweet and serious beauty and her gentle ways—and again he pictured her seated on the white deck of Sir Alexander's yatch, a soft south wind filling the sails, and the happy gray-blue Highland eyes looking forward contentedly enough to the yellow line of the Orosay shore. That was to be her future—fair and shining; for always he had associated Meenie with beautiful things—roses, the clear tints of the dawn, the singing of a lark in the blue; and who could doubt that her life would continue so, through these bright and freshly coming years?

Yes, it was a glad enough departure for him, for he was busy and eager, and only anxious to set to work at once. But by-and-by, when the first novelty and excitement of the travelling were beginning to wear off, he suddenly discovered that the little Maggie, seated in the corner there, was stealthily crying.

"What, what, lass?" said he, cheerfully. "What is it, now?"

She did not answer; and so he had to set to work to comfort her; making light of the change; painting in glowing colors all that lay before them; and promising that she should write to Miss Douglas a complete account of all her adventures in the great city. He was not very successful, for the little lass was sorely grieved over the parting from the few friends she had in the world; but at least it was an occupation; and perhaps in convincing her he was likewise convincing himself that all was for the best, and proving that people should be well content to leave the monotony and dullness of a Highland village for the wide opportunities of Glasgow.

But even he, with all his eager hopes and ambitions, was chilled to the heart when at last they drew near to the giant town. They had spent the night in Inverness, for he had some business to transact there on behalf of Lord Ailine; and now it was afternoon—an afternoon dull and dismal, with an east wind blowing that made even the outlying landscape they had come through dreary and hopeless. Then, as they got nearer to the city, such suggestions of the country as still remained grew more and more grim: there were patches of sour looking grass surrounded by damp stone walls, gaunt buildings soot-begrimed and gloomy, and an ever-increasing blue-gray mist pierced by tall chimneys that were almost spectral in the dulled light. He had been to Glasgow before, but chiefly on one or two swift errands connected with guns and game and fishing rods, and he did not remember having found it so very melancholy-looking a place as this was. He was rather silent as he got ready for leaving the train.

He found his brother Andrew awaiting them; and he had engaged a cab, for a slight drizzle had begun. Moreover, he said he had secured for Ronald a lodging right opposite the station, and thither the younger brother forthwith transferred his things; then he came down the hollow-resounding stone stair again, and got into the cab, and set out for the Reverend Andrew's house, which was on the south side of the city.

And what a fierce and roaring Maelstrom was this into which they now were plunged! The dusky crowds of people, the melancholy masses of dark-hued buildings, the grimy flag-stones, all seemed more or less phantasmal through the gray veil of mist and smoke; but always there arose the harsh and strident rattle of the tram-cars and the wagons and carts—a confused, commingled, unending din that seemed to fill the brain somehow and bewilder one. It appeared a terrible place this, with its cold gray streets and hazy skies and its drizzle of rain; when, in course of time, they crossed a wide bridge, and caught a glimpse of the river and the masts and funnels of some ships and steamers, these were all ghost-like in the thin, ubiquitous fog. Ronald did not talk much, for the unceasing turmoil perplexed and confused him; and so the stout, phlegmatic minister, whose bilious-hued face and gray eyes were far from being unkindly in their expression, addressed himself mostly to the little Maggie, and said that Rosina, and Alexandra, and Esther, and their brother James, were all highly pleased that she was coming to stay with them, and also assured her that Glasgow did not always look so dull and miserable as it did then.

At length they stopped in front of a house in a long, unlovely, neutral-tinted street; and presently two rather weedy-looking girls, who turned out to be Rosina and Alexandra, were at the door, ready to receive the new-comers. Of course it was Maggie who claimed their first attention; and she was carried off to her own quarters to remove the stains of travel (and of tears) from her face; as for Ronald, he was ushered at once into the parlor, where his sister-in-law—a tall, thin woman, with a lachrymose face, but with sufficiently watchful eyes—greeted him in a melancholy way, and sighed, and introduced him to the company. That consisted of a Mr. McLachlan—a large, pompous-looking person, with a gray face and short-cropped white hair, whose cool stare of observation and lofty smile of patronage instantly made Ronald say to himself, "My good friend, we shall have to put you into your proper place": Mrs. McLachlan, an insignificant woman, dowdily dressed; and finally, Mr. Weems, a little, old, withered man, with a timid and appealing look coming from under black bushy eyebrows—though the rest of his hair was gray. This Mr. Weems, as Ronald knew, was in a kind of fashion to become his coach. The poor old man had been half killed in a railway accident; had thus been driven from active duty; and now, with a shattered constitution, and a nervous system all gone to bits, managed to live somehow on the interest of the compensation sum awarded him by the railway company. He did not look much of a hardy forester; but if his knowledge of land and timber measuring and surveying, and of book-keeping and accounts, was such as to enable him to give this stalwart pupil a few practical lessons, so far well; and even the moderate recompense would doubtless be a welcome addition to his income.

