

THE
LIFE OF
MANSIE WAUCH

TAILOR IN DALKEITH.

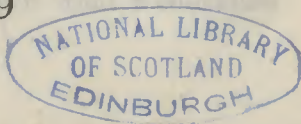


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And a tailor is a man.

GLASGOW ;

PRINTED FOR THE BOOKSELLERS

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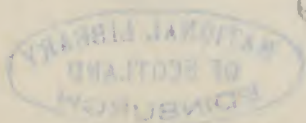


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THE LIFE OF MANSIE WAUCH.

I was born during the night of the 15th of October, 1765, in that little house, standing by itself; not many yards from the eastmost side of the Flesh-Market Gate, Dalkeith. Long was it spoken about that something mysterious would happen on that dreary night; as the cat, after washing her face, gaed mewung about, with her tail sweeing behind her like a ramrod; and a corbie, from the Duke's woods, tumbled down Jamie Elder's lum, when he had set the little still a-goin—giving them a terrable fright, as they took it for the deevil and then for an exciseman—and fell with a great cloud of soot, and a loud skraigh, into the empty kail-pot.

The first thing that I have any clear memory of, was my being carried out on my auntie's shoulder, with a leather cap tied under my chin, to see the Fair Race. Oh! but it was a grand sight! I have read since then, the story of Aladdin's Wonderful Lamp, but this beat it all to sticks. There was a long row of tables, covered with carpets of bonny patterns, heaped from one end to the other with shoes of every kind and size, some with polished soles, and some glittering with sparribles and cuddyheels; and little red worsted boots for bairns, with blue and white edgings, hingung like strings of flowers up the posts at each end;—and ther what a collection

of luggies! the whole meal in the market sacks on a Thursday did not seem able to fill them: and horn spoons, green and black freckled, with shanks clear as amber,—and timber caups,—and ivory egg-cups of every pattern. Have a care of us! all the eggs in Smeaton dairy might have found resting places for their doups in a row. As for the gingerbread, I shall not attempt a description. Sixpenny and shilling cakes, in paper, tied with skinie; and roundabouts, and snaps, brown and white quality, and parliaments, on stands covered with calendered linen, clean from the fold. To pass it was just impossible; it set my teeth a-watering, and I skirled like mad, until I had a gilded lady thrust into my little nieve; the which after admiring for a minute, I applied my teeth to and of the head I made no bones: so that in less than no time; she had vanished, petticoats and all, no trace of her being to the fore, save and except long treacly daubs, extending east and west from ear to ear, and north and south from cape nep of the nose to the extremity of beardyland.

But what, of all things, attracted my attention on that memorable day, was the show of cows, sheep and horses, mooing, baaing, and neighing; and the race—that was best! Od, what a sight!—we were jammed in the crowd of auld wives, with their toys and shining ribbons; and carter lads, with their blue bonnets; and young wenches, carrying home their fairings in napkins, as muckle as would hold their teeth going for a month;—there scarcely could he muckle for love, when there was so much for the

stomach;—and men with wooden legs, and brass
 virls at the end of them, playing on the fiddle,—
 and a bear that roared, and danced on its hind
 feet, with a muzzled mouth,—and Punch and
 Polly,—and puppie-shows and mair than I can
 tell,—when up came the horses to the starting-
 post. I shall never forget the bonny dresses of
 the riders. One had a napkin tied round his
 head, another had on a black velvet hunting-cap
 and his coat stripped O! but he was a brave lad
 and sorrow was the folks for him, when he fell
 off in taking ower sharp a turn, by which auld
 Pullen, the bell-ringer wha was holding the post
 was made to coup the creels. And the last was
 all life, as gleg as an eel. Up and down he went
 and up and down gaed the beast on its hind-legs
 and its fore-legs, funking like mad; yet tho' he
 was not aboon thirteen, or fourteen at most, he
 did not cry out for help more than five or six
 times, but grippit at the mane with one hand
 and at the baek of the saddle with the ither, til
 daft Robie, the hostler at the stables elaught hold
 of the beast by the head, and off they set. The
 young birkie had neither hat nor shoon but he did
 not spare the stick; round and round they flew
 like daft. Ye would have thought their een
 would have loupen out, and loudly all the erowd
 were hurraing, when young hatless came up fore-
 most, standing in the stirrups, the long stiek be-
 tween his teeth, and his white hair fleeing behind
 him in the wind-like streamers on a frosty night.

