

"Too drunk to git so far," said Long Kirby, kindly man.

"I reck'n the Cup is kind o' company to him," said Jim Mason. "Happen it's lonesomeness as drives him here so much." And happen you were right, charitable Jim.

"Best mak' maist on it while he has it, 'cos he'll not have it for long," Tammas remarked amid applause.

Even Parson Leggy allowed—rather reluctantly, indeed, for he was but human—that the little man was changed wonderfully for the better.

"But I am afraid it may not last," he said. "We shall see what happens when Owd Bob beats him for the Cup, as he certainly will. That'll be the critical moment."

As things were, the little man spent all his spare moments with the Cup between his knees, burnishing it and crooning to Wullie:

"I never saw a fairer,
I never lo'ed a dearer,
And neist my heart I'll wear her,
For fear my jewel tine."

There, Wullie! look at her! is she no bonnie? She shines like a twinkle—twinkle in the sky." And he would hold it out at arm's length, his head cocked sideways the better to scan its bright beauties.

The little man was very jealous for his treasure. David might not touch it; might not smoke in the kitchen lest the fumes should

tarnish its glory; while if he approached too closely he was ordered abruptly away.

"As if I wanted to touch his nasty Cup!" he complained to Maggie. "I'd sooner ony day——"

"Hands aff, Mr. David, immediate!" she cried indignantly. "'Pertinence, indeed!" as she tossed her head clear of the big fingers that were fondling her pretty hair.

So it was that M'Adam, on coming quietly into the kitchen one day, was consumed with angry resentment to find David actually handling the object of his reverence; and the manner of his doing it added a thousandfold to the offence.

The boy was lolling indolently against the mantelpiece, his fair head shoved right into the Cup, his breath dimming its lustre, and his two hands, big and dirty, slowly revolving it before his eyes.

Bursting with indignation, the little man crept up behind the boy. David was reading through the long list of winners.

"Theer's the first on 'em," he muttered, shooting out his tongue to indicate the locality: "'Andrew Moore's Rough, 178-.' And theer agin—'James Moore's Pinch, 179-.' And agin—'Beck, 182-.' Ah, and theer's 'im Tammas tells on! 'Rex, 183-,' and 'Rex, 183-.' Ay, but he was a rare un by all tell-in's! If he'd nob'but won but onst agin! Ah, and theer's none like the Gray Dogs—they

all says that, and I say so masel'; none like the Gray Dogs o' Kenmuir, bless 'em! And we'll win agin too——" he broke off short; his eye had travelled down to the last name on the list.

"M'Adam's Wull'!" he read with unspeakable contempt, and put his great thumb across the name as though to wipe it out. "M'Adam's Wull'! Goo' gracious sakes! P-h-g-h-r-r!"—and he made a motion as though to spit upon the ground.

But a little shoulder was into his side, two small fists were beating at his chest, and a shrill voice was yelling: "Devil! devil! stan' awa'!"—and he was tumbled precipitately away from the mantelpiece, and brought up abruptly against the side-wall.

The precious Cup swayed on its ebony stand, the boy's hands, rudely withdrawn, almost overthrowing it. But the little man's first impulse, cursing and screaming though he was, was to steady it.

"M'Adam's Wull'! I wish he was here to teach ye, ye snod-faced, ox-limbed profleegit!" he cried, standing in front of the Cup, his eyes blazing.

"Ay, M'Adam's Wull'! And why not M'Adam's Wull'? Ha' ye ony objection to the name?"

"I didn't know yo' was theer," said David, a thought sheepishly.

"Na; or ye'd not ha' said it."

"I'd ha' thought it, though," muttered the boy.

Luckily, however, his father did not hear. He stretched his hands up tenderly for the Cup, lifted it down, and began reverently to polish the dimmed sides with his handkerchief.

"Ye're thinkin', nae doot," he cried, casting up a vicious glance at David, "that Wullie's no gude enough to ha' his name alangside o' they cursed Gray Dogs. Are ye no? Let's ha' the truth for aince—for a diversion."

