

Jock Barefoot



MAUD LINDSAY

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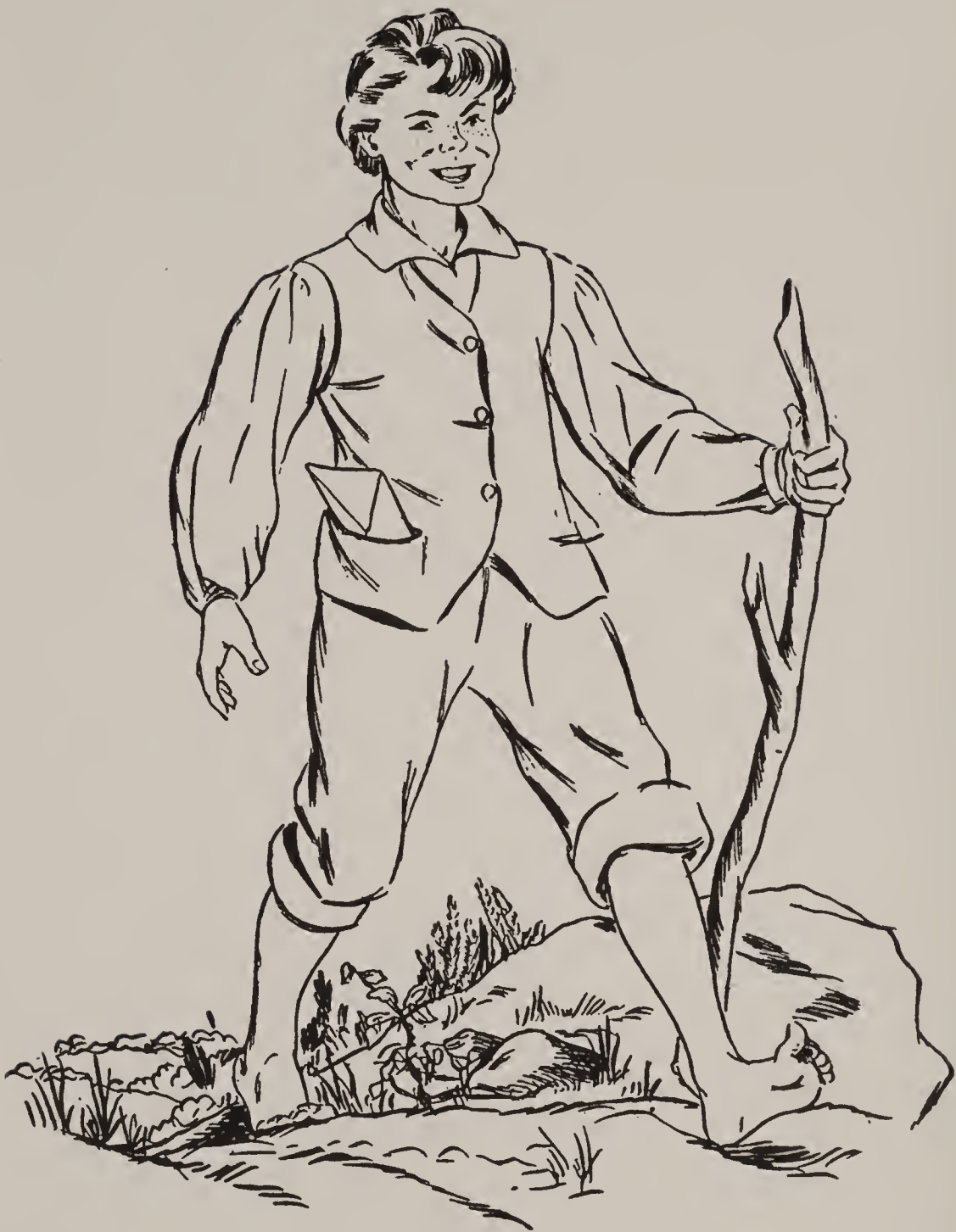
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JOCK BAREFOOT



*He went along as though he had been left
a fortune.*

JOCK BAREFOOT

By

MAUD LINDSAY

Pictured by

JANE LINTON



LOTHROP, LEE AND SHEPARD COMPANY

BOSTON

1939

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To the one bonny lassie and two braw laddies who
are my best listeners and critics.

ELIZABETH NATHAN, ROBERT LINDSAY NATHAN, JR.,
AND NATHAN DRISDALE

Endure fort

Motto of Lindsay Clan

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FOREWORD

The story of Jock Barefoot grew from a legend which I found in a history of my own people; "The Lives of the Lindsays" by Lord Alexander Lindsay, Sixth Earl of Balcarres and the brother of Lady Anne Lindsay Barnard who wrote the famous ballad "Auld Robin Grey."

I have been to Scotland and know the charms of its countryside but the atmosphere of my story I owe to my father, Robert Burns Lindsay, who was born and lived through boyhood in a little Scotch village in that section of the Lowlands made famous by Walter Scott.

Another Scotchman, Dr. George Lang, now of the University of Alabama, hearing that I was writing Jock Barefoot hastened in true Scotch fashion to send me a helpful book, "The Glamour of the Glen" by Dr. William McConachie, from which I got information for the natural setting of the story. And Hugh Miller, a noted Scotch writer of the early nineteenth century, initiated me into the mysteries of fairies and their like through his "Scottish Scenes and Legends" published in 1835.

FOREWORD

There is a glen called *The Glen of the Fairies*. The tree, from which the real Jock Barefoot is supposed to have broken a branch, actually grew to such a size that in its prime it was forty-three feet in circumference!

MAUD LINDSAY

Sheffield, Alabama

Dec. 30, 1938

CHAPTER I

IF Jock Barefoot had known, as he climbed the hill to the Laird's house, all that would happen before he came that way again, he might not have been in such high spirits. As it was he went along as if he had just been left a fortune, and no wonder. Any boy who was trusted by Mistress Margot, the postmistress and sweet-shop-keeper of Wraye, to take a letter to the Laird had a right to be pleased, and proud too.

The letter was pinned securely in a pocket of his coat and he was already planning how the sixpence fee, which he was sure to get for the errand, should be spent. First he would buy a fine new taw for he was a great marble player. Then, maybe a bag of sweets or cracknuts to share with his playfellows. And then something special, a ribbon or a kerchief, for Kirsty the minister's little daughter who was always sharing with him. Yes, it was a very fortunate thing that he had chosen this morning to wade in the mud puddle directly opposite Mistress Margot's shop, else it might be Robin Mucklewraith or Jamie Ferguson or Davy

Davit who was trudging up the hill and making plans.

Robin had pretended that he would not have gone on such an errand if it had been offered to him twenty times over on account of the Laird's temper.

"You're as likely to get a clout on the head as a sixpence," he had told Jock, but that was only because he was envious. If the Laird did have a terrible temper, what difference would that make to Jock? All he had to do was to hand the letter to the Laird's steward, Andrew MacAndrew MacPherson, get his sixpence—it might even be a shilling—and come away.

He thrust his toes into every soft ridge of earth left by cart wheels along the road, and sang at top of his voice a foolish song that he liked for its nonsensical words:

*Come dance a jig with Granny's pig,
Rowdy, dowdy, dowdy.
Come dance a jig with Granny's pig,
Singing rantie, cantie, rollicking rantie,
Rowdy, dowdy-O.*

What did he care what Robin Mucklewraith said, though he did wonder at the Laird. Why should a man who owned a house as big as a castle, and almost the whole village of Wraye besides, to say nothing of moorlands where the curlews called and pasture lands

for blackfaced sheep, fields for oats and barley and even a glen where fairies were supposed to live, go ranting and roaring if his porridge were too hot or too cold, or his dinner too early or too late, or maybe for nothing at all as folk declared he did?

Everybody was of the opinion that Andrew MacAndrew MacPherson led an unhappy life with the Laird when he was at home. Though for that matter the Laird was seldom there. He had a fine house in Edinboro' Town and another in London, and he was fond of traveling in foreign lands. He had gotten home only the day before, after so long an absence that Jock, who had never seen him except in his carriage on his rare visits to Wraye, could scarcely remember how he looked.

Robin Mucklewraith, who thought he knew everything, said that he was as tall as a giant, and strong enough to carry his great Derby ram over his shoulder. But Jock turned up his nose at this.