CALF-LOVE.

Just after I was put to my 'prenticeship, hav-

ing made free choice of the tailoring trade, I had a terrible stound of calf-love. Never shall I forget it. I was growing up, long and lank as a willow-wand, brawns to my legs there were none, as my trowsers of other years too visibly effected to show. The long yellow hair hung down, like a flax-wig, the length of my lantern jaws, which looked, notwithstanding my yapness and stiff appetite, as if eating and they had broken up acquaintanceship. My blue jacket seemed in the sleeves to have picket a quarrel with the wrists, and had retreated to a tait below the elbows. The haunch-buttons, on the contrary, appeared to have taken a strong liking to the shoulders, a little below which they showed their tarnished brightness. At the middle of the back the tails terminated, leaving the well-worn rear of my corduroys, like a full moon seen through a dark haze. Oh! but I must have been a bonny lad.

My first flame was the minister's lassie, Jess, a buxom and forward queen, two or three years older than myself. I used to sit looking at her in the kirk, and felt a droll confusion when our een met. It dirdled through my heart like a dart, and I looked down at my psalm-book sheepish and blushing. Fair would I have spoken to her, but it would not do; my courage aye failed me at the pinch, though she whiles gave me a smile when she passed me. She used to go to the well every night with her twa stoups, to draw water after the manner of the Israelites at gloaming; so I thought of watching to give her the two apples which I had carried in my pouch for

more than a week for that purpose. How she laughed when I stappit them into her hand, and brushed by without speaking? I stood at the bottom of the close listening, and heard her laughing till she was like to split. My heart flap, flappit in my breast like a pair of fanners. It was a moment of heavenly bope; but I saw Jamie Coom, the blacksmith, who I aye jealous-ed was my rival, coming down to the well. I saw her give him one of the apples: and hearing him say with a loud gaffaw, "Where is the tailor?" I took to my heels, and never stopped till I found myself on the little stool by the fireside, and the hamely sound of my mother's wheel bum-bumming in my lug, like a gentle lullaby.

Every noise I heard flustered me, but I calmed in time, though I went to my bed without my supper. When I was driving out the gaislings to the grass on the next morn, who was it, my ill fate to meet but the blacksmith, "Ou, Mansie," said Jamie Coom, "are ye gaun to take me for your best man? I hear you are to be eried in the kirk on Sunday?"

"Me!" answered I, shaking and staring.

"Yes!" said he, "Jess the minister's maid told me last night, that you had been giving up your name at the manse. Ay, it's ower true—for she showed me the apples ye gied her in a present. This is a bonny story, Mansie, my man, and you only at your 'prenticeship yet."

Terror and despair had struck me dumb. I stood as still and as stiff as a web of buckram. My tongue was tied and I couldna contradict him. Jamie faulded his arms, and gaed away whistling,

turning every now and then his sooty face over his shoulder, and mostly stieking his tune, as he could not keep his mouth serewed for laughing. What would I not have given to have laughed to!

There was no time to be lost; this was the Saturday. The next rising sun would shine on the Sabbath. Ah, what a case I was in I could mostly have drowned myself, had I not been frightened. What could I do? My love had vanished like lightning: but oh, I was in a terrible gliff! Instead of gundy, I sold my thrums to Mrs Walnut for a penny, with which I bought at the counter a sheet of paper and a pen; so that in the afternoon I wrote out a letter to the minister, telling him what I had been given to hear, and begging him, for the sake of merey, not to believe Jess's word, as I was not able to keep a wife, and as she was a leeing gipsy.

PUSHING MY FORTUNE.

The days of the years of my 'prenticeship having glided eannily over on the working-board of my respected maister, James Hosey, where I sat working cross-legged like a busy bee, in the true spirit of industrious contentment. I found myself at the end of the seven year, so well instructed in the tailoring trade, to which I had paid a near-sighted attention, that, without more ado, I girt myself round about with a proud determination of at once cutting my mother's apron string, and venturing to go without a hold. Thinks I to myself "faint heart never won fair lady;" so, taking my stiek in my hand, I set out towards

Edinburgh, as brave as a Highlander in search of a journeyman's place. I may set it down to an especial providence, that I found one, on the very first day, to my heart's content in by at the Grassmarket, where I stayed for the space of six calendar months.