"Reck'n he's good enough if there's none better," David replied dispassionately.

"And wha should there be better? Tell me that, ye muckle gowk."

David smiled.

"Eh, but that'd be long tellin', he said.

"And what wad ye mean by that?" his father cried.

"Nay; I was but thinkin' that Mr. Moore's Bob'll look gradely writ under yon." He pointed to the vacant space below Red Wull's name.

The little man put the Cup back on its pedestal with hurried hands. The handkerchief dropped unconsidered to the floor; he turned and sprang furiously at the boy, who stood against the wall, still smiling; and, seizing him by the collar of his coat, shook him to and fro with fiery energy.

"So ye're hopin', prayin', nae doot, that

James Moore—curse him!—will win ma Cup awa' from me, yer ain dad. I wonder ye're no 'shamed to crass ma door! Ye live on me; ye suck ma blood, ye foul-mouthed leech. Wullie and me brak' oorsel's to keep ye in hoose and hame—and what's yer gratitude? Ye plot to rob us of oor rights."

He dropped the boy's coat and stood back.

"No rights about it," said David, still keeping his temper.

"If I win is it no ma right as muckle as ony Englishman's?"

Red Wull, who had heard the rising voices, came trotting in, scowled at David, and took his stand beside his master.

"Ay, *if* yo' win it," said David, with significant emphasis on the conjunction.

"And wha's to beat us?"

David looked at his father in well-affected surprise.

"I tell yo' Owd Bob's rinin'," he answered.

"And what if he is?" the other cried.

"Why, even yo' should know so much," the boy sneered.

The little man could not fail to understand.

"So that's it!" he said. Then, in a scream, with one finger pointing to the great dog:

"And what o' him? What'll ma Wullie be doin' the while? Tell me that, and ha' a care! Mind ye, he stan's here hearkenin'!" And, indeed, the Tailless Tyke was bristling for battle.

David did not like the look of things; and edged away toward the door.

"What'll Wullie be doin', ye chicken-hearted brock?" his father cried.

"'Im?" said the boy, now close on the door! "'Im?" he said, with a slow contempt that made the red bristles quiver on the dog's neck. "Lookin' on, I should think—lookin' on. What else is he fit for? I tell yo' oor Bob——"

"—'Oor Bob'!" screamed the little man darting forward. "'Oor Bob'! Hark to him. I'll 'oor——' At him, Wullie! at him!"

But the Tailless Tyke needed no encouragement. With a harsh roar he sprang through the air, only to crash against the closing door!

The outer door banged, and in another second a mocking finger tapped on the window-pane.

"Better luck to the two on yo' next time! laughed a scornful voice; and David ran down the hill toward Kenmuir.

CHAPTER XII

HOW RED WULL HELD THE BRIDGE

FROM that hour the fire of M'Adam's jealousy blazed into a mighty flame. The winning of the Dale Cup had become a mania with him. He had won it once, and would again despite all the Moores, all the Gray Dogs, all the undutiful sons in existence; on that point he was resolved. The fact of his having tasted the joys of victory served to whet his desire. And now he felt he could never be happy till the Cup was his own—won outright.

At home David might barely enter the room. There the trophy stood.

"I'll not ha' ye touch ma Cup, ye dirty-fingered, ill-begotten wastrel. Wullie and me won it—you'd naught to do wi' it. Go you to James Moore and James Moore's dog."

"Ay, and shall I tak' Cup wi' me? or will ye bide till it's took from ye?"

So the two went on; and every day the tension approached nearer breaking-point.

In the Dale the little man met with no sympathy. The hearts of the Dalesmen were to a man with Owd Bob and his master.

Whereas once at the Sylvester Arms his shrill, ill tongue had been rarely still, now he

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maintained a sullen silence; Jem Burton, at least, had no cause of complaint. Crouched away in a corner, with Red Wull beside him, the little man would sit watching and listening as the Dalesmen talked of Owd Bob's doings, his staunchness, sagacity, and coming victory.

