

off at Muirtown, and this iss what he will say as the train wass leaving, in his cheery English way, 'Keep up your heart, lass, there's a good time coming,' and Peter Bruce will be waiting for me at the Junction, and a gentle man iss Peter Bruce, and Maister Moncur will be singing a psalm to keep up my heart, and I will see the light, and then I will know that the Lord hass had mercy upon me. That iss all I have to tell you, Marget, for the rest I will be saying to God."

"But there iss something I must be telling," said Lachlan, coming in, "and it iss not easy."

He brought over the Bible and opened it at the family register where his daughter's name had been erased; then he laid it down before Flora, and bowed his head on the bed.

"Will you ever be able to forgive your father?"

"Give me the pen, Marget," and Flora wrote for a minute, but Lachlan never moved.

When he lifted his head, this was what he read in a vacant space:

FLORA CAMPBELL,

Missed, April, 1873.

Found, September, 1873.

"Her father fell on her neck and kissed her."

## IV.

## AS A LITTLE CHILD.

Drumtochty made up its mind slowly upon any newcomer, and for some time looked into the far distance when his name was mentioned. He himself was struck with the studied indifference of the parish, and lived under the delusion that he had escaped notice. Perhaps he might have felt uncomfortable if he had suspected that he was under a microscope, and the keenest eyes in the country were watching every movement at kirk and market. His knowledge of theology, his preference in artificial manures, his wife's Sabbath dress, his skill in cattle, and his manner in the Kildrummie train, went as evidence in the case, and were duly weighed. Some morning the floating opinion suddenly crystallized in the kirk-yard, and there is only one historical instance in which judgment was reversed. It was a strong proof of Lachlan Campbell's individuality that he impressed himself twice on the parish, and each time with a marked adjective.

Lachlan had been superintending the theology of the glen and correcting our ignorance from an unapproachable height for two years before the word went forth, but the glen had been thinking.



"Lachlan is a carefu' shepherd and fine wi' the ewes at the lambing time, there's nae doot o' that, but a' canna thole [bear] himsel'. Ye wud think there was nae reelegion in the pairish till he cam' frae Auchindarroch. What say ye, Domsie?"

"Campbell's a censorious body, Drumsheugh," and Domsie shut his snuff-box lid with a snap.

Drumsheugh nodded to the fathers of our commonwealth, and they went into kirk with silent satisfaction. Lachlan had been classified, and Peter Bruce, who prided himself on keeping in touch with Drumtochty, passed the word round the Kildrummie train next market night.

"Ye haena that censorious body, Lachlan Campbell wi' ye the nicht," thrusting his head in on the thirds.

"There's naething Peter disna ken," Hillocks remarked with admiration afterward; "he's as gude as the 'Advertiser.'"

When Flora had come home, and Drumtochty resumed freedom of criticism, I noticed for the first time a certain vacillation in its treatment of Lachlan.

"He's pluckit up his speerit maist extraordinary," Hillocks explained, "and he whuppit by me like a three-year-auld laist Sabbath.

"I'm gled tae hear the Miss is comin' roond fine," says I.

"It's the fouk of Drumtochty hes made her weel. God bless you, for you hev done good

for evil,' and wi' that he was aff afore I cud fin' a word.

"He's changed, the body, some wy or ither, and there's a kind o' warmth about him ye canna get ower."

Next day I turned into Mrs. MacFadyen's cottage for a cup of tea, and the smack of that wise woman's conversation, but was not able to pass the inner door for the sight which met my eyes.

Lachlan was sitting on a chair in the middle of the kitchen with Elsie, Mrs. Macfadyen's pet child, on his knee, and their heads so close together that his white hair was mingling with her burnished gold. An odor of peppermint floated out at the door, and Elsie was explaining to Lachlan, for his guidance at the shop, that the round drops were a better bargain than the black and white rock.

When Lachlan had departed, with gracious words on his lips and a very sticky imprint on his right cheek, I settled down in the big chair, beyond the power of speech, and Mrs. MacFadyen opened the mystery.