Had it not been from a real sense of the duty I owed to my future employers, whomsoever they might be, in making myself a first-rate hand in the cutting, shaping, and sewing line, I would not have found courage in my breast to have helped me out through such a long and dreary time.

Never let us repine, howsoever, but consider that all is ordered for the best. The sons of the patriarch Jacob found out their brother Joseph in a foreign land, and where they least expected it: so it was here—even here where my heart was sickening unto death, from my daily and nightly thoughts being as bitter as gall—that I fell in with the greatest blessing of my life, Nanse Cromie!

In the flat below our workshop lived Mrs Whitterraick, the wife of Mr. Whitterraick, a dealer in hens and Hams in the poultry market, who coming from the Lauder neighbourhood had hired a bit wench of a lassie that was to follow them come the term. And who think ye should this lassie be, but Nanse Cromie, afterwards, in the course of a kind providence, the honoured wife of my bosom, and the mother of bonny Benjie.

In going up and down the stairs,—it being a common entry, ye observe—me may be going

down with my every day hat on to my dinner, and she coming up, carrying a stoup of water, or half a-pound of pouthered butter on a plate, with a piece of paper thrown over it,—we frequently met half-way, and had to stand still to let one another pass. Nothing came of these forgetterings, howsomever, for a month or two, she being as shy and modest as she was bonny, with her clean demity short gown, and snow-white morning mutch, to say nothing of her cherry mou, and me unco douffie in making up to strangers. We could not help, nevertheless, to take aye a stoun look of each other in passing; and I was a gone man, bewitched out of my seven senses, falling from my claes, losing my stomach, and over the lugs in love, three weeks and some odd days before ever a single syllable passed between us.

If ever a man loved and loved like mad, it was me, Mansie Wauch,—and I take no shame in the confession; but, kenning it all in the course of nature, declared it openly and courageously in the face of the wide world. Let them laugh who like; honest folk, I pity them;—such know not the pleasures of virtuous affection. It is not in corrupted sinful hearts that the fire of true love can ever burn clear. Alas, and ohon orie! they lose the sweetest, completest, dearest, truest pleasure that this world has in store for its children. They know not the bliss to meet, that makes the embrace of separation bitter. They never dreamed the dreams that make awakening to the morning light unpleasant. They never felt the raptures that can dirl like darts through a man's soul from a woman's ee. They never

tasted the honey that dwells on a woman's lip, sweeter than yellow marygolds to the bee; or fretted under the fever of bliss that glows through the frame on pressing the hand of a suddenly met, and fluttering sweetheart. But tuts-tuts—hech-how! my day has long since past; and this is stuff to drop from the lips of an auld fool. Nevertheless, forgive me, friends: I cannot help all-powerful nature.

Nanse's taste being like my own, we amused one another in abusing great cities: and it is curious how soon I learned to be up to trap—I mean in an honest way; for, when she said she was wearying the very heart out of her to be home again to Lauder, which, she said, was her native and the true land of Goshen, I spoke back to her by way of answer—“Nancy my dear,” says I, “believe me that the real land of Goshen is out at Dalkeith; and if ye'll take up house wi' me, and enter into a way of doing, I daursay in a while ye'll come to think so too.”

What will you say there? Matters were by-and-by settled full tosh between us; and though the means of both parties were small, we were young, and able and willing to help one another. For two three days, I must confess, after Nanse, and me found ourselves in the comfortable situation of man and wife, I was a dowie and disponding, thinking we were to have a' numerous small family and where work was to come from; but no sooner was my sign nailed up, with four iron haudfasts by Johnny Hammer, painted in black letters, on a blue ground, with a picture of a jacket on one side and a pair of shears on the other,

and my shop door opened to the public with a wheen ready-made waistcoats, gallowses, leather-caps, and Kilmarnock cowls, hung up at the window, than business flowed in upon us in a perfect torrent. First one came in for his measure, and then another; a wife came in for a pair of red worsted boots for her bairn, but would not take them for they had not blue fringes. A bare-headed lassie, hoping to be hansel, threw down twopence, and asked tape at three yards a half-penny. The minister sent an old black coat beneath his maid's arm, prinned up in a towel, to get docked in the tails down into a jacket: which I trust I did to his entire satisfaction, making it fit to a hair. The Duke's butler himself patronised me, by sending me a coat which was all hair powder and pomate, to get a new neck put to it.