Sometimes he could restrain himself no longer. Then he would spring to his feet, and stand, a little swaying figure, and denounce them passionately in almost pathetic eloquence. These orations always concluded in set fashion.

"Ye're all agin us!" the little man would cry in quivering voice.

"We are that," Tammas would answer complacently.

"Fair means or foul, ye're content sae lang as Wullie and me are beat. I wonder ye dinna poison him—a little arsenic, and the way's clear for your Bob."

"The way is clear enough wi'oot that," from Tammas caustically. Then a lengthy silence, only broken by that exceeding bitter cry: "Eh, Wullie, Wullie, they're all agin us!"

And always the rivals—red and gray—went about seeking their opportunity. But the Master, with his commanding presence and stern eyes, was ever ready for them. Toward the end, M'Adam, silent and sneering, would secretly urge on Red Wull to the attack; until, one day in Grammoch-town, James Moore

turned on him, his blue eyes glittering. "D'yo' think, yo' little fule," he cried in that hard voice of his, "that onst they got set we should iver git either of them off alive?" It seemed to strike the little man as a novel idea; for, from that moment, he was ever the first in his feverish endeavors to oppose his small form, buffer-like, between the would-be combatants.

Curse as M'Adam might, threaten as he might, when the time came Owd Bob won.

The styles of the rivals were well contrasted: the patience, the insinuating eloquence, combined with the splendid dash, of the one; and the fierce, driving fury of the other.

The issue was never in doubt. It may have been that the temper of the Tailless Tyke gave in the time of trial; it may have been that his sheep were wild, as M'Adam declared; certainly not, as the little man alleged in choking voice, that they had been chosen and purposely set aside to ruin his chance. Certain it is that his tactics scared them hopelessly: and he never had them in hand.

As for Owd Bob, his dropping, his driving, his penning, aroused the loud-tongued admiration of crowd and competitors alike. He was patient yet persistent, quiet yet firm, and seemed to coax his charges in the right way in that inimitable manner of his own.

When, at length, the verdict was given, and

it was known that, after an interval of half a century, the Shepherds' Trophy was won again by a Gray Dog of Kenmuir, there was such a scene as has been rarely witnessed on the slope behind the Dalesman's Daughter.

Great fists were slapped on mighty backs; great feet were stamped on the sun-dried banks of the Silver Lea; stalwart lungs were strained to their uttermost capacity; and roars of "Moore!" "Owd Bob o' Kenmuir!" "The Gray Dogs!" thundered up the hillside, and were flung, thundering, back.

Even James Moore was visibly moved as he worked his way through the cheering mob; and Owd Bob, trotting alongside him in quiet dignity, seemed to wave his silvery brush in acknowledgement.

Master Jacky Sylvester alternately turned cart-wheels and felled the Hon. Launcelot Bilks to the ground. Lady Eleanour, her cheeks flushed with pleasure, waved her parasol, and attempted to restrain her son's exuberance. Parson Leggy danced an unclerical jig, and shook hands with the squire till both those fine old gentlemen were purple in the face. Long Kirby selected a small man in the crowd, and bashed his hat down over his eyes. While Tammias, Rob Saunderson, Tupper, Hoppin, Londesley, and the rest joined hands and went raving round like so many giddy girls.

Of them all, however, none was so uproari-

ous in the mad heat of his enthusiasm as David M'Adam. He stood in the Kenmuir wagon beside Maggie, a conspicuous figure above the crowd, as he roared in hoarse ecstasy:

"Weel done, oor Bob! Weel done, Mr. Moore! Yo've knocked him! Knock him agin! Owd Bob o' Kenmuir! Moore! Moore o' Kenmuir! Hip! Hip!" until the noisy young giant attracted such attention in his boisterous delight that Maggie had to lay a hand upon his arm to restrain his violence.

Alone, on the far bank of the stream, stood the vanquished pair.

The little man was trembling slightly; his face was still hot from his exertions; and as he listened to the ovation accorded to his conqueror, there was a piteous set grin upon his face. In front stood the defeated dog, his lips wrinkling and hackles rising, as he, too, saw and heard and understood.