Robin said, too, that there was just one thing that the Laird was afraid of—fairies. You could not have gotten him into his own glen, according to Robin, and however he had found this out it was likely to be true. There was nobody in the village who would dare go to the Glen of the Fairies, even in broad daylight, unless it was the minister.

The minister did not believe in The Little Good People, as it was safer to call fairies, and neither did he believe in the tales about the Laird. Stories grow in the telling he always said, and he insisted, too, that the Laird had a kind heart in spite of his quick temper.

“Nobody in Wraye is ever driven for his rent,” he pointed out. But everybody else gave Andrew MacAndrew MacPherson the credit for that. Anyway it was a good thing for the village people that the steward was there to stand between them and the Laird, and pay out sixpences or shillings.

Jock began to run, now, for the gateway of the Laird’s place was in sight, and he was eager to get his errand done before anybody else had time to buy the marble that he had set his heart on. It was a blue one with one white spot.

He had never been inside the gateway, for the great iron gates were always locked when the Laird was away, but he had often peeped in to see the fountains and statues and trees in the courtyard. One of the trees was worth a thousand pounds, or at least it was told that the Laird would not take that much in gold for it. He had brought it from across the seas to plant by his gates, though his own woods were filled with trees just as bonny. And when he was off on his travels and ad-

ventures the steward had to write letters to tell how it was growing.

Somebody or something had broken one of its branches this morning, and the broken piece lay directly in Jock's way. He picked it up as he passed and took it into the yard with him. Now that he was there he felt a little abashed by his fine surroundings. Perhaps it would have been better to have brought Robin along—for all of his talk he'd have jumped at the chance—but it was too late to think of that now. Jock would have to get through his errand alone, and to keep up his courage he slashed at the pebbles on the graveled walk and whistled "The Campbells are coming" which was the bravest tune he could remember at the moment. He had scarcely begun it when he heard a great voice roaring behind him:

"STOP! STOP!" And when he turned whom should he see but the Laird, for it could be no other, coming towards him in a towering rage. "Scamp! Rogue! Trespasser!" he shouted, "I'll teach you how to come into my grounds breaking and destroying and slashing and whistling! WHISTLING!" He brandished his walking stick as if he were about to give Jock the clout on the head that Robin had predicted, but he only pointed to the gate with it calling louder than ever:



“I’ll teach you how to come into my grounds!”

“Away with you! Away with you for an idle impudent callant that will come to no good end. Begone and never let me see your face again or I’ll—I’ll—I’ll—”

What he would do he had no chance to tell for, casting the letter and branch on the ground, Jock Barefoot went bounding away. If a pack of wolves had been at his heels he could not have traveled faster. And no sooner was he off than the Laird, whose temper was always as quick to go as it was to come, began to be sorry for his hasty words.

The letter was proof enough that the lad had been sent to the house on an errand, and, now that it lay on the ground before him, the broken branch which had been the cause of all his anger seemed to the Laird a trifling thing. He went to the gate and looked down the road, but, though he could see almost to the village street, no small boy was there. It passed all belief how he could have vanished so quickly, and, with the hope that he was lingering about to get his fee from the steward, the Laird called once or twice, “Laddie, come back, I’ve a shilling for you.”

He soon saw that this was wasting breath and he was so put out by the whole matter that, though he went in when dinner was ready, he would not touch a bite.

“He is fairly spoiled with foreign cooking and there’ll be no pleasing him. I have it in mind to seek another place,” the cook told the steward.

“Wait a little. Wait a little,” he advised. “There’s something lies heavy on his mind and I’ll hear it soon or my name is not Andrew MacAndrew MacPherson as my father’s was before me.” He was right, too, for dinner was not long over when the Laird sent for him to inquire if he knew anything of a small lad with a red head and freckles on his nose like the specks on a throstle’s egg.

“Had he shoon?” said Andrew MacAndrew, which was his way of asking if the child wore shoes.

“No, he was barefoot,” answered the Laird, who looked downcast and ashamed, though the steward pretended not to notice this.

“It could not have been Davy that’s Mistress Davit’s bairn,” he answered briskly, “for he will not gang barefoot for fear of stumping his toe, nor Mrs. Ferguson’s Jamie, for his hair is yellow as ripe barley, nor Mrs. Mucklewraith’s Robin—”

“HAVE DONE! HAVE DONE!” cried the Laird. “Do I want to hear the names of the whole village and their mothers. Who is the child and where does he live?”

“Well,” said Andrew MacAndrew, who was too

used to the Laird's humors to be disturbed by them, "I'm thinking that it's Jock Barefoot that you mean." But his answer only provoked the Laird to a frenzy.

"Who would give a name like that to any bairn?" he demanded. "Jock Barefoot! Jock Barefoot."

"Folks call him that," said the steward, "and I've heard it told that he got the name because he cannot abide the feel of leather on his feet, and he a poor orphan laddie that has neither kith nor kin to make him wear what he doesna' like. And where would your Lairdship be seeing Jock Barefoot?" he added for he was not above showing a little curiosity. His Lairdship was in no mood to gratify him.

"Have you no ears to hear or civility to answer a plain question?" he asked bitterly. "Where does the laddie live?"

"It's no easy question to answer," retorted Andrew MacAndrew. "He sleeps mostly at Granny Blair's for she's old and needing company. He eats at the miller's where there are already so many children that one more to sup porridge makes no difference. All the mothers that your Lairdship does not like to hear about do his mending and the like. He gets his Saturday tub along with Robin Mucklewraith, and the minister sees to it that he knows his catechism and Bible."

“HOLD YOUR TONGUE!” shouted the Laird forgetful that he had been the one to urge the speaking. “HOLD YOUR TONGUE and have the horses put to the carriage. I’m going to the minister.”

Only a little later the minister and the minister’s wife and the minister’s little daughter Kirsty were astonished to see the Laird’s fine carriage, drawn by two high-stepping bay horses, stopping in front of the manse. The Laird himself was getting out to visit them! They were still more astonished to learn that he had come to inquire for Jock Barefoot, though he could not have gone to a better place. Jock was in and out of the Manse like one of the family for he was Kirsty’s great playmate.

“Run and find him, lassie,” her mother bade, “He’ll not be far away I’m thinking.”

The Laird sat in the minister’s study to wait, but none too patiently. He did not explain why he wished to see Jock and when the minister told, as the steward had, that the boy was at home in every house in the village, and mothered by every woman there, he growled like an angry bear:

“Foolishness. They will spoil him among them. What he needs is a good home and to stay there.”

The minister and his wife agreed that he might be right, though Jock’s case was different from most.

When his father and mother died, which was before the minister's family had come to Wraye, there had been no one to take the bairn but distant cousins who were not eager, and the village women were poor but tenderhearted. First one and then another had offered to do her part in caring for the child, and all together they had worked so well that now nobody ever thought of sending him away.

“Jock is as happy as any laddie,” said the minister, “and good. There is no child more bidable except in the matter of wearing shoes, and that he will outgrow. I have advised against troubling him about it.”

His eyes twinkled as he spoke, and so, for a wonder, did the Laird's. The minister's wife always thought he would have laughed outright if Kirsty had not come running in just then with plenty to tell, though not what the Laird wanted to hear. Jock Barefoot was not at the sweetshop, nor the mill, nor off with Robin and the other boys nor at Crippled Dick's house.

“He's nowhere that he likes to be,” she reported breathlessly, “and Dick thinks he's maybe gone to be a sailor.”

The Laird told the whole story to the minister then, and it was not long before the Town-Crier went through the streets ringing his bell and calling:

“Has anybody seen Jock Barefoot? Has anybody seen Jock Barefoot?” And varying his cry once in a while by adding:

“If anybody’s seen Jock Barefoot, the minister wants to know.”

CHAPTER II

SOON a string of people were at the minister's door, though most of them came to get news rather than to tell anything of the missing boy. A few had seen him at the mudpuddle that morning, a playmate or two had spoken to him on his way from the village, and a waggoner had passed him on the road.

"He was all right then and singing like a laverock," the waggoner assured the minister, but that had been early in the day. No one had seen or heard of Jock Barefoot after he left the Laird's house.

Mistress Margot who had been among the first to reach the Manse was full of remorse for having sent him on the errand.