No wonder than we attracted customers, for our sign was the prettiest ye ever saw, though the jacket was not just so neatly painted, as for some sand-blind creatures not to take it for a goose. I daresay there were fifty half-naked bairns glowring their een out of their heads at it, from morning till night: and, after they all were gone to their beds, both Nanse and me found ourselves so proud of our new situation in life, that we sliped out in the dark by ourselves, and had a prime look at it with a lantern.

MANSIE WAUCH'S FIRST AND LAST PLAY.

Mony a time and often had I heard of play-

acting, and of players making themselves kings and queens, and saying a great many wonderful things; but I had never before an opportunity of making myself a witness to the truth of these hearsays. So Maister Glen, being as fu' of nonsense, and as fain to have his curiosity gratified, we took upon us the stout resolution to gang our thegither, he offering to treat me, and I determined to run the risk of Maister Wiggie, our minister's rebuke, for the transgression, hoping it would make na lasting impression on his mind, being for the first and only time. Folks shouldna at a' times be ower scrupulous.

After paying our money at the door, never, while I live and breathe, will I forget, what we saw and heard that night; it just looks to me, by a' the world, when I think on't, like a fairy dream. The place was crowded to the ee, Maister Glen and me having nearly got our ribs dung in, before we fand a seat, and them behint were obliged to mount the back benches to get a sight. Right to the fore hand of us was a large green curtain, some five or six ells wide, a guid deal the waur of the wear, having seen service through two or three simmers, and just in the front of it were eight or ten penny candles, stuek in a board fastened to the ground, to let us see the players' feet like, when they came on the stage, and even before they came on the stage, for the curtain being scrimpit in length, we saw legs and feet moving behind the scenes very neatly, while twa blind fiddlers, they had brought with them, played the bonniest ye ever heard. Odd, the very music was worth a sixpence of itsell.

The place, as I said before, was choke full, just to excess, so that ane could scarcely breathe. Indeed I never saw ony pairt sae crowded, not even at a tent-preaching, when Mr Roarer was giving his discourses on the building of Solomon's Temple. We were obligated to have the windows opened for a mouthful of fresh air, the barn being as close as a baker's oven, my neighbour and me fanning our red faces with our hats to keep us cool, and, though all were half stewed, we had the worst o't, the toddy we had ta'en having fomented the blood of our bodies into a perfect fever.

Just at the time that the twa blind fiddlers were playing the Downfall of Paris, a hand-bell rang and up goes the green curtain, being hauled to the ceiling, as I observed wi' the tail o' my ee, by a birkie at the side, that had haud o' a rope. So, on the music stopping and all becoming as still as that you might have heard a pin fall, in comes a decent old gentleman, at his leisure, weil powdered, wi' au auld-fashioned coat, and waistcoat wi' flap pockets, brown breeches, with buckles at the knees, and silk stockings, with red gushets on a blue ground. I never saw a man in sic distress; he stampit about, and better stampit about, dadding the end of his staff on the ground, and emploring all the powers of heaven and yearth to help him to find out his run-awa' daughter, that had decampit wi' some neerdowell loon of a halfpay captain, that keppit her in his arms frae her bed-room window, up twa pair o' stairs. Every father and head of a family maun hae felt for a man in his situation, thus to be rub-

bit of his dear bairn, and an only daughter too, as he tell't us ower and ower again, as the saut saut tears ran gushing down his withered face, and he aye blew his nose on his clean callendered pocket napkin. But, ye ken, the thing was absurd to suppose, that we should ken ony thing about the matter, having never seen either him or his daughter between the een afore, and no kennin' them by head mark; so, though we sympathised with him, as folks ought to do with a fellow-creature in affliction, we thought it best to haud our tongues, to see what might cast up better than he expected. So out he gaed stamping at the ither side, determined, he said, to find them out, though he should follow them to the world's end, Johnny Groat's House, or something to that effect.