"It's a gran' thing to ha' a dutiful son. Wullie," the little man whispered, watching David's waving figure. "He's happy—and so are they a'—not sae much that James Moore has won, as that you and I are beat."

Then, breaking down for a moment:

"Eh, Wullie, Wullie! they're all agin us. It's you and I alane, lad."

Again, seeing the squire followed by Parson Leggy, Viscount Birdsaye, and others of the gentry, forcing their way through the press to shake hands with the victor, he continued:

"It's good to be in wi' the quality, Wullie. Niver mak' a friend of a man beneath ye in rank, nor an enemy of a man aboon ye: that's a soond principle, Wullie, if ye'd get on in honest England."

He stood there, alone with his dog, watching the crowd on the far slope as it surged upward in the direction of the committee tent. Only when the black mass had packed itself in solid phalanges about that ring, inside which, just a year ago, he had stood in very different circumstances, and was at length still, a wintry smile played for a moment about his lips. He laughed a mirthless laugh.

"Bide a wee, Wullie — he! he! Bide a wee.

'The best-laid schemes o' mice and men
Gang aft agley.'

As he spoke, there came down to him, above the tumult, a faint cry of mingled surprise and anger. The cheering ceased abruptly. There was silence; then there burst on the stillness a hurricane of indignation.

The crowd surged forward, then turned. Every eye was directed across the stream. A hundred damning fingers pointed at the solitary figure there. There were hoarse yells of: "There he be! Yon's him! What's he done wi' it? Thief! Throttle him!"

The mob came lumbering down the slope like one man, thundering their imprecations on a thousand throats. They looked danger-

ous, and their wrath was stimulated by the knot of angry Dalesmen who led the van. There was more than one white face among the women at the top of the slope as they watched the crowd blundering blindly down the hill. There were more men than Parson Leggy, the squire, James Moore, and the local constables in the thick of it all, striving frantically with voice and gesture, ay, and stick too, to stem the advance.

It was useless; on the dark wave rolled, irresistible.

On the far bank stood the little man, motionless, awaiting them with a grin upon his face. And a little farther in front was the Tailless Tyke, his back and neck like a new-shorn wheat-field, as he rumbled a vast challenge.

"Come on, gentlemen!" the little man cried. "Come on! I'll bide for ye, never fear. Ye're a thousand to one and a dog. It's the odds ye like, Englishmen a'."

And the mob, with murder in its throat, accepted the invitation and came on.

At the moment, however, from the slope above, clear above the tramp of the multitude, a great voice bellowed: "Way! Way! Way for Mr. Trotter!" The advancing host checked and opened out; and the secretary of the meeting bundled through.

He was a small, fat man, fussy at any time, and perpetually perspiring. Now his face was crimson with rage and running; he gesticu-

lated wildly; vague words bubbled forth, as his short legs twinkled down the slope.

The crowd paused to admire. Some one shouted a witticism, and the crowd laughed. For the moment the situation was saved.

The fat secretary hurried on down the slope, unheeding of any insult but the one. He bounced over the plank-bridge: and as he came closer, M'Adam saw that in each hand brandished a brick.

"Hoots, man! dinna throw!" he cried, making a feint as though to turn in sudden terror.

"What's this? What's this?" gasped the secretary, waving his arms.

"Bricks, 'twad seem," the other answered, staying his flight.

The secretary puffed up like a pudding in a hurry.

"Where's the Cup? Champion, Challenge, etc.," he jerked out. "Mind, sir, you're responsible! wholly responsible! Dents, damages, delays! What's it all mean, sir? These—these monstrous creations"—he brandished the bricks, and M'Adam started back—"wrapped, as I live, in straw, sir, in the Cup case, sir! the Cup case! No Cup! Infamous! Disgraceful! Insult me—meeting—committee—every one! What's it mean, sir?" He paused to pant, his body filling and emptying like a bladder.

M'Adam approached him with one eye on

the crowd, which was heaving forward again, threatening still, but sullen and silent.

"I pit 'em there," he whispered; and drew back to watch the effect of his disclosure.