"My heart has been in my mouth ever since I saw him go," she said tearfully, "though the worst I feared was that he would lose the letter." She took great comfort in the thought that she had made him wash his feet before he went.

"They were as white as the driven snow, poor lad-die," she repeated over and over.



Robin Mucklewraith and Jamie Ferguson and Davy Davit came running to tell that a pair of Davy's outgrown shoes, that his mother had given Jock Barefoot only the day before, were hanging in a tree near the puddle.

"I tellit her he would not wear them," said Davy who was half-crying with excitement.

All the children in the village went to look at the shoes, and Robin would have climbed the tree and brought them down but Kirsty would not hear of this.

"He'll get them himself when he comes home for supper," she insisted, for she would not give up hope that Jock would soon be back to laugh with all of them at the great stir he had caused.

Many friends and neighbors thought the same, and the miller's wife set Jock's usual place at the table, and filled a mug with milk for him.

"Run to the door, hinny, and have a look for him," she bade her youngest child when everything was ready for supper. But though more than one was watching for him no Jock Barefoot came singing down the street. Even the men grew uneasy now, and by bed-time everyone was roused.

"He has run away and fallen into a peat-hag and it's all my fault," sobbed Mistress Margot when the

women gathered at her shop to talk over their fears.

The minister was consulted and search parties went out with lanterns to be lighted when the long twilight ended. Jock Barefoot might be asleep on the moor or hillside. He might have gone so far that he had to stop at a farmhouse or shepherd's hut for the night. He might have lost his way in a bog or ravine. These were some of the suggestions.

"He's too canny to have gotten into the loch," said the miller in answer to an unspoken fear, but, when daylight came and the boy was not found, the Laird sent his men with ropes and nets to drag the water.

At last every place in the neighborhood, dingles and copses, the glen of the Fairies, and the far pastures had been searched without a trace of Jock Barefoot. And where to look next was a question! The Laird offered one pound, two pounds, five pounds for news, and ten pounds if the child were found. But, though this was more money than most of the villagers saw in a year, they could do no better for a reward than they had done without a thought of any pay.

Still the reward made talk not only in Wraye but outside as well, and soon all sorts of rumors were brought in. One of these was that Jock Barefoot had been seen with a cattle drover footing it away over the border into England. This so caught the children's

fancy that they made a song about it with the very same chorus that their lost playmate had liked:

*Jock Barefoot's over the Border-O
Rowdy, dowdy, dowdy,
Ho, good Jock, would you serve us so,
Singing rantie, cantie, rollicking rantie,
Rowdy, dowdy-O.*

Then came a tale that Jock Barefoot in kilt and tartan and bonnet was marching away to the hills with wild Highlanders, and the song must have another verse:

*Cockle-button and cockle-ben,
Rowdy, dowdy, dowdy.
Jock Barefoot's off with Hieland men
Singing rantie, cantie, rollicking rantie,
Rowdy, dowdy-O.*

This verse was scarcely learned when Robin Mucklewraith came running and whooping to tell great news. "Jock Barefoot's with GYPSIES! And he's got a red kerchief on his head. The packman tellit the Laird and he's sent to catch them all and bring them back."

There was no time for singing then. The children were too busy watching the highway and shouting,

“Here they are! There they are!” if there was so much as a cloud of dust on the road. The excitement lasted for more than a day, but nothing came of it. The Laird followed every clue only to be disappointed again and again. The whole country seemed to be full of drovers, and Highlanders, and gypsies, and every one of them as hard to find as a flaxseed in a bushel of barley.

After a little nobody beside the Laird and a few others had hopes of ever seeing Jock Barefoot again. Because of other strange things that were happening in the village just then, the child was almost forgotten, or at least for a time.

The first to know of anything out of the way was the boy known as Crippled Dick. Crippled Dick was a great one for play. He could not go running and shouting about the streets with the other children, but nobody’s thoughts traveled faster than his. He was never at a loss for something to do.

To hear him talk, his crutch was sometimes a horse, a grand black or grey or bay horse with crimson trappings, ready to gallop at a word up hill and down dale all over the world with Dick on its back. And another time, maybe on a day when Robin and all the other boys had gone fishing, that same crutch with a string attached would change into a fishing rod. No-

body, not even Robin, ever caught such fish as Dick brought up from a pool of sunlight on the kitchen floor.

“Give him a brick and he’ll build a house,” his mother said. And she did not know half the splendid things he imagined. Nobody, unless it were Kirsty or Jock Barefoot, knew all of his games. They were his best playfellows.

Dick had grieved his heart sick over Jock’s disappearance and he was thinking of him the very night that he heard a noise—a queer little scratching sound—at the wooden shutter of a window close by his bed.

The shutter was strong and securely fastened, but in one of its panels was a hole as large as a penny. This hole had always been a source of great pleasure to Dick. If he played that he was shut into a prison by a wicked king, the hole-in-the-shutter was a fine outlet through which to let down a string to draw up a message from his friends which read perhaps, “WE WILL RESKUE YOU TO-NITE.” Or if the play was that he was besieged in his castle, he could lie with an eye at a loophole to watch the enemy’s every movement.

All of this had been make-believe, but the noise was real—scratch, scratch, scratch. Dick was not afraid.

All of his life he had been expecting something to happen, and now it was coming true.

As a usual thing he had an older brother for a bedfellow, but to-night he was away. Because of this a little lantern had been left burning in the room to keep Dick company. By its light he could see the knot hole plainly. At first he lay still, watching it with his heart beating fast, but after a moment or two of suspense he called softly, "Who is there? What is your wish?"

Just as if someone had been waiting to find out if he were awake, the scratching stopped. A small object that appeared to be nothing but an ordinary stick came through the hole and fell on the bed. A token, thought Dick, who was prepared for anything. Still he must be careful. He lifted the stick as gingerly as if it were a poisoned arrow and gave a gasp of delight. What he held was a tiny flute or flageolet such as shepherds make from hollow reeds. Dick had often and often longed for one.

"Thank you, thank you," he whispered through the hole in the shutter, but if he expected an answer he was disappointed. Listen as he would, not another sound was to be heard.

Dick sat up in bed and turned the flute over and over, as if by looking at it he could discover the giver.

It had been carefully made with a mouthpiece and four finger holes. He put it to his mouth and blew softly, one, two, three, four fine little, weird little notes. The very sound of them made him tingle all over.



A small object came through the hole.

Just like fairy music, he thought. Yes, and who, but the Little Good People, went about in the night playing tricks like this? They were the ones who had brought the flute he hadn't a doubt. Oh, oh, if he could just have seen them scratching on the shutter, and

peeking through the hole, though perhaps it was better as it was. Once a man had tried to see fairies and all he got out of it was a tweak on his nose. His nose was crooked ever after.

Dick could not wait until morning to tell his mother what had happened.

“Wake up, wake up,” he called, “and see what the fairies have given me.”

CHAPTER III

“THERE are no such folks as fairies, or brownies, or the like. The minister himself says so and there’s no going against the minister with all his learning.” This was what Crippled Dick’s mother told him more than once on the day after his strange experience, but when she tried to guess who the mysterious visitor, or visitors, might have been, she was soon at her wit’s end.

“Laddies,” said she, “or maybe Larry Lickladle, the fiddler. He is out later than most and likes his fun. Or—” but here she came to an end of her guessing, and had to begin again. “You’ll find it was that long-legged Robin Mucklewraith or some of his gang.”

What was found out by cautious questions among the neighbors left her as puzzled as ever. Larry Lickladle had been at a fiddler’s contest miles away. Robin had spent the night at his grandmother’s in Next Town. Jamie Ferguson, who had a cold, had been well dosed and put to bed before supper, and that Davy Davit would go anywhere by himself in the middle of the night was too much to believe.

“There’s nobody to have done it but the Little Good People,” said Dick who wished to think that very thing and nothing else. “I tellit you that before you went asking about.”

“Well, keep it to yourself,” said his mother, “or folks will think ye’re daftie.”

In spite of her warning, though, it was soon all over the village that the Little Good People had brought Dick a flute that might be a magic one. Every child in Wraye went to bed at night hoping for a visit from fairy folk. One enterprising laddie even took the pains to bore a hole in a shutter to be ready for them, but all he got was a scolding from his mother.

Not a child, but an old, old woman was the next to have a surprise. She was not expecting anything, and she could not believe her own eyes when she went out one morning and found, close to the doorstep, a heap of sticks for her fire. And, hanging to the doorlatch, was a fine fresh fish for her breakfast.