Hardly was his back turned, and amaisit before ye could cry Jack Robison, in comes the birkie and the very young leddy the auld gentleman described, arm and arm thegither, smodging and lauching like daft. Dog on it, it was a shameless piece of business. As true as death, before all the crowd of folk, he pat his arm round her waist, and caad her his sweetheart, and love, and dearie, and darling, and every thing that is sweet. If they had been courting in a closs thegither, on a Friday night, they couldna haec said mair to ane anither, or gaen greater lengths. I thought sic shame to be an eewitness to sic ongoings, that I was obliged at last to haud up my hat afore my face and look down, though, for a that, the young lad, to be sic a blackguard as his conduct showed, was weil enough faured and had

a guid coat on his back, wi' double-gilt buttons, and fashionable lapells, to say little o' a very weil-made pair of buckskins; a lettle the waur o' the wear to be sure, but which, if they had been cleaned, would hae looked amaiist us good as new. How they had come, we never could learn, as we neither saw chaise nor gig; but, from his having spurs on his boots, it is mair than likely that they had lighted at the back door of the barn frae a horse, she riding on a pad behint him, may be with her hand round his waist.

The faither lookit to be a rich auld bool, baith from his manner of speaking, and the rewards he seemed to offer for the apprehension of his daughter; but, to be sure, when so many of us were present that had an equall right to the spulzie, it wad na be a great deal a thousand pounds when divided, still it was worth the looking after; so we just bidit a wee.

Things were brought to a bearing, whosoever, sooner than either themselfs, I daur say, or onybody else present seemed to hae the least glimpse of; for just in the middle of their fine going-on, the sound of a coming fit was heard, and the lassie taking guilt to her, cried out, "Hide me, hide me, for the sake of gudeness, for yonder comes my old father!"

Nae sooner said than done. In he stappit her into a closet; and, after shutting the door on her, he sat down upon a chair, pretending to be asleep in a moment. The auld faither came bounding in, and seeing the fellow as sound as a tap, he ran forrit and gaed him sich a shake, as if he wad hae shooken him a' sundry, which sune made

him open his een as fast as he had steekit them. After blackguarding the chield at no allowanee, cursing him up hill and down dale, and caaing him every name but a gentleman, he haddit his staff ower his crown, and gripping him by the cuff o' the ncek, askit him what he had made o' his daughter. Never since I was born did I ever see sich brazen-faced impudence! The rascal had the brass to say at ance, that he hadna seen word or wittens o' his daughter for a month, though mair than a hundred folk sitting in his company had seen him dauting her with his arm round her jimpy waist, not five minutes before. As a man, as a father, as an elder of our kirk, my corruption was raised, for I aye hated leeing, as a puir cowardly sin, and an inbreak on the ten commandments: and I fand my neebour Mr Glen, fidgetting on the seat as weel as me; so I thocht, that whacver spoke first wad hae the best right to be entitled to the reward; whereupon, just as he was in the act of rising up, I took the word out of his mouth, saying, "Dinna believe him, auld gentleman, dinna believe him, friend; he's telling a parcel of lees. Never saw her for a month! It's no worth arguing, or caaing witnesses; just open that press door, and ye'll see whether I'm speaking truth or no."

The auld man stared, and lookit dumb-founded: and the young man, instead of rinning forrit wi' his double nieves to strike me, the only thing I was feared for, began a laughing, as if I had dune him a gude turn. But never since I had a being, did I ever witness an uproar and noise as immediately took place. The hail

house was sae glad that the scoundrel had been exposed, that they set up siccan a roar o' lauchter, and thumpit away at siccan a rate at the boards wi' their feet, that at lang and last, wi' pushing, and fidgitting, and hadding their sides, down fell the place they ca' the gallery, a' the folk in't being hurled tapsy-turvy, head foremost amang the saw-dust on the floor below; their guffawing sune being turned to howling, ilka ane crying louder than anither at the tap of their voices; "Murder! murder! haud off me; murder! my ribs are in; murder! I'm killed—I'm speechless!" and ither lamentations to that effect; so that a rusli to the door took place, in which everything was overturned—the door keeper being wheeled away like wildfire—the furins strampit to pieces—the lights knockit out—and the twa blind fiddlers dung head foremost ower the stage, the bass fiddle cracking like thunder at every bruise. Siccan tearing, and swearing, and tumbling, and squeeling, was never witnessed in the memory of man, sin the building of Babel; legs being likly to be broken, sides staved in, een knocked out, and lives lost; there being only ae door, and that a sma' ane: so that when we had been carried off our feet that length, my wiud was fairly gane, and a sick dwam cam ower me, lights of a manner of colours, red, blue, green, and orange dancing before me, that entirely deprived me o' common sense, till, on opening my een in the dark, I fand mysell leaning wi' my braid side against the wa' on the opposite side of the close. It was some time before I mindit what had happened; so, dreading scaith, I fand