The secretary gasped.

"You—you not only do this—amazing thing—these monstrosities"—he hurled the bricks furiously on the unoffending ground—"but you dare to tell me so!"

The little man smiled.

"'Do wrang and conceal it, do right and confess it,' that's Englishmen's motto, and mine, as a rule; but this time I had ma reasons."

"Reasons, sir! No reasons can justify such an extraordinary breach of all the—the decencies. Reasons? the reasons of a maniac. Not to say more, sir. Fraudulent detention—fraudulent, I say, sir! What were your precious reasons?"

The mob with Tammas and Long Kirby at their head had now wellnigh reached the plank-bridge. They still looked dangerous, and there were isolated cries of:

"Duck him!"

"Chuck him in!"

"An' the dog!"

"Wi' one o' they bricks about their necks!"

"There are my reasons!" said M'Adam, pointing to the forest of menacing faces. "Ye see I'm no beloved amang yonder gentlemen, and"—in a stage whisper in the other's ear

—"I thocht maybe I'd be 'tacked on the road."

Tammas foremost of the crowd, had now his foot upon the first plank.

"Ye robber! ye thief! Wait till we set hands on ye, you and yer gorilla!" he called.

M'Adam half turned.

"Wullie," he said quietly, "keep the bridge."

At the order the Tailless Tyke shot gladly forward, and the leaders on the bridge as hastily back. The dog galloped on to the rattling plank, took his post fair and square in the centre of the narrow way, and stood facing the hostile crew like Cerberus guarding the gates of hell: his bull-head was thrust forward, hackles up, teeth glinting, and a distant rumbling in his throat, as though daring them to come on.

"Yo' first, ole lad!" said Tammas, hopping agilely behind Long Kirby.

"Nay; the old uns lead!" cried the big smith, his face gray-white. He wrenched round, pinned the old man by the arms, and held him forcibly before him as a covering shield. There ensued an unseemly struggle betwixt the two valiants, Tammas bellowing and kicking in the throes of mortal fear.

"Jim Mason'll show us," he suggested at last.

"Nay," said honest Jim; "I'm fear'd." He could say it with impunity; for the pluck of Postie Jim was a matter long past dispute.

Then Jem Burton'd go first?

Nay; Jem had a lovin' wife and dear little kids at 'ome.

Then Big Bell?

Big Bell'd see 'isself further first.

A tall figure came forcing through the crowd, his face a little paler than its wont, and a formidable knob-kerry in his hand.

"I'm goin'!" said David.

"But yo're not," answered burly Sam'l, gripping the boy from behind with arms like the roots of an oak. "Your time'll coom soon enough by the look on yo' wi' niver no hurry." And the sense of the Dalesmen was with the big man; for, as old Rob Saunderson said:

"I reck'n he'd liefer claw on to your throat, lad, nor ony o' oors."

As there was no one forthcoming to claim the honor of the lead, Tammias came forward with cunning counsel.

"Tell yo' what, lads, we'd best let 'em as don't know nowt at all about him go first. And onst they're on, mind, we winna let 'em off; but keep a-shovin' and a-bovin' 'on 'em forra'd. *Then* us'll foller."

By this time there was a little naked space of green round the bridge-head, like a fairy circle, into which the uninitiated might not penetrate. Round this the mob hedged: the Dalesmen in front, striving knavishly back and bawling to those behind to leggo that shovin'; and these latter urging valorously

forward, yelling jeers and contumely at the front rank. "Come on! 'O's afraid? Lerrus through to 'em, then, ye Royal Stan'-backs!"—for well they knew the impossibility of their demand.

And as they wedged and jostled thus, there stole out from their midst as gallant a champion as ever trod the grass. He trotted out into the ring, the observed of all, and paused to gaze at the gaunt figure on the bridge. The sun lit the sprinkling of snow on the dome of his head; one forepaw was off the ground; and he stood there, royally alert, scanning his antagonist.

"Th' Owd Un!" went up in a roar fit to split the air as the hero of the day was recognized. And the Dalesmen gave a pace forward spontaneously as the gray knight-errant stole across the green.