“I have not had such a fish since Jock Barefoot went away. He was always a great one for fishing, poor laddie,” she said, for she was the very Granny Blair at whose house the orphan boy had often stayed.

She had no other thought than that some good neighbor had brought the fish and the fuel, but when

she hobbled from cottage to cottage to find out whom she must thank, nobody knew anything about them.

“Fairies,” whispered the children who soon learned what had happened, and, when Davy Davit com-



Not a child, but an old, old woman was the next.

plained of being wakened by birds chissicking and peeping and cawing and craiking in the night, not only children but older people as well were full of talk. Davy's mother, it is true, thought that he might have had a nightmare.

“He is always restless-like,” she said, but this did not keep others from thinking and saying, too, that what Davy had heard was the chatter of—well, if not the Little Good People themselves something just as uncanny.

There was one person who should have been able to find out the truth, and that man was the watchman of Wraye. He went up and down the streets at night telling the time and the weather, and keeping an eye on things so that everyone else could sleep safe and easy.

“Laddies or fairies they’ll not get away from me,” he said, when he heard of the strange happenings. And that very night he started out to end the mystery or know the reason why. At ten o’clock a stray cat crossed his path, at eleven a dog barked, at twelve the sexton’s rooster crowed, and at one the watchman sat down on the church steps to rest. The next thing he knew someone was shouting in his ears:

*Two o’clock! Two o’clock! Off and away,
If the fox comes to town the geese will all gae.*

“Where? What? Who?” cried the watchman springing up in a hurry but he got no answer. Not a soul was there and nobody was to be found, though the poor man fairly ran about the village, dashing

around corners and crying into dark places, "Come out! Come out! or I'll come and fetch you."

He was so distracted that instead of calling the next hour in the proper way, "Three o'clock and all's quiet," he quavered the foolish rhyme that he had just heard and did not even get that right:

*Three o'clock! Three o'clock! Off and away,
If the Goose comes to town the foxes will gae.*

As soon as it was light, he was at the minister's with his story. Nobody need think that the Little Good People were at the bottom of the mischief. No, indeed!

"It was a laddie's voice that I heard and there's no use for him to deny it," he declared.

"We shall see," said the minister, but though he inquired himself at every home, there was not a boy in the whole village who had so much as put his nose out of doors after bedtime. And the mothers were indignant.

"The poor bairns get the blame of everything, fairy tricks and all," complained Mrs. Mucklewraith, "and it puts things to do in their heads."

In spite of the watchman's protests most people believed he had fallen asleep and dreamed it all. But other things happened.

Jamie Ferguson who slept by an open window, be-

cause his father had all sorts of notions about fresh air, waked up one day to find his nose black with soot and a great smutty mustache on his lip. He was such a sight that his own mother could not keep from laughing at him. And when he got Robin Mucklewraith to sleep with him next night, the same trick was played. Only this time it was two black noses and two sooty mustaches that Mrs. Ferguson saw when she wakened the children for breakfast.

Then Mistress Margot's cow was milked in the night, and all the talk turned to that. Not that the post-mistress was angry.

"Let them have the milk if it will do them any good, the poor wee ones," she said, for like every one else she thought it was the work of the fairies. And she was all the more convinced of this when her milk bucket was filled with sweet ripe berries from the moorland. Yes, the Little Good People always paid in one way or another for what they took.

Belief in fairies was growing fast when one morning Kirsty, the minister's little daughter, walked into the kitchen where her mother was busy and said as calmly as if what she told was nothing surprising.

"See the Lucky Stone that Jock Barefoot put in my playhouse."

Kirsty was as full of fun and frolic as any child



“See the Lucky Stone that Jock Barefoot put in my playhouse.”

should be, but she had a head on her shoulders. "You can't fool Kirsty," her playmates agreed. And they had learned, too, that they might as well try to move the Mucklestane from the moor as to try to get Kirsty to say what she did not believe, or do what she did not think was right. Her mother was so startled to hear her speak of the lost boy in this casual way that she dropped a pan, but she did not doubt her.

"Jock Barefoot!" she cried, "Where has the laddie been this long while, and why have you not brought him in for a bite and a sup?" She was right much vexed when Kirsty said that she had not seen Jock.

"But he has been here," she insisted, "for he is the one who promised me the Lucky Stone, and nobody else knows where my playhouse is."

"It is all in a piece with the mischief that is driving your father wild. What with the Little Good People here, and the Little Good People there, he has not rest at all. And now you are talking about Lucky Stones and Jock Barefoot. I'm surprised at you, Kirsty, and you a minister's child," said her mother. But the minister had more patience.

He knew that a Lucky Stone was one with a ring around it. There was no luck in it, and he would not like Kirsty to think that, but it was a pretty plaything. As for Jock Barefoot, she must not set her heart too

greatly on his return, though it was right to have hope, as the Bible taught.

“And you do think maybe I’m right, don’t you?” cried Kirsty. “I can see it in your eyes.”

Neither her mother’s doubt nor her father’s reasoning could make her change her mind. Jock Barefoot, and nobody else, had brought her the Lucky Stone, and that night at supper she would not eat her bannock.

“I’m going to put it in the playhouse for Jock,” she explained.

“It’s a kind thought,” said the minister. So when the meal ended, the little girl was allowed to take her bannock and another cake besides to lay on a bit of white cloth in the midst of the playhouse hidden among the broom bushes.

She was up and out early next morning to see what had happened and the household was roused to hear, “They are gone! They are gone! Mother, Father, Jock Barefoot has taken his bannocks.”

“A dog has likely eaten them,” said her mother, but the minister looked thoughtful. Kirsty knew very well that he was puzzled, and every now and then she was back with something more to tell him.

“I’m thinking it was Jock who brought Dick the flute. It’s just popped into my head,” she cried. Then

here she was bubbling with laughter at the thought that it must have been Jock who blackened noses and put mustaches on his playfellows.

“Oh, Father,” she said, “what grand fun it will be when they find out who has been making sport of them, though Robin will not like it.”

And at last she came a little more seriously to ask, “You’ll be telling the Laird, will you not, Father?” But now it was the minister’s turn to astonish her.

“I’m not the one for that,” he answered, as promptly as if he had already thought of her question. “You must go and tell him, yourself, Kirsty.”

CHAPTER IV

THE minister's wife was very unwilling to have Kirsty go on such an errand, especially when she learned that the minister was not going with her.

"The Laird's cross to children, and I'm not of a mind to have our Kirsty's feelings hurt," she told him. "If there's any use in carrying idle tales like this you're the one to go."

The minister had to reason it all out, just as he did in his sermons, before he could persuade her to give her consent. First, the tale of the lucky-stone and the bannocks was one for a child to tell. If the minister went with it, the Laird's hopes might be raised higher than was wise without more proof. Second, it would be a long time, if ever, before the Laird would be cross with any child, if the minister judged rightly. He was too downcast because of Jock Barefoot for that. Third, a visit from a sensible little lass like Kirsty was just what the Laird needed most.

"His great house is lonely, which is one reason

why he does not stay there more, and we must not begrudge him a little comfort," said the minister.

The end of it all was that Kirsty, in her very best pinafore and new shoes, to say nothing of a cherry colored ribbon on her hair, was soon ready for her visit.

"There's no lassie like our Kirsty. She's real bonny," said her mother as she watched the little girl down the street, and the minister was more than willing to agree with her.

What with all her excitement over Jock Barefoot, and the visit to the Laird besides, Kirsty could not walk. She must go skipping and hopping and dancing along the way until everybody she passed turned to look at her. And it was all she could do to keep her news to herself. Just suppose she should stop and call "Jock Barefoot's home, and I'm going to tell the Laird!" Why the Town Crier would be out with his bell in five minutes after, and people would be tumbling over each other to get to the minister's!

She had no idea of letting the secret get away from her, but she was pleased when a playmate asked where she was going in her Sabbath clothes. At least she could tell that much.

"Oh, just to the Laird's house," she answered, as



She must go skipping and hopping.

carelessly as if that were nothing more than going to the sweetshop or the baker's.

"Wh-e-e," whistled Robin Mucklewraith who happened to overhear her. "I'm glad I'm not in your shoes. The Laird has a chopper to chop off your head, and he'll give you no candle to light you to bed."