And now this high occasion was to be celebrated by a "meat tea," for the Reverend Andrew was no stingy person, though his wife had sighed and sighed again over the bringing into the house of a new mouth to feed. Maggie came down stairs, accompanied by the other members of the family; Mr. McLachlan was invited to sit at his hostess's right hand; the others of them took their seats in due course; and the minister pronounced a long and formal blessing, which was not without a reference or two to the special circumstances of their being thus brought together. And if the good man spoke apparently under the assumption that the Deity had a particular interest in this tea-meeting in Abbotsford Place, it was assuredly without a thought of irreverence; to himself the occasion was one of importance; and the way of his life led him to have continual—and even familiar—communion with the unseen Powers.

But it was not Ronald's affairs that were to be the staple of conversation at this somewhat melancholy banquet. It very soon appeared that Mr. McLachlan was an elder—and a ruling elder, unmistakably—of Andrew Strang's church; and he had come prepared with a notable proposal for wiping off the debt of the same.

"Ah'm not wan that'll gang back from his word," he said, in his pompous and raucous voice, and he leaned back in his chair, and crossed his hands over his capacious black satin waistcoat, and gazed lofty on his audience. "Wan hundred pounds—there it is, as sure as if it was in my pocket this meenit—and there it'll be when ye get fower ither members o' the congregation to pit doon their fifty pounds apiece. Not but that there's several in the church abler than me to pit doon as much; but ye ken how it is, Mr. Strang, the man makes the money, and the woman spends it; and there's mair than one family we ken o' that should come forrit on an occasion like this, but that the money rins through the fingers o' a feckless wife. What think ye, noo, o' Mrs. Nichol setting up her powny-carriage, and it's no nine years since Geordie had to make a composition? And they tell me that Mrs. Paton's lasses, when they gang doon the watter—and not for one month in the year will they let that house o' theirs at Dunoon—they tell me that the pairties an' dances they have is jist extraordinar', and the wastry beyond a' things. Ay, it's them that save and scrimp and deny themselves that's expected to do everything in a case like this, notwithstanding it's a public debt—mind, it's a public debt, binding on the whole congregation; but what an say an'll stand to—there's wan hundred pounds ready, when there's fower ithers wi' fifty pounds apiece—that's three hundred pounds—and wi' such an example before them, surely the rest o' the members will make up the remaining two hundred and fifty—surely, surely."

"It's lending to the Lord," said the minister's wife, sadly, as she passed the marmalade to the children.

The conversation now took the form of a discussion as to which of the members might reasonably be expected to come forward at such a juncture; and as Ronald had no part or interest in this matter he made bold to turn to Mr. Weems, who sat beside him, and engage him in talk on their own account. Indeed, he had rather taken a liking for this timorous little man, and wished to know more about him and his belongings and occupations; and when Mr. Weems revealed to him the great trouble of his life—the existence of a shrill-voiced chanticleer in the back yard of the cottage adjoining his own, out somewhere in the Pollokshaws direction—Ronald was glad to come to his help at once.

"Oh, that's all right," said he. "I'll shoot him for you."

But this calm proposal was like to drive the poor little man daft with terror. His nervous system suffered cruelly from the skirling of the abominable fowl, but even that was to be dreaded less than a summons and a prosecution and a deadly feud with his neighbor, who was a drunken, quarrelsome, cantankerous shoemaker.