"Ye may weel look, for twa month syne I wudna hae believed this day, though a' hed seen him wi' ma ain een.

"It was juist this time laist year that he cam' here on his elder's veesitation, and he catches the bairn in this verra kitchen.

"'Elsbeth,' says he—it was Elsie that day, ye mind—'div ye ken that ye're an oreeginal sinner?"

"It was nichtfa' afore she got ower the fricht,



and when she saw him on the road next Sabbath, she cooried in ahint ma goon, and cried till I thocht her hert wud break.

“‘It’s meeserable wark for Christ’s Elder,’ says Jeems, ‘tae put the fear o’ death on a bairn, and a’m thinkin’ he wudna get muckle thanks frae his Maister, if He wes here,’ and Jeems wasna far wrong, though, of course, a’ told him tae keep a quiet sough, and no conter the elder.

“Weel, I sees Lachlan comin’ up the road the day, and a’ ran oot to catch Elsie and hide her in the byre. But a’ micht hae saved mysel’ the trouble: afore I got tae the gairden gate they were comin’ up as chief [friendly] as ye like, and Lachlan wes callin’ Elsie his bonnie dawtie.

“If he hadna a pock o’ peppermints—but it wasna that wiled Elsie’s hert. Na, na; dogs and bairns can read fouks’ faces, and mak nae mistakes. As sune as a’ saw Lachlan’s een a’ kent he wes a new man.

“Hoo has it come about? That’s easy tae guess. Sax months syne Lachlan didna ken what father meant, and the hert wes wizened in the breist o’ him wi’ pride an’ diveenity.

“He kens noo, and a’m jalousing that nae man can be a richt father tae his ain without being sib [akin] tae every bairn he sees. It was Flora he wes dawting [petting] ye see the day, and he’s learned his trade weel, though it cost him a sair lesson.”

Wonderful stories circulated through the glen, and were told in the kirkyard of a Sab-

bath morning, concerning the transformation of Lachlan Campbell.

“Ane o’ ma wee lassies,” expatiated Domsie, “fell comin’ doon the near road frae Whinnie Knowe, and cuttit her cheek on the stones, and if Lachlan didna wash her face and comfort her; an’ mair, he carried her a’ the road tae the schule, and says he in his Hieland way, ‘Here iss a brave little woman that hass hurt herself, but she will not be crying,’ and he gave her a kiss and a penny tae buy some sweeties at the shop. It minded me o’ the Gude Samaritan, fouks,” and everybody understood that Lachlan had captured Domsie for life.

“It beats a’ things,” said Whinnie; “a’ canna mak’ oot what’s come ower the cratur. There’s a puckle o’ the upland bairns pass oor wy frae schule, and whiles Lachlan ’ill meet them when he’s aifter his sheep, and as sure as a’m stannin’ here, he’ll lay aff stories aboot battles and fairies, till the laddies ’ill hardly gae hame. I wes tellin’ Marget this verra mornin’, and she says, ‘Lachlan’s become as a little child.’ I dinna haud wi’ her there, but a quieter, mair cautious body ye never saw.”

Drumtochty was doing its best to focus Lachlan afresh, and felt the responsibility lay on Domsie, who accepted it cheerfully.

“Marget’s aye richt, neeburs, and she’s put the word on it noo. His tribble hes melted Lachlan’s hert, an’—it’s in the Evangel, ye ken—he’s become as a little child.”

This language was too figurative and impos-



ing for the parish, but it ran henceforward in our modest speech, "He's a cautious body." Cautious, with us, meant unassuming, kindly, obliging, as well as much more; and I still hear Drumsheugh pronouncing its final judgment of the glen on Lachlan as we parted at his grave ten years later, and adding, "He'll be sair missed by the bairns."

While the glen was readjusting itself to Lachlan, I came down from a long tramp on the moor, and intended to inquire for Flora. But I was arrested on the step by the sound of Lachlan's voice in family worship.

"This my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry."

Lachlan's voice trembled as he read, but he went on with much firmness:

"Now his elder son was in the field."