"If my head were off I wouldn't need a candle," answered Kirsty promptly. Robin Mucklewraith need not think to frighten her with his silly rhymes. And what wouldn't he give to know what she knew! She had scarcely left him behind when here came Jamie Ferguson.

"Hey, Kirsty, where are you going in all your fine togs?" he called.

She had a great mind not to tell him, but she knew he would hear from Robin anyway.

"I am going to see the Laird, Jamie Ferguson," she replied with dignity. "My father, the minister, is sending me."

"Whe-e-e," whistled Jamie in his turn. "He'll cut off your hair, and he'll snip off your nose, and make a big pie with a' ten of your toes." He did not wait for an answer for Robin was still in sight, and there was nothing that Jamie liked better than to tag after Robin.

"Goodbye, Kirsty, if I never see you again," he called as he raced away.

Boys were silly creatures, thought Kirsty, and she was glad that the next person coming toward her was Effie, the sexton's daughter. Effie was a big girl with a merry face, though it grew serious enough when she heard where Kirsty was going.

"Have a care, Kirsty," she cried. "The old Laird is an awful one to visit. It is told he threw a plate at Andrew McAndrew and on a Sabbath, too. And there's some that say he has Jock Barefoot in a dungeon under the Castle."

"I've heard that but hearing need not be believing, my father says," replied Kirsty moving on, though when she had gone only a little farther she called back, "I'll tell you all about the Laird's house when I've been there, Effie."

"Are you going to the Castle?" asked a woman who was passing. "I wonder that the minister would let you." Kirsty wished her good-morning as politely as she could, and left her exclaiming, "Eh, sirs," and "What do ye think?" as if something terrible was happening.

The little girl was out of the village now, and there were no more questions to answer. She was beginning to feel a little strange and lonely when a great sheep dog came bounding to meet her. He was one of the Laird's dogs and an old acquaintance, for he

often accompanied the steward to the village. He wagged his tail in greeting and looked into her face as if he were trying to tell her something. Before



Kirsty had thrown her arms around him.

she knew what she was doing Kirsty had thrown her arms around him and was crying out, "Oh, Shep, I am going to see the Laird and I will not be afraid, I will not, I will not."

Whether he understood or not, the dog turned

and went with her, keeping close to her side all the way to the Castle as if to assure her of his protection.

Kirsty was surprised to find other visitors ahead of her. In an open space before the gateway were horses, covered vans and rickety carts. Bags and bundles of all shapes and sizes lay scattered on the ground, and half a dozen mongrel dogs that guarded them sprang up in a hurry to growl at Shep. Excited voices reached the little girl's ears, and when she looked in she saw that the courtyard was crowded with men, women and children.

They were a very different kind from the sober village folk. The women wore velvet bodices and gay skirts of yellow or red. Strings of beads were around their necks, and copper rings hung from their ears. Even the men had sashes about their waists and pieces of bright-colored cloth on their heads.

Kirsty did not have to be told that they were gypsies. Every summer one or another of their wandering bands came to a dell near Wraye known as the Gypsies' Dingle. Permission to camp there had been given a gypsy king by a laird of the land more than a hundred years before, or so it was told. There was a rhyme about it that the village children delighted in chanting:

*As long as broom and heather grow,
Or Mucklestane stands on the moor,
Gypsy folk have leave to stay
On the land of Lyndesaye.
Twelve days and twelve nights
These shall be the gypsies' rights;
One hare from the hill,
One fish from the rill,
One sheaf from the field,
Air, water, wood and bield,
All given scot-free,
For in my need they helpit me.*

What the need or help had been was long ago forgotten, but the rhyme had traveled down from Laird to Laird, and gypsy band to gypsy band. Each year between broom-time and heather-time gypsies came to the dingle.

The men were always skillful in shoeing horses and mending pots and pans, and the women sold laces and told fortunes. Their coming made as much stir among the children as a Punch and Judy show or a dancing bear, and though the minister often warned his people not to believe in their amulets nor the foolish fortune-telling, he and everybody else liked the light-hearted wanderers.

There was no gay bantering talk among them this morning, nor laughter nor singing. They stood sullen as prisoners before the Laird who was in one of his tempers. As Kirsty came up she heard his voice above all the rest, and now an old woman, who held her head high as if she were a great person, stood out from the crowd to answer him.

“The child you seek is not in the tents of the Romnies, north, south, east or west. The print of his bare foot is on your own heart, Laird of Lindesaye, and you need not think to wipe it out by breaking the promises and pledges kept so long and driving us from the bonny dingle.”

Kirsty understood everything then. Ever since the rumors that Jock Barefoot was with some of them the Laird had been on the watch for gypsies. He had scarcely been able to wait for the time which usually brought them into the neighborhood and now that they had come, with nothing to tell, he was angry as well as disappointed. Andrew MacAndrew MacPherson who stood close by him could not calm him. He must have his say like a spoiled child.

“Pledges and promises,” he sputtered. “Fiddlesticks and broomstraw! Give them a hare and they’ll take ten, a fish and they’ll empty the burn. North, south, east, west! BOSH! If they do not know where



"Pledges and promises," he sputtered.

the child is I'll eat my wig. I'm no silly, gaping steward to be deceived by them. Let them tell the truth or out they go. Fetch the Baillie, Andrew MacAndrew MacPherson, fetch the Baillie."

"Wait, wait," cried Kirsty whose heart was aching for the poor wanderers, "You must not send them away. I've come with news of Jock Barefoot."

The stir in the courtyard stopped on the instant, and every eye turned to the little girl who had been unnoticed until then. She grew a little uncomfortable under such concentrated attention.

"I'm just Kirsty from the manse," she explained, making the Laird a curtsy as her mother had begged her to remember to do. "I've brought good news of Jock, and you will let the gypsies have their bonny dingle, will you not? My father, the minister, says it's wicked to break promises."

The Laird spoke quickly then in the gypsies' own patter. Kirsty could not understand the words but his meaning was plain. The dark faces before her cleared as if by magic, and a good wish was at the end of every tongue. A blessing for the little lady, a long life for the Laird, a rich harvest from his fields, a good season for his sheep. One merry fellow had a kind word for the steward.

"Come to the bonny dingle, Andrew MacAndrew

MacPherson," he called, "and the old wives will find you a grand fortune in the tea leaves."

All the anger and resentment were gone in a breath, and soon the gypsies were gone, too, bags, bundles, babies, dogs and all, to set up their tents and build their fires in the spot they loved so well.

Only the Laird, and the steward, and the little girl, with the dog still beside her, were left in the courtyard. If it had not been for Shep, Kirsty would have been very much inclined to run away like Jock Barefoot. What would the Laird have to say to a child who had meddled with his business and almost called him wicked? She looked up with a timid glance to find him smiling broadly at her and speaking, too, though not to her. "Come in Shep," he called, "and bring the lassie with you."

CHAPTER V

EXCEPT for Robin Mucklewraith, who had climbed up and peeped in a window, none of the children had ever seen the inside of the Laird's house. All that Robin could tell was that everything looked grand, and that the pictures on the wall had frames of gold. But Crippled Dick's imagination soon supplied what was lacking. His favorite amusement was to tell what he thought the Laird's house was like, with gold chairs, gold dishes, gold hangings! And now Kirsty would see it all. She drew a deep breath as she followed the Laird into the hall, and another longer one as she sat in a satin-covered chair in the great drawingroom. It was terribly hard to sit in a satiny chair without slipping, especially when her toes did not reach the floor. But Kirsty managed it till the Laird told Andrew MacAndrew to bring her a hassock. Then she could look about with ease.

Well, except for the picture frames there was no gold in the room, but it was grand with its brocaded sofas and soft carpets. Kirsty could scarcely believe



Then she could look about with ease.

that it was truly herself sitting there to tell the Laird all she thought and believed about Jock Barefoot. And the Laird believed it too.

“It’s the laddie himself and no other,” he declared, giving a nearby table such a resounding thump with his fist that Kirsty might have been frightened if she had not already made friends with him. When she and Shep went up the castle steps, the Laird had taken one of her small hands in one of his big ones, and that very instant she had lost all of her fear of him, though it did seem strange to hear him laughing and chuckling over Jock’s pranks.