first the ae arm, and then the ither, to see if they were broken—syne my head—and syne baith o' my legs; but a', as weel as I could discover, was skinhale and scart free. On perceiving which, my ijoy was without bounds, having a great notion that I had been killed on the spot. So I reached round my hand, very thankfully, to tak out my pocket-napkin, to gie my brow a wipe, when lo and behold the tail of my Sunday's coat was fairly aff and away, doekit by the haunch buttons.

PHILISTINE IN THE COAL-HOLE.

It was about the month of March, in the year of grace anno domini eighteen hunder, that the hail country trummelled, like a man ill of the interminable fiver, under the consternation of Bonapartie, and all the French vagabonds emigrating ower, and landing in the firth. Keep us a' the folk, dydit bodies, pat less confidence than became them in what our volunteer regiments were able and willing to do; though we had a remnant amang us of the true bluid, that with loud lauchter lauched the creatures to scorn, and I for ane, keepit up my pluck, like a true Hielander. Does ony leeving soul believe that Scotland could be conquered, and the like o' us sold, like Egyptian slaves, into captivity? Fie, fie,—I could spit on siccan haevers. Are we no descended, faither and son, frae Robert Bruce and Sir William Wallace, having the bright bluid of freemen in our veins and the Pentland hills, as weel as our

ain dear hames and firesides, to fight for? The fief that wadna gie cut-and-thrust for his coun-try, as lang as he had a breath to draw, or a leg to stand on, should be tied neck and heels, without benefit o' clergy, and thrown ower Leith pier, to swim for his life like a mangy dog!

It was sometime in the blasty month of Mareh, the weather being rawish and rainy, wi' sharp frosty nights, that left all the window-soles white-washed ower with frost-rind in the morning, that, as I was going out in the dark, afore lying down in my bed, to gie a look into the hen-house door, and loek the coal cellar, so that I might pit the bit key intil my breek pouches, I happened to gie a keck in, and, lo and behold, the awfu' apparition of a man wi' a yellow jacket, lying sound asleep on a great lump o' parrot-coal in a eorner.

In the hurry of my terror and surprise, at seeing a man with a yellow jacket, and a blue foraging-cap in such a situation, I was like to drap the guid two-penny candle, and feint clean away; but comming to mysell in a jiffy, I determined, in case it might be a high-way rubber, to thraw about the key, and, rinnig up for the firelock, shoot him through the head instantly, if found necessary. In turning round the key, the lock being in want of a feather o' oil, made a noise, and waukened the puir wretch, who jumping to the soles of his feet in despair, eried out in a voice that was like to break my heart, though I coudna make out ae word of his paraphernally. It minded me, by a' the world, of a wheen eats fuffing and feighting through ither, and whiles

something that sounded like “Sugar, sugar, measure the cord,” and “dabble, dabble.” It was waur than the maist outrageous Gaelic ever spoken in the height o’ passion by a Hicland shearer.

‘Oh!’ thinks I, friend, ye cannot be a Christian from your lingo, that’s one thing pöz; and I would wager tippence you’re a Frenchy. Who kens keep us all, but ye may be Bonaparte himself in disguise, come over in a flat-bottomed boat, to spy the nakedness of the land. So ye may just rest content, and keep your quarters good till the morn’s morning.’

It was a wonderful business, and enough to happen to a man, in the course of his lifetime, to find Mounseer from Paris in his coal-neuk, and have the enemy of his country snug under lock and key; so, while he kept rampaging, fuffing; stamping, and diabbling away, I went in, and brought out Benjie with a blanket rowed round him, and my journeyman, Tommy Bodkin,—who being an orphan, I made a kind of parloür boarder of, be sleeping on a shake-down beyond the kitchen fire—to hold a consultation; and be witness of the transaction.