"You will not be reading more of that chapter, father," interrupted Flora, with a new note of authority.

"And why not?" said Lachlan, quite humbly.

"Because you will be calling yourself the elder son and many more bad names, and I will be angry with you."

"But they are true names, and it iss good for me to know myself."

"You hef just one true name, and that is father, . . . And now you will be singing a psalm."

"There iss a book of himes [hymns] here, and maybe you will be liking one of them."

And Lachlan produced the little book Flora

got in that London church when the preacher told her she was missed.

"We will not sing hymns, father, for I am remembering that you hef a conscience against hymns, and I did not know that you had that book."

"My conscience wass sometimes better than the Bible, Flora, and if God will be sending a hime to bind up your heart when it wass broken, it iss your father that will be wanting to sing that hime.

"It iss here," continued Lachlan in triumph, "for I hef often been reading that hime, and I am not seeing much wrong in it."

"But each hymn hass got its own tune, father, and you will not know the way that it goes, and the doctor will not be wishing me to sing."

"You are a good girl, Flora, but you are not so clever as your father; oh, no! for I hef been trying that hime on the hill, and it will sing beautiful to a Psalm tune. You will lie still and hear."

Then Lachlan lifted up his voice in "French":

"There is a fountain filled with blood,  
Drawn from Immanuel's veins,  
And sinners plunged beneath that flood  
Lose all their guilty stains."

The singing was fairly good, with a whisper from Flora, till they came to that verse:

"Then in a nobler, sweeter song  
I'll sing Thy power to save,  
When this poor lisping, stammering tongue  
Lies silent in the grave,"



when Lachlan seemed to lose the tune, and be falling into a coronach.

"We must not be singing that to-day, father, for God iss fery good to us, and I will be stronger every week, and maybe you will be saying that we are thankful in your prayer."

Then I realized my baseness, and went off on tiptoe (had the dogs been at home it had not been so easy to escape); but first I heard, "Our Father." It was a new word for Lachlan; he used to say Jehovah.

The doctor paid his last visit one frosty winter day, and was merciless on Lachlan.

"What for are ye cockering up this lassie, and no getting her doon tae the kirk? It's clean disgracefu' in an Elder, and if I were yir minister a'wud hae ye sessioned. Sall, ye're hard enough on ither fouk that are no kirk greedy."

"You will not be speaking that way next Sabbath, for it iss in her pew Flora will be sitting with her father," said Lachlan, in great spirits.

Flora caught him studying her closely for some days, as if he were taking her measure, and he announced that he had business in Muirtown on Friday.

When he came up in the market train he was carrying a large paper parcel, and attempted a joke with Peter at a window of the third. From a critical point of view it was beneath notice, but as Lachlan's first effort it was much tasted.

"Ye'll believe me noo, Peter, since ye've

heard him. Did ye ever see sic a change? It's maist astonishin'."

"Man, Hillocks, div ye no see he's gotten back his dochter, and it's made him anither man?"

Lachlan showed Flora a new pair of shears he had bought in Muirtown, and a bottle of sheep embrocation, but she did not know he had hidden his parcel in the byre, and that he opened it four separate times on Saturday.

From daybreak on Sabbath Lachlan went in and out till he returned with Marget Howe.

"Mrs. Howe iss very kind, and she will be coming to help you with your dresses, Flora, for we will be wanting you to look well this day, and here iss some small thing to keep you warm," and Lachlan produced with unspeakable pride a jacket lined with flannel and trimmed with fur.

So her father and Marget dressed Flora for the kirk, and they went together down the path on which the light had shone that night of her return.

There were only two dog-carts in the Free Kirk Session, and Burnbrae was waiting with his for Flora at the foot of the hill.

"I bid ye welcome, Flora, in the name o' oor kirk. It's a gled day for your father, and for us a' tae see you back again and strong. And noo ye'll just get up aside me in the front, and Mistress Hoo 'ill hap ye round, for we maunna let ye come to ony ill the first day yir oot, or we'll never hear the end o't." And



so the honest man went on, for he was as near the breaking as Drumtochty nature allowed.