“So he comes at night like Robin Goodfellow that the tales tell about and blackens faces and milks cows,” he said delightedly.

“And brings fish for Granny Blair’s breakfast,” put in Kirsty. “Jock Barefoot’s always a great one for helping.”

“I would not have thought he would be so full of tricks,” said the Laird. “He seemed a wee frightened laddie to me, with no mind to stand up for himself.”

“Oh, but that was because he was not used to being scolded-like, and you the Laird, too,” cried Kirsty, who was always one to stand up for her friends. “Jock’s brave, as brave as Robin Mucklewraith. Robin cannot come it over Jock.”

The Laird seemed pleased to hear this.

“He’s a good laddie and we must bring him home, Kirsty. We must bring him home,” he told her more than once.

He had a plan, too. Some one must watch in the playhouse till the laddie came again.

“He’ll be back, never fear, and we’ll have him before he knows it,” said the Laird chuckling at the thought. “I’ll watch there myself.”

“But he does not know you are sorry yet,” she objected. “He’ll run like a tod at the sight of you, I’m thinking, and there’s nobody can run faster than Jock.”

The steward who was waiting with the dog in the hall shook his head at her daring. The lassie had better have a care, or she’d upset the frying pan and all the fat would be in the fire. If he could catch her eye he would give her a warning, but this was no easy thing to do. Let the Laird see him keeking about and whispering and he’d go off like gunpowder. Well, the lassie was not afraid and she had a way with her. The Laird was pleased as a stroked cat.

“Who must do the watching then?” he asked as mildly as if butter wouldn’t melt in his mouth. And what was the lassie saying now?

“There’s my father,” she told the Laird, “though

it might make talk if the minister hid in the bushes to spring out at poor Jock, and there's myself if my mother would let me, which I doubt, and there's Granny Blair but she's too old. And there's Andrew MacAndrew MacPherson, nobody's frightened at him."

"But I will not sit in the dews all night," cried Andrew MacAndrew bursting in at the door with Shep beside him. "It is bad for my bones, and there's bugs flying about. I canna abide the bugs. I will not do it for any Laird."

The Laird's face began to grow red and there was every sign of a storm in the air when Kirsty suggested, "If you'll not do it for the Laird, you maybe will for Jock Barefoot."

Yes, for the laddie, the steward might be willing to watch for a while.

"But suppose it is not Jock?" he objected, "There's talk of bogies going about and I'll not have a bogie creeping up behind me."

"Then I'll go myself," declared the Laird. "The laddie will never know the difference in the dark." But this disturbed the steward more than bogies could have done.

"You'll catch rheumatism and hoasts," he cried, "and ye are too old besides."

“Old?” said the Laird indignantly. “You are older yourself. Ye were at my christening.”

“I was not,” said Andrew McAndrew. “You were at my own.”

They glowered at each other very much as Robin



“You’ll catch rheumatism and hoasts,” he cried.

Mucklewraith and Jamie Ferguson might have done, and Kirsty who was used to settling quarrels among the children thought it was a good time to speak.

“Andrew MacAndrew might sit with his back against a tree and then he would not be afraid of bogies

behind him," she suggested. "There's a bonny pear tree near the playhouse."

Whether the steward liked this idea or not he agreed to it, though for another reason than the one Kirsty had given.

"There's nobody would like to sit all night with no place to rest, but if there's a tree to lean against I'll try it," he told her. "And I'll take my pipe for company."

"You will not," shouted the Laird. "The laddie would scent the tobacco and be off like a hare."

"It's my pipe or no Andrew MacAndrew. And you need not be glowering at me, for it will do you no good," cried the steward.

"You could take it in your pocket like Effie the sexton's lass takes a shilling. She's never to spend it but it's there if she needs it," said Kirsty. "And I've another thought. You should have a sweetie to coax the laddie with. Jock's awful fond of sweets."

This so delighted the Laird that he was all for sending Andrew MacAndrew to the village at that moment to lay in a supply of Mistress Margot's wares.

"Gingerbread, candy sugar, lollipops, everything she has," he directed.

"And cracknuts," put in the steward. "There's

nothing a laddie likes better than to try his teeth on cracknuts.”

Soon to hear him talk it was Andrew MacAndrew MacPherson and nobody else who had made the whole plan. He would go to the manse at a certain hour with his sweets in one pocket and his pipe in another, though he would not light it unless the bugs grew too fierce. And when Jock Barefoot came to see what Kirsty had left him, or maybe to bring her a present, the steward would speak, whisper-like, “Whist, laddie, it’s your old friend Andrew MacAndrew with a pocket full of goodies—”

“Fiddlesticks!” cried the Laird. “Catch him first and then say, ‘The Laird has sent you a lollipop.’”

It was as good as a play to hear them, but Kirsty knew very well that she must not stay to listen.

“My mother will think harm has come to me,” she said getting up and smoothing her apron. “She always does when I’m away from her.”

The Laird would not have her leave, though, without refreshment, and when the steward proposed to take the lassie to the kitchen for a bite he roared!

“For what would she be doing in the kitchen and she my guest.”

In the end Andrew MacAndrew himself waited on her just as if she were the finest lady in the land.

Kirsty wished with all her heart that those teasing boys could see her sipping milk from a silver cup, and eating scones in the Laird's drawing room. Her pleasure reached its height when the steward filled her pinafore pockets with all the cakes that were left.

"I'll take them to Crippled Dick," she said at once. "It will be the next thing to coming himself to the Laird's house, and that's a thing he's always wanted to do. He believes everything here is made of gold but he'd like it better as it is, I'm thinking."

She had thanked the Laird and was already out of the door when the steward came running to call her back.

"Wait, Kirsty, wait," he cried. "Ye've forgotten it."

Kirsty looked hastily for her kerchief which was all she had brought with her, but that was tight in her hand.

"No, no, it's naught you had," said the steward who was in a great state of excitement. "It's the grand reward. Five pounds for news of the laddie. The Laird has it all ready—a five pound note. Think of it and you but a bit lassie."

"Oh, that," said Kirsty, as the Laird himself came hurrying out. "I cannot take it. My father, the min-

ister, would not let me, but you might give it to Andrew MacPherson for sitting among the bugs.”

She did not stop to see whether or not this suited the Laird. She was in too great a hurry to get home with all her news of gypsies and cakes and plans. Never had there been such a delightful visit, and the most astonishing thing that she had to tell was that she liked the Laird.

“He’s almost as good as you are, father,” she said, “and as for his temper, I do not mind that a bit.”

CHAPTER VI

ONLY one other beside the minister and his wife was let into the great secret plan for catching Jock Barefoot. Kirsty confided it to Crippled Dick, but that was just like putting it at the bottom of a well. Nobody would hear it from Dick. And it was nice to have him to talk with, especially when Kirsty's mother did not approve of the plan, and even the minister looked grave when it was mentioned.

Crippled Dick entered into the adventure with as much enthusiasm as if he were going to be right on the spot.

"Eh, Kirsty," he said, "it will be grand sport, I'm thinking, with Andrew MacAndrew MacPherson behind the broom bushes, and you watching at a window, maybe, and Jock slipping through the night to have his fun and never dreaming that anyone has found him out. Andrew should speak quickly, though, or Jock will be off. It will not be easy to put a hand on him." If only he could go to the garden, as well as the steward, it would be a different matter.

“I’d blow soft-like on my flute and Jock would know who was there and not be frightened,” Dick told the little girl.

“And oh, Kirsty, I’ve a thought,” he added. “I cannot go myself, but I’ll lend you the flute.”

“I cannot play,” objected Kirsty, but Dick waved that aside.

“No more can I, not tunes,” he said, “but I can make it call like a bird climbing the sky. I’ll show you. And if you put your fingers where I put mine, and blow your breath in the mouthhole as if you were blowing a feather in the air, you can sound it as well as myself.”

Kirsty’s fingers trembled a little at her undertaking, but she followed instructions so well that one note after another came quavering out, each a little higher and finer than the one that went before.

“I tellit you could,” cried Dick triumphantly. “I could not have done it better.”

“But my mother will not let me stay in the garden,” said Kirsty. “She says it’s all just wicked foolishness.” For Kirsty to stay out in the night, however, was not Dick’s idea. All she had to do was to lean out of the window and sound the call once, or maybe twice would be better.