I got my musket, and Tommy Bodkin armed himself with the goose, a deadly weapon, whoever may get a clour with it, and Benjie took the poker in one hand and the tongs in the other; and out we all marched briskly, to make the Frenchman, that was locked up from the light of day in the coal house surrender. After hearkening at the door for a while, and finding all quiet, he gave a knock to rouse him up, and see

if we could bring anything out of him by speering him cross-questions. Tammy and Benjie trembled from top to toe, like aspen leaves, but sient a word could we make common sense of it a'. I wonder wha edicates thae foreign creaturès? it was in vain to follow him, for he just gab, gabbed away like ane o' the stone-masons at the tower of Babel. At first I was completely bamboozled, and amaisit dung stupid, though I kent a word of French which I wantit to pit till him, so I cried through, "Canna you speak French, Mounseer?"

He hadna the politeness to stop and mak answer, but just gaed on wi' his string of havers, without either rhyme or reason, which we could mak neither tap, tail, nor main o'.

It was a sair trial to us a', putting us to our wits end, and hoo to come on was past all visible comprehension; when Tammy Bodkin gieing his elbow a claw said, "Odd maister, I wager something that he's broken loose frae Pennycuick. We have him like a rotten in a fa." On Pennycuick being mentioned we heard the foreign creature in the coal house groaning out, 'och' and 'ohone,' and 'parbleu,' and 'Mysie Rabbie,'—that I fancy was his sweetheart at hame, sum bit French queen that wondered he was never like to come frae the wars and marry her. I thocht on this, for his voice was mournfu', though I couldna understand the words; and kenning he was a stranger in a far land, my bowels yearned within me with compassion towards him.

I wad hae gien half-a-crown, at that blessed moment, to hae been able to wash my hands free

o' him; but I swithered, and was like the cuddie between the twa bundles of hay. At lang and last a thocht struek me, which was to gie the deduded simple cratur a chance of escape; reckonin' that if he fand his way hame, he wad see the shame and folly of feighting against us ony mair; and, marrying Maysie Rabbie, live a contented and peacefu' life under his ain feg and bey tree. So, wishing him a sound aleep, I cried through the door,—"Mounseer, gooda nighta;" decoyin' away Benjie and Tammy Bodkin into the house, and dispatching them to their beds like lamp-lighters, bidding them never fash their thumbs, but sleep like taps, as I would keep a sharp look-out till morning.

As soon, hoosomever, as I fand a' things snug, I slippit awa to the coal hole, and gien the key a canny turn in the lock, I went to my bed beside Nanse.

At the dawn o' day, by cock-craw, Benjie and Tammy Bodkin, keen o' the ploy, were up and astir as anxious as if their life depended on it, to see that all was safe and snug, and that the prisoner hadna shot the lock. They agreed to march sentry over him, half an hour the piece, time about, the ane stretching himsell out on a stool beside the kitchen fire, by way of a bench in the guard-house, while the other gaed to and fro like the ticker of a elock.

The back window being up a jink, I heard the twa confabbing. 'We'll draw cuts,' said Benjie, 'which is to walk sentry first; see, here's twa straes, the langest gets the choice,' 'I've won,' cried Tammy, 'so gang you in a while,

and if I need ye, or grow frightened, I'll beat leather-ty-patch wi' my knuckles on the back door. But we had better see first what he is about, for he may be howking a hole through a-neath the foundations; thae siefs can work like moudiewards.'—'I'll slip forrit,' said Benjie, 'and gie a peep,'—'Keep to a side,' cried Tammy Bodkin, 'for, dog on it, Moosey'll maybe hae a pistol;—and, if his birse be up, he would think nae mair o' shooting ye as dead as a mawkin than I would do of taking my breakfast.

'I'll rin past, and gie a knock, at the door wi' the poker to rouse him up?' askit Benjie.

'Come away then,' answered Tammie, 'and ye'll hear him gie a yowl, and commence gabbling like a goose.'

As all this was going on, I rose and took a vizzly between the chinks of the window-shutters; so, just as I got my neb to the hole, I saw Benjie, as he flew past, give the door a drive. His consternation, on finding it flee half open, may be easier imagined than described, for, expecting the Frenchman to bounce out like a roaring lion, they hurried like mad into the house, coupling the creels ower ane anither, Tammie spraining his thumb against the back door, and Benjie's foot going into Tammie's coat poeket, which it carried away with it, like a cloth sandal; what became o' the French vagrant is a matter o' surmise,—nae mortal kens.

FINIS.