"A'body's pleased," said Marget to Lachlan as they sat on the back seat and caught the faces of the people. "This is the first time I have seen the fifteenth of Luke in Drumtochty. It's a bonnie sicht, and a'm thinkin' it's still bonnier in the presence o' the angels."

"Flora Cammil's in the kirk the day," and the precentor looked at Carmichael with expectation. "The fouk are terrible taen up wi' Lachlan and her."

"What do you think of the Hundred and third Psalm, Robert? It would go well this morning."

"The verra word that was on my lips, and Lachlan 'ill be lookin' for Coleshill."

Lachlan had put Flora in his old place next the wall (for he would not need it again, having retired from the office of inquisitor), and sat close beside her, with great contentment on his face. The manners of Drumtochty were perfect, and no one turned his head by one inch; but Marget Howe, sitting behind in Burnbrae's pew, saw Flora's hand go out to Lachlan's as the people sang:

"All thine iniquities who doth  
Most graciously forgive,  
Who thy diseases all and pains  
Doth heal and thee relieve."

The Session met that week, and a young girl broke down utterly in her examination for the Sacrament, so that not even Burnbrae could get a correct answer.

She rose in great confusion and sorrow.

"A' see it wudna be fit for the like o' me tae gae forrit, but a' had set ma hert on't; it wes the last thing He askit o' His freends," and she left before any one could bid her stay.

"Moderator," said Lachlan, "it iss a great joy for me to move that Mary Macfarlane get her token, and I will be wishing that we all had her warrant, oh, yes! for there iss no warrant like love. And there is something that I must be asking of the elders, and it is to forgive me for my pride in this Session. I wass thinking that I knew more than any man in Drumtochty, and wass judging God's people. But He hass had mercy upon Simon the Pharisee, and you hef all been very good to me and Flora. . . . The Scripture hass been fulfilled, 'So the last shall be first, and the first last.'"

Then the minister asked Burnbrae to pray, and the Spirit descended on that good man, of simple heart:

"Almighty Father, we are a' Thy puir and sinfu' bairns, wha wearied o' hame and gaed awa' intae the far country. Forgive us, for we didna ken what we were leavin' or the sair hert we gied oor Father. It wes weary wark tae live wi' oor sins, but we wud never hev come back had it no been for oor Elder Brither. He cam' a long road tae find us, and a sore travail He had afore He set us free. He's been a gude Brither tae us, and we've been a heavy chairge tae Him. May He keep a firm haud o' us, and guide us in the richt road and bring us back gin we wander, and tell us a' we need



tae know till the gloamin' come. Gither us in then, we pray Thee, and a' we luve, no a bairn missin', and may we sit doon for ever in oor ain Father's House. Amen."

As Burnbrae said Amen, Carmichael opened his eyes, and had a vision which will remain with him until the day break and the shadows flee away.

The six elders—three small farmers, a tailor, a stonemason, and a shepherd—were standing beneath the lamp, and the light fell like a halo on their bent heads. That poor little vestry had disappeared, and this present world was forgotten. The sons of God had come into their heritage, "for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."

## THE CUNNING SPEECH OF DRUMTOCHTY.

Speech in Drumtochty distilled slowly, drop by drop, and the faces of our men were carved in stone. Visitors, without discernment, used to pity our dullness and lay themselves out for missionary work. Before their month was over they spoke bitterly of us, as if we had deceived them, and departed with a grudge in their hearts. When Hillocks scandalized the Glen by letting his house and living in the bothie, —through sheer greed of money,—it was taken by a fussy little man from the South, whose control over the letter "h" was uncertain, but whose self-confidence bordered on the miraculous. As a deacon of the **Social Religionists**, —a new denomination, which had made an 'it with Sunday Entertainments,—and Chairman of the Amalgamated Sons of Rest,—a society of persons with conscientious objections to work between meals,—he was horrified at the primeval simplicity of the Glen, where no meeting of protest had been held in the memory of living man, and the ministers preached from the Bible. It was understood that he was to do his best for us, and there was curiosity in the kirkyard.