"Oor Bob'll fetch him!" they roared, their blood leaping to fever heat, and gripped their sticks, determined in stern reality to follow now.

The gray champion trotted up on to the bridge, and paused again, the long hair about his neck rising like a ruff, and a strange glint in his eyes; and the holder of the bridge never moved. Red and Gray stood thus, face to face: the one gay yet resolute, the other motionless, his great head slowly sinking between his forelegs, seemingly petrified.

There was no shouting now: it was time for

deeds, not words. Only, above the stillness, came a sound from the bridge like the snore of a giant in his sleep, and blending, with it, a low, deep, purring thunder like some monster cat well pleased.

"Wullie," came a solitary voice from the far side, "keep the bridge!"

One ear went back, one ear was still forward; the great head was low and lower between his forelegs and the glowing eyes rolled upward so that the watchers could see the murderous white.

Forward the gray dog stepped.

Then, for the second time that afternoon, a voice, stern and hard, came ringing down from the slope above over the heads of the many.

"Bob, lad, coom back!"

"He! he! I thocht that was comin'," sneered the small voice over the stream.

The gray dog heard, and checked.

"Bob, lad, coom in, I say!"

At that he swung round and marched slowly back, gallant as he had come, dignified still in his mortification.

And Red Wull threw back his head and bel-
lowed a pæan of victory—challenge, triumph,
scorn, all blended in that bull-like, blood-
chilling blare.

In the mean time, M'Adam and the secretary had concluded their business. It had been

settled that the Cup was to be delivered over to James Moore not later than the following Saturday.

"Saturday, see! at the latest!" the secretary cried as he turned and trotted off.

"Mr. Trotter," M'Adam called after him, "I'm sorry, but ye maun bide this side the Lea till I've reached the foot o' the Pass. Gin they gentlemen"—nodding toward the crowd—"should set hands on me, why—" and he shrugged his shoulders significantly. "Forbye, Wullie's keepin' the bridge."

With that the little man strolled off leisurely; now dallying to pick a flower, now to wave a mocking hand at the furious mob, and so slowly on to the foot of the Muirk Muir Pass.

There he turned and whistled that shrill, peculiar note.

"Wullie, Wullie, to me!" he called.

At that, with one last threat thrown at the thousand souls he had held at bay for thirty minutes, the Tailless Tyke swung about and galloped after his lord.

CHAPTER XIII

THE FACE IN THE FRAME

ALL Friday M'Adam never left the kitchen. He sat opposite the Cup, in a coma, as it were; and Red Wull lay motionless at his feet.

Saturday came, and still the two never budged. Toward the evening the little man rose, all in a tremble, and took the Cup down from the mantelpiece; then he sat down again with it in his arms.

"Eh, Wullie, Wullie, is it a dream? Ha, they took her fra us? Eh, but it's you and I alane, lad."

He hugged it to him, crying silently, and rocking to and fro like a mother with a dying child. And Red Wull sat up on his haunches, and weaved from side to side in sympathy.

As the dark was falling, David looked in. At the sound of the opening door the little man swung round noiselessly, the Cup nursed in his arms, and glared, sullen and suspicious, at the boy; yet seemed not to recognize him. In the half-light David could see the tears coursing down the little wizened face.

"'Pon ma life, he's gaein' daff!" was his comment as he turned away to Kennuir. And again the mourners were left alone.

"A few hours noo, Wullie," the little man wailed, "and she'll be gane. We won her, Wullie, you and I, won her fair: she's hit the hoose for us; she's softened a' for us—and God kens we needed it; she was the ae thing we had to look to and love. And noo they're takin' her awa', and 'twill be night agin. We've cherished her, we've garnished her, we've loved her like oor ain; and noo she maun gang to strangers who know her not."

He rose to his feet, and the great dog rose with him. His voice heightened to a scream, and he swayed with the Cup in his arms till it seemed he must fall.