"But, God bless me!" Ronald said, "it's not to be thought of that any human being should be tortured like that by a prute beast. Well, there's another way o settling the hash o' that screeching thing. You just go and buy a pea-shooter, or if one of the laddies will lend you a tin whistle, that will do; then go and buy twopence worth of antibilious pills—indeed, I suppose any kind would serve—and then fire half a dozen over into the back yard. My word, when the bantam gentleman has picked up these bonny looking peas and swallowed them, he'll no be for flapping his wings and crowing, I'm thinking; he'll rather be for singing the tune of 'Annie Laurie.' But maybe you're not a good shot with a pea-shooter? Well, I'll come over and do it for you—early some morning when the beast's hungry."

But it was difficult for any one to talk, even in the most subdued and modest way, with that harsh and strident voice laying down the law at the head of the table. And now the large-waistcoated elder was on the subject of the temperance movement—arraigning the government for not suppressing the liquor traffic altogether, denouncing the callous selfishness of those who were inclined to temporize with the devil, and laying at their door all the misery caused by the drunkenness of their fellow-creatures, and proudly putting in evidence his own position in the city of Glasgow, his authority in the church, the regard paid to his advice, and the solid, substantial slice of the world's gear that he possessed, as entirely due to the fact that he had never, not even as a young man, imbibed one drop of alcohol. Now Ronald Strang was ordinarily a most abstemious person, and no credit to him, nor to any one in the like case, for his firm physique and his way of living hitherto had equally rendered him independent of any such artificial aid (though a glass of whiskey on a wet day on the hillside did not come amiss to him, and his hard head could steer him safely through a fair amount of jollification when those wild lads came down from Tongue). But he was irritated by that loud and raucous voice; he resented the man's arrogance and his domineering over the placid and phlegmatic Andrew, who scarcely opened his mouth; and here and there he began to put in a sharp saying or two that betokened discontent and also a coming storm. "They used to say that cleanliness was next to godliness; but nowadays ye would put total abstinence half a mile ahead of it," he would say, or something of the kind; and in due course these two were engaged in a battle-royal of discussion. It shall not be put down here; for who was ever convinced—in morals, or art, or literature, or anything else—by an argument? It need only be said that the elder, being rather hard pressed, took refuge in Scriptural authority. But, alas! this was not of much avail; for the whole family of the East Lothian farmer (not merely the student one of them) had been brought up with exceeding care, and taught to give chapter and verse for everything; so that when Mr. McLachlan sought to crush his antagonist with the bludgeon of quotation, he found it was only a battledore he had got hold of.

"'Wine is a mocker; strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise,'" he would say, severely.

"'Wine which cheereth God and man,'" the other would retort. "'Wine that maketh glad the heart of man.' What make ye of these?"

"'Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath babbling?—they that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine.' What better authority can we have?"

"Ay, man, the wise king said that; but it wasna his last word. 'Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts. Let him drink and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more.'"

"The devil quoting scripture for his own ends," the Reverend Andrew interposed, with a mild facetiousness.

"It's a dreadful thing to hear in a minister's house," said the minister's wife, appealing to her neighbor, Mrs. McLachlan.

"What is? A verse from the Proverbs of Solomon?" Ronald said, turning to her quite good-naturedly.

But instantly he saw that she was distressed, and even more lachrymose than ever; and he knew that nothing would convince her that he was not a child of wrath and of the devil; and he reproached himself for having entered into any discussion of any kind whatever in this house, where Maggie was to live—he hoped in perfect accord and amity. As for himself, he wished only to be out of it. He was not in his right element. The vulgar complacency of the rich elder irritated him; the melancholy unreason of his sister-in-law depressed him. He foresaw that not here was any abiding-place for him while he sojourned in the great city.

But how was he to get away? They lingered and dawdled over their tea-drinking in a most astonishing fashion, his brother being the most intemperate of all of them, and obviously accounting thereby for his pallid and bilious cheeks. Moreover, they had returned to that fruitful topic of talk—the capability of this or the other member of the congregation to subscribe to the fund for paying off the debt on the church; and as this involved a discussion of everybody's ways and means, and of his expenditure, and the manner of living of himself, his wife, his sons, and daughters, and servants, the very air seemed thick with trivial and envious tittle-tattle, the women-folk, of course, being more loquacious than any.

"Lord help us!" said Ronald to himself, as he sat there in silence, "this house would be a perfect paradise for an income tax commissioner."