“Then I’ll know before any of the other laddies

that Jock's home," he told her. Kirsty was willing to try, but she was doubtful.

"It's a bonny sound," she said, hesitating a little as she spoke for fear of hurting Dick's feelings, "but there's no noise in it. You'll never hear it."

"That I will," cried Dick. "It's thin but it's reaching, and I'll be listening. I'll sleep with my ear against the hole in the shutter all night." He cautioned Kirsty, though, not to let the other children see what she was taking home with her.

"Else they'll be fashing me to lend it to them which I will not," he explained.

The precious flute was carefully hidden under Kirsty's pinafore where it made a conspicuous bulge. All the way she expected that someone would ask what she was hiding. Even when she reached the Manse she did not feel easy until Dick's treasure was under the pillow on her own bed. And even then she climbed the stairs twice before supper time to see if it were safe.

Dick's suggestion that she might watch at a window fell in with her own desires, and she decided at once that she would not go to bed that night till all was over. Not only did her mother object to this, but she insisted that Kirsty should eat her supper before she went out to watch for Andrew MacAndrew MacPher-son.

“Laird or no laird, children must eat and sleep,” she said.

Fortunately the steward came before bed time, though at first glimpse Kirsty was not sure that it was himself. He was wrapped up for all the world as if he were going to sit on an iceberg, instead of taking his ease in the pleasant garden where Kirsty played every day.

Besides his own plaid he had one of the Laird’s tartans wrapped tight around him, and on his head he wore a great woolen night-cap that made his head look like a teapot with an enormous cosy, or at least this was what Kirsty thought.

He was full of grumbling. First because he had not been allowed to bring Shep, who had more sense than most folk, to keep him company. The Laird had gone up in the air at the mere thought of such a thing.

“He has to be humored,” groaned Andrew MacAndrew, “but it’s wearying.” Then, too, so many instructions about Jock Barefoot had been given him that his head spun around like a top.

“I must not speak loud and I must not speak soft. I must not spring on him sudden-like, and I must not let him go. I came early to get rid of it all,” he told the little girl.



*He was wrapped up as if he were going
to sit on an iceberg.*

“And did you bring the sweeties?” inquired Kirsty, for to her this was the most important thing.

“I did that,” said Andrew with pride, “a gingerbread monkey, a sugar-horse painted red, and one of the queen’s soldiers made of chocolate. You’ll like him, Kirsty. And cracknuts, besides. Mistress Margot was fairly astonished at all I bought. ‘Are you turning child again, Andrew MacAndrew MacPherson?’ she asked, but she learned nothing from me. ‘It’s the Laird’ was the only answer I gave her.”

Kirsty thought it a great pity for sweets like these to be hidden away in Andrew’s pocket.

“Let’s spread them in the playplace,” she proposed. “Then when Jock comes he’ll spy them the very first thing, and while he’s wondering who put them here, for he’ll know I would not have so many, you can slip out and tell him.”

This plan was so much to the steward’s liking that before Kirsty’s mother called her in there was a grand array of sugar plums under the broom bushes, the chocolate soldier leading all the rest.

Kirsty thought of them with a great deal of satisfaction as she lay in bed with Dick’s flute clasped tightly in her hand. She was determined not to go to sleep. At the least sound from the garden she would jump out of bed and fly down the stair with a coverlet

around her. If he succeeded in the plan, Andrew Mac-Andrew was to bring Jock Barefoot to the house to spend the night in the guest room, where the bed had been made with fresh sheets. The minister was waiting up to open the door, and before he could even turn the key Kirsty would be right by his side.

Jock would be better pleased if she were there, and she might let him blow the flute to tell the news to Dick, she thought as she watched the curtains at her window blowing in a little breeze back and forth, back and forth.

Then all at once she seemed to be deep, deep, deep down in a dungeon under the Laird's house. Jock Barefoot was there, too, hidden in a tangle of briars and vines and bushes. She was trying to get him out but the faster she broke the branches away, the faster they grew. It was terrible to see them grow, and while she was tearing at them and pulling them down the door of the dungeon opened, and there came the Laird with a great chopper to cut off her head.

"You shall not do it! You shall not do it! My father, the minister, will not let you," screamed Kirsty springing up, and to her surprise she found herself in her own bed in her own room brandishing Dick's flute in her hand. The curtains were still blowing in the wind, but instead of the moon that had lighted her to

bed the sun was shining. Dear me! Dear me! She had slept through all the excitement and missed all the fun. And what about poor Dick waiting this weary while for news!

She could not dress fast enough. And such a time as she had with buttons that would not go into button-holes, and strings that got themselves into hard knots. It must be early, though. When she opened her door not a sound could be heard in the house. She tiptoed past her mother's room to the guest room beyond, and peeped in cautiously. Why the bed was empty! There wasn't so much as a wrinkle in the covers to show that it had been used.

Not knowing what to think she ran down the stairs to the kitchen. No one was there. Then to the study where to her surprise a lamp was still burning. Yes, and there was her father fast asleep with his head on an open book. Could it be that nothing had happened!

Kirsty opened the front door with caution and went into the garden past the orderly rows of gilly flowers and stock, past the currant bushes, past the broom bushes to the playplace.

Well, the sweets were all gone—every one of them. Jock had come, but if this were true what about Andrew MacAndrew and all the fine plan?

He could not catch him and he's run after him, thought Kirsty, unless it really wasn't Jock but a—no, no, she must not even think of the Little Good People, that was next to believing in them, her mother said.

All at once a heavy sound came to Kirsty's ears, a kind of rumbling, grumbling, growling noise. Grrrrumph! Grrrrrumph! She must go back to the house and call her father. Something terrible was happening behind the broom bushes. There came the sound louder than ever. GRRRRRUMPH! Kirsty stood still as a stone and listened. Could it be? Could it be?

Suddenly she darted behind the bushes to the pear tree where the steward had stationed himself. There he lay stretched out on his back and snoring till it was a wonder that he had not driven every bird from the garden. And on his head instead of the woolen night cap was a bright red kerchief like the ones the gypsies wore!

CHAPTER VII

BETA, the gypsy girl, came to the Manse the very day that the great plan had failed. Kirsty who was sitting in her playplace spied her standing at a little wicket gate that opened from a lane into the garden, and went to meet her.

She did not know her name then, and if anyone had told her that she and the gypsy would soon be friends, Kirsty would have found it hard to believe.

Neither of the children spoke at first but stood looking shyly at each other. Kirsty could not keep from wondering how it would seem to be dressed in a red petticoat and yellow bodice instead of a long-sleeved frock and a pinafore like her own. She wondered, too, why the gypsy child's hair was allowed to fly about her face without a ribbon 'round it to keep it smooth. But perhaps she did not have a ribbon, and Kirsty had three. Almost before she knew what she was doing she spoke some of her thoughts aloud.

“Would you like for me to give you a ribbon for your hair? You can take the one you like.”

The little gypsy's mouth spread in a smile. Put-

ing her hand in a small velvet bag that hung at her waist, she brought out a narrow strip of crimson cloth and tied it on her head in the same fashion that Kirsty's hair-ribbon was tied.

"Now, pretty little lady, may Beta, the gypsy, come in?" she asked.

"You may come in," said Kirsty who was not used to compliments, "but I am not a lady, only the minister's lass. And I'm not pretty, just bonny sometimes, my mother says." Beta laughed at this.

"You are a lady," she said softly, "for you wear fine clothes and have a kind heart. And ye are pretty for your hair is gold like the broom-bloom."

She opened the gate and stepped inside as she spoke, and Kirsty thought it was time to ask her errand.

"Have you come to see my father, the minister?"

"No," said Beta, shaking her head. "It is not the minister but yourself I have come for. My grandmother has something to say that she will not tell to anyone but you. And you must go to her for she's over old to come to you."

"I'll go if my father will let me," said Kirsty, "and it's maybe that he will. He isn't frightened of things like my mother, and she's not at home." She was about to lead the visitor to the house but she stopped to add,

“He’ll ask you questions but you need not be afraid. He’s kind to everybody.”

“I have answers,” said Beta confidently. “My grandmother gave them to me.”

She was not as excited as Kirsty as they went into the minister’s study, and her answers to his questions were clearly spoken.

“Where do you wish Kirsty to go?” the minister asked first.

“As far and no farther than the Gypsies’ Dingle,” Beta told him.