"Did they win her fair, Wullie? Na; they plotted, they conspired, they worked ilka ain o' them agin us, and they beat us. Ay, and noo they're robbin' us—robbin' us! But they shallna ha' her. Oor's or naeboddy's, Wullie! We'll finish her sooner nor that."

He banged the Cup down on the table and rushed madly out of the room, Red Wull at his heels. In a moment he came running back, brandishing a great axe about his head.

"Come on, Wullie!" he cried. "Scots wha hae! Noo's the day and noo's the hour! Come on!"

On the table before him, serene and beautiful, stood the target of his madness. The little man ran at it, swinging his murderous weapon like a flail.

"Oor's or naeboddy's Wullie! Come on!

'Lay the proud usurpers low!'" He aimed a mighty buffet; and the Shepherds' Trophy—the Shepherds' Trophy which had won through the hardships of a hundred years—was almost gone. It seemed to quiver as the blow fell. But the cruel steel missed, and the axe-head sank into the wood, clean and deep, like a spade in snow.

Red Wull had leapt on to the table, and in his cavernous voice was grumbling a chorus to his master's yells. The little man danced up and down, tugging and straining at the axe-handle.

"You and I, Wullie!

'Tyrants fall in every foe!
Liberty's in every blow!'"

The axe-head was as immoveable as the Muir Pike.

"'Let us do or die!'"

The shaft snapped, and the little man tottered back. Red Wull jumped down from the table, and, in doing so, brushed against the Cup. It toppled* over on to the floor, and rolled tinkling away in the dust. And the little man fled madly out of the house, still screaming his war-song.

When, late that night, M'Adam returned home, the Cup was gone. Down on his hands

*N. B.—You may see the dent in the Cup's ~~white~~ sides to this day.

and knees he traced out its path, plain to see, where it had rolled along the dusty floor. Beyond that there was no sign.

At first he was too much overcome to speak. Then he raved round the room like a derelict ship, Red Wull following uneasily behind. He cursed; he blasphemed; he screamed and beat the walls with feverish hands. A stranger, passing, might well have thought this was a private Bedlam. At last, exhausted, he sat down and cried.

"It's David, Wullie, ye may depend; David that's robbed his father's hoose. Oh, it's a grand thing to ha' a dutiful son!"—and he bowed his gray head in his hands.

David, indeed, it was. He had come back to the Grange during his father's absence, and, taking the Cup from its grimy bed, had marched it away to its rightful home. For that evening at Kenmuir, James Moore had said to him:

"David, your father's not sent the Cup. I shall come and fetch it to-morrow." And David knew he meant it. Therefore, in order to save a collision between his father and his friend—a collision the issue of which he dared hardly contemplate, knowing, as he did, the unalterable determination of the one and the lunatic passion of the other—the boy had resolved to fetch the Cup himself, then and there, in the teeth, if needs be, of his father and the Tailless Tyke. And he had done it.

When he reached home that night he marched, contrary to his wont, straight into the kitchen.

There sat his father facing the door, awaiting him, his hands upon his knees. For once the little man was alone; and David, brave though he was, thanked heaven devoutly that Red Wull was elsewhere.

For a while father and son kept silence, watching one another like two fencers.

"'Twas you as took ma Cup?" asked the little man at last, leaning forward in his chair.

"'Twas me as took Mr. Moore's Cup," the boy replied. "I thowt yo' mun ha' done wi' it—I found it all bashed upon the floor."

"You took it—pit up to it, nae doot, by James Moore."

David made a gesture of dissent.

"Ay, by James Moore," his father continued. "He durse na come hiss' for his ill-gotten spoils, so he sent the son to rob the father. The coward!"—his whole frame shook with passion. "I'd ha' thocht James Moore'd ha' bin man enough to come himself for what he wanted. I see noo I did him a wrang—I misjudged him. I kent him a heepocrite; ain o' yer unco gudes; a man as looks one thing, says anither, and does a third; and noo I ken he's a coward. He's fear'd o' me, sic as I am, five foot twa in ma stockin's." He rose from his chair and drew himself up to his full height

"Mr. Moore had nowt to do wi' it," David persisted.