However, the fourth or fifth teapot was exhausted at last; the minister offered up a prolonged thanksgiving; and Ronald thought that now he might get away, and out into the freer air. But that was not to be as yet. His brother observed that it was getting late; that all the members of the household were gathered together; and they might appropriately have family worship now. So the two servant girls were summoned in to clear the table, and, that done, they remained; the minister brought the family Bible over from the sideboard, and all sat still and attentive, their books in their hand, while he sought out the chapter he wanted. It was the Eighth of the Epistle to the Romans; and he read it slowly and elaborately, but without any word of comment or expounding. Then he said that they would sing to the praise of the Lord the XCIII. Psalm—himself leading off with the fine old tune of "Martyrdom;" and this the young people sang very well indeed, though they were a little interfered with by the uncertain treble of the married women and the bovine barytone of the elder. Thereafter the minister offered up a prayer, in which very pointed reference was made to the brother and sister who had come from the far mountains to dwell within the gates of the city; and then all of them rose, and the maid-servants withdrew, and those remaining who had to go began to get ready for their departure.

"Come over and see us soon again," the minister said to him, as they followed him into the lobby; but the minister's wife did not repeat that friendly invitation.

"Ronald," the little Maggie whispered, and her lips were rather tremulous, "if you hear from Meenie, will you let me know?"

"But I am not likely to hear from her, lass," said he, with his hand upon her shoulder. "You must write to her yourself, and she will answer, and send ye the news."

"Mind ye pass the public-houses on the way gaun hame," said the elder, by way of finishing up the evening with a joke, Ronald took no notice, but bade the others good-by, and opened the door and went out.

When he got into the street, his first startled impression was that the world was on fire; all the heavens, but especially the southern heavens, were one blaze of soft and smoky blood-red, into which the roofs and chimney-stacks of the dusky buildings rose solemn and dark. A pulsating crimson it was, now dying away slightly, again gleaming up with a sudden fervor; and always it looked the more strange and bewildering because of the heavy gloom of the buildings and the ineffectual lemon-yellow of the gas lamps. Of course he remembered instantly what this must be—the glow of the iron works over there in the south; and presently he had turned his back on that sullen radiance, and was making away for the north side of the city.

But when he emerged from the comparative quiet of the southern thoroughfares into the glare and roar of Jamaica Street and Argyll Street, all around him there seemed even more of bewilderment than in the day-time. The unceasing din of tramway-cars and vans and carts still filled the air; but now there was everywhere a fierce yellow blaze of gas-light glowing in the great stocked windows, streaming out across the crowded pavements, and shining on the huge gilded letters and sprawling advertisements of the shops. Then the people—a continuous surge, as of a river—the men begrimed for the most part; here and there drunk and bawling; the women with cleaner faces, but most of them bare-headed, with Highland shawls wrapped round their shoulders. The suffused crimson glow of the skies was scarcely visible now; this horizontal blaze of gas-light killed it; and through the yellow glare passed the dusky phantasmagoria of a city's life—the cars and horses, the grimy crowds. Buchanan Street, it is true, was less noisy; and he walked quickly, glad to get out of that terrible din; and by-and-by, when he got away up to Port Dundas Road, where his lodging was, he found the world grown quite quiet again, and gloomy and dark, save for the solitary gas lamps and the faint dull crimson glow sent across from the southern skies.

He went up the stone stair, was admitted to the house, and shown in to the apartment that his brother had secured for him. It had formerly been used as a sitting-room, with a bedroom attached; but now these were separated, and a bed was placed at one end of the little parlor, which was plainly and not untidily furnished. When his landlady left he proceeded to unpack his things, getting out first his books, which he placed on the mantel-shelf to be ready for use in the morning, then he made some further disposition of his belongings, and then—then somehow he fell away from this industrious mood, and became more and more absent, and at last went idly to the window, and stood looking out there. There was not much to be seen—a few lights about the Caledonian Railway Station, some dusky sheds, and that faint red glow in the sky.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Supremely Delightful