"Ye're lyin'. James Moore pit ye to it."

"I tell yo' he did not."

"Ye'd ha' bin willin' enough wi'oot him, if ye'd thocht o't, I grant ye. But ye've no the wits. All there is o' ye has gane to mak' yer muckle body. Hooiver, that's no matter. I'll settle wi' James Moore anither time. I'll settle wi' you noo, David M'Adam."

He paused, and looked the boy over from head to foot.

"So, ye're not only an idler! a wastrel! a liar!"—he spat the words out. "Ye're—God help ye—a thief!"

"I'm no thief!" the boy returned hotly. "I did but give to a mon what ma feyther—shame on him!—wrongfully kept from him."

"Wrangfully?" cried the little man, advancing with burning face.

"'Twas honorably done, keepin' what wasna your'n to keep! Holdin' back his rights from a man! Ay, if ony one's the thief, it's not me: it's you, I say, you!"—and he looked his father in the face with flashing eyes.

"I'm the thief, am I?" cried the other, incoherent with passion. "Though ye're three times ma size, I'll teach ma son to speak so to me."

The old strap, now long disused, hung in the chimney corner. As he spoke the little man sprang back, ripped it from the wall, and,

almost before David realized what he was at, had brought it down with a savage slash across his son's shoulders; and as he smote he whistled a shrill, imperative note:

"Wullie, Wullie, to me!"

David felt the blow through his coat like a bar of hot iron laid across his back. His passion seethed within him; every vein throbbled; every nerve quivered. In a minute he would wipe out, once and for all, the score of years; for the moment, however, there was urgent business on hand. For outside he could hear the quick patter of feet hard-galloping, and the scurry of a huge creature racing madly to a call.

With a bound he sprang at the open door; and again the strap came lashing down, and a wild voice:

"Quick, Wullie! For God's sake, quick!"

David slammed the door to. It shut with a rasping snap; and at the same moment a great body from without thundered against it with terrific violence, and a deep voice roared like the sea when thwarted of its prey.

"Too late, agin!" said David, breathing hard; and shot the bolt home with a clang. Then he turned on his father.

"Noo," said he, "man to man!"

"Ay," cried the other, "father to son!"

The little man half turned and leapt at the old musketoen hanging on the wall. He missed it, turned again, and struck with the

strap full at the other's face. David caught the falling arm at the wrist, hitting it aside with such tremendous force that the bone all but snapped. Then he smote his father a terrible blow on the chest, and the little man staggered back, gasping, into the corner; while the strap dropped from his numbed fingers.

Outside Red Wull whined and scratched; but the two men paid no heed.

David strode forward; there was murder in his face. The little man saw it: his time was come; but his bitterest foe never impugned Adam M'Adam's courage.

He stood huddled in the corner, all dishevelled, nursing one arm with the other, entirely unafraid.

"Mind, David," he said, quite calm, "murder 'twill be, not manslaughter."

"Murder 'twill be," the boy answered, in thick, low voice, and was across the room.

Outside Red Wull banged and clawed high up on the door with impotent pats.

The little man suddenly slipped his hand in his pocket, pulled out something, and flung it. The missile pattered on his son's face like a rain-drop on a charging bull, and David smiled as he came on. It dropped softly on the table at his side; he looked down and—it was the face of his mother which gazed up at him!

"Mither!" he sobbed, stopping short. "Mither! Ma God, ye saved him—and me!"

He stood there, utterly unhinged, shaking and whimpering.

It was some minutes before he pulled himself together; then he walked to the wall, took down a pair of shears, and seated himself at the table, still trembling. Near him lay the miniature, all torn and crumpled, and beside it the deep-buried axe-head.

He picked up the strap and began cutting it into little pieces.

"There! and there! and there!" he said with each snip. "An' ye hit me agin there may be no mither to save ye."

M'Adam stood huddling in the corner. He shook like an aspen leaf; his eyes blazed in his white face; and he still nursed one arm with the other.

"Honor yer father," he quoted in small low voice.

PART IV

THE BLACK KILLER