To the emaciated and debilitated invalid is the sense of returning health and strength produced by Hostetter's Stomach Bitters. When that promoter of vigor is tested by persons in feeble health, its restorative and vitalizing potency soon evinces itself in improved appetite, digestion and nightly repose, the sole conditions under which strength and nerve quietude is vouchsafed to the human system. A gain in flesh of course ensues upon the restoration of digestion and assimilation. As surely as winter follows the fall of the leaf, does disease shadow the footsteps of declining strength, when the premature decadence of vitality is not arrested. Marasmus, consumption and other wasting maladies are prompt to fasten upon the enfeebled. Avert disease, therefore, with this grand enabling tonic, which not only renews failing strength, but mitigates and counteracts the infirmities of age and those of the gentler sex. Rheumatism, malaria, liver and kidney troubles yield to it. Aug. 19:26

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Every day adds to the great amount of evidence as to the curative powers of Hood's Sarsaparilla. Letters are continually being received from all sections of the country, telling of benefits derived from this great medicine. It is unequalled for general debility, and as a blood purifier, expelling every trace of scrofula or other impurity. Now is the time to take it. Made by C. I. Hood & Co., Lowell, Mass. Sold by all druggists.

ECZEMA

And Every Species of Itching and Burning Diseases Positively Cured.

ECZEMA, or Salt Rheum, with its agonizing itching and burning, instantly relieved by a warm bath with CUTICURA SOAP, and a single application of CUTICURA, the great Skin Cure. This repeated daily, with two or three doses of CUTICURA RESOLVENT, the New Blood Purifier, to keep the blood cool, the perspiration pure and unirritating, the bowels open, the liver and kidneys active, will speedily cure Eczema, Tetter, Ringworm, Psoriasis, Lichen, Pruritus, Scall Head, Dandruff, and every species of Itching, Scaly and Pimply Humors of the Scalp and Skin when the best physicians and all known remedies fail.

Will McDonald, 2342 Dearborn St., Chicago, gratefully acknowledges a cure of Eczema, or Salt Rheum, on head, neck, face, arms and legs for seventeen years; not able to walk except on hands knees for one year; not able to help himself for eight years; tried hundreds of remedies; doctors pronounced his case hopeless; permanently cured by CUTICURA RESOLVENT blood purifier internally, and CUTICURA and CUTICURA SOAP (the great skin cures) externally.

Chas. Houghton, Esq., lawyer, 28 State St., Boston, reports a case of Eczema under his observation for ten years, which covered the patient's body and limbs, and to which all known methods of treatment had been applied without benefit, which was completely cured solely by the CUTICURA REMEDIES, leaving a clean and healthy skin.

Mr. John Theil, Wilkesbarre, Pa., writes "I have suffered from Salt Rheum for over eight years, at times so bad that I could not attend to my business for weeks at a time. Three boxes of CUTICURA and four bottles RESOLVENT have entirely cured me of this dreadful disease."

Sold by all druggist. Price: CUTICURA, 50 cts.; RESOLVENT, $1.00; SOAP, 25 cts. Prepared by the POTTER DRUG AND CHEMICAL CO., Boston, Mass.

BEAUTIFY the Complexion and Skin by using the CUTICURA SOAP.

"TIRED AND ACHING MUSCLES, crying through countless nerves for rest and relief." Like manna to the children of Israel is the CUTICURA PLASTER to the tired, overworked, aching muscle. Do not deny yourself the comfort afforded by this new, original and speedy antidote to pain and inflammation. At druggist, 25c.; five for $1.00. Mailed free. POTTER DRUG AND CHEMICAL CO., Boston.

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Cramps, Pains, Cholera Morbus, Diarrhœa, and Dysentery, whether produced by unripe fruit impure water, unwholesome food, or change of climate, food or water, or any little ills of home or travel, such as Colds, Chills, Simple Fevers, Dyspepsia, Indigestion, Seasickness, Exhaustion, Nervousness, Loss of Sleep, Debility and Dissipation, are instantly relieved by SANFORD'S GINGER, the safest, surest, and best summer medicine and travelling companion.

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Best in the world. Harmless! Reliable! Instantaneous! No disappointment, no ridiculous tints; remedies the ill effects of bad dyes; leaves the hair soft and beautiful Black or Brown. Explanatory circulars sent postpaid in sealed envelopes, on application, mentioning this paper. Sold by all druggists. Applied by experts at BATCHELOR'S Wig Factory, 30 East 10th St., N.Y. city.

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For Rheumatism.

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12
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