“What is your grandmother’s name?”

“Beta, the gypsy queen, though some call her Beta, the Old,” the little girl replied.

“What is your own name?”

“Little Beta or maybe Betakin.”

“May I not go with my little daughter to the Dingle?”

“No, my grandmother will not speak unless Kirsty comes alone, but I was to tell you that she will come to no harm,” Beta assured him.

“Do you know anything about the secret?” the minister’s questions continued.

“Only what my grandmother has said.”

“And what was that?” Kirsty’s father wanted to know.

Beta's reply was that it was something that Kirsty and the minister wished to know, but that they would never know, maybe, unless the little girl was allowed to go to the Dingle.

Kirsty stood by all this while, listening and hoping that her father would give his consent to the gypsy's plan. There was no use for her to plead with him, for he would do exactly what he thought was right and nothing else. He was thinking earnestly, too, and maybe praying, for his head was bowed. It seemed a long time, though it was really only a few minutes, before he looked up and said quietly.

"I will let her go."

He kissed Kirsty and watched at the gate as she hurried off with Beta, and if there was any fear in his heart he did not show it to her.

The way that the children took to the gypsy camp was a wild one. No highway nor smooth paths for their feet! They went through fern and bracken and heather and furse, chattering all the time like magpies. Soon they had heard all that there was to hear of each other. Kirsty's life seemed very quiet and dull to her beside the tales that Beta had to tell of wandering here and there, sometimes in towns and cities, and sometimes by the ocean itself. Beta had no playthings like dolls and doll dishes, but she had a colt of her own,

a beautiful brown colt with a white star on his forehead, and because of this he was named for a star, Arcturus. She would show him to Kirsty.

The minister's little girl began to think that she would like to be a gypsy and sleep in a tent, or perhaps with nothing but the sky overhead. When she told this to her companion, Beta did not seem to be surprised.

"I know," she said, "I've been thinking that I'd like to be a lady and live in a house with a fine roof to keep the rain off, but I'd soon be longing for the woods and the bonny moorlands."

Yes, and now that she thought about it, Kirsty would never be willing to be a gypsy unless her father and mother were gypsies too, which was a thing that she could not even imagine.

Their feet had kept up with their tongues, and they were soon at the dingle where everything was noise and confusion. Dogs were barking, children were laughing or crying, and young people were singing, all at the same time. The men were busy at their tinkering, and the women tended a brew that was cooking in a big iron pot hung on three poles above a fire, or washed their clothes at a little stream of water.

Most of these had a smile of greeting for the children as they passed, and one woman called out to Beta,

“The old one is waiting for you. She sent but now to ask if you were in sight.”

A little farther on horses were tethered to graze by the stream, and Beta pointed out her colt. He was beautiful, but not even for such a pet would Kirsty be a gypsy now. She was already homesick for her mother's kitchen with its white sanded floor and well scrubbed pans.

There was little time to think or speak, for Beta hurried her on to the place where the gypsy queen sat under a great tree a little way off from the camp. Kirsty recognized her as the old woman who had reproved the Laird on the morning at the castle, though she seemed very different now. There was no anger nor bitterness in her face, only the pleasant look that grandmothers mostly have. And she sat so quietly with her hands folded in her lap and her eyes closed, that Kirsty thought she must be asleep. She stopped and looked at Beta to see if they should go on but the gypsy child nodded.

“She's blind, but you might not care if she touches your face and hands to acquaint herself with ye,” Beta whispered.

The sound of their coming had already reached the old woman's ears, and she called to know if Beta had done her errand.

“She is here, Granny,” answered Beta. “Kirsty’s here and she is not afraid of gypsies.”

“I kened her heart was right,” said the crone stretching out her hand till it reached Kirsty and passed softly over her face. “I kened that she would have



“I kened her heart was right,” said the crone.

no fear. And she will never rue the day she took the part of the poor gypsies. Call your father, Beta, and bid him bring the token.”

A man, whose clothes seemed finer and even gayer than those worn by the other gypsies, came quickly at the child’s bidding. He handed the old woman a broken copper coin which she, in turn, gave to Kirsty.

“Whenever ye are in need of help, bring or send this to me or mine and help will come, though it be through storm or flood,” she said, “and a blessing goes with it.”

She motioned for the others to leave her alone with the child, and when they were out of hearing distance she drew Kirsty nearer and whispered rapidly a kind of doggerel rhyme:

*Seek ye the lad without the shoon,
Go look for him by light of moon
For he who would from mortals hide
With the fairy folk must bide.*

She repeated this rhyme until Kirsty had every word of it by heart, but she would not explain its meaning.

“I cannot, and keep faith with one I will not name,” she said sinking back on her pillows. And Beta came running to lead Kirsty away.

“The minister is waiting for you,” she said laughing. “One of our folks saw him pacing the road yonder and I had thought to see him here. My father was not over-anxious for me to do my granny’s errand and I knew yours would be no better.”

CHAPTER VIII

KIRSTY was scarcely safe at home again when the Laird came driving up to the door to ask the minister's advice.

"What shall be done about the laddie now?" he said as soon as he was in the house. "It is beyond all thought that he should go roaming and frolicking over the country side taking up with gypsies and nobody-knows-who. I'm thinking the Baillie will have to take a hand in finding him."

"As for that," said the minister, "I believe I know pretty well where he is." When the Laird looked at him in astonishment, he repeated the gypsy queen's rhyme which Kirsty had lost no time in telling him.

*He who would from mortals hide,
Must with fairy folk abide.*

"Stuff! Nonsense!" cried the Laird. "Would ye have me believing in fairies, and ye the minister? It's all gypsy patter."

"Still," said the minister, "I think there is meaning



“I believe I know pretty well where he is.”

in it. There are no Little Good People to be sure, but, as I understand it, the old gypsy mother is trying to tell us that Jock Barefoot is in the Glen of the Fairies.”

“The very place,” exclaimed the Laird. “I won-

der we did not think of it before. There are caves there and hidey-holes for a dozen laddies. I have been in them myself when I was young. We'll soon have him now. I'll send this very day to search the glen from end to end."

Strange to say, the minister was reluctant to agree to this.

"Wait a little," he advised. "And the laddie may come home himself. He is having a fine play now and doing no harm, but he'll weary of it, and all the sooner if he's not harried or driven."

"He'll go hungry and lie hard," objected the Laird, but the minister was not of that opinion.

"Not while summer is here," he said.

"And I'll leave him his bannocks in the play-place," put in Kirsty. The Laird, who was never too ready to give up his own plans, began to smile now.

"I have it! I have it!" he shouted. "Andrew Mac-Andrew shall feed him. I'll send him every night to the glen with a bit of supper in a basket to hang on a bush or set on a stone. The laddie'll find it out and know it is for him. It's likely he'll play he's Bonny Prince Charlie who had to lie hidden so long with nothing but what was smuggled to him."

"And he'll know he has friends watching over him," said the minister.

He and the Laird were like boys themselves as they settled Jock Barefoot's affairs to their own liking. He would have made a bed of moss and heather, they thought. And he could catch fish for himself, as well as for Granny Blair, in a little stream that ran through the glen, and feast on berries as long as they lasted.

"He'll do well enough with us to help him," said the Laird, "but it must a' be kept secret or we'll have the whole village spying about us."

"Not in the Fairies' Glen," exclaimed Kirsty. "There's nobody goes that way if he can go another, and Andrew MacAndrew will not like it either."

"Andrew MacAndrew MacPherson goes where he is sent," thundered the Laird, though he did not convince Kirsty.

"You'll have to tell him that Jock Barefoot'll go hungry maybe unless he takes him his supper," she suggested, and she was right.

Let the Laird roar as loud as Sir Arthur O'bower in the nursery rhyme, the steward would not go to the glen. He did not believe in fairies, oh no, but he could not abide the tales that were told of them. There was a man who had been pinched black and blue for nothing more than stepping on a fairy ring. He was never the same afterwards. And a woman who brushed away

a spider's web, which turned out to be fairy lace, could never knit again without dropping her stitches.

"There's no word of truth in any of it," said Andrew MacAndrew, "but I'm cautious. After dusk I stay at home."

"Then Jock Barefoot must go hungry," said the Laird remembering Kirsty's advice. He chuckled to see how quickly it worked, though the steward was far from admitting that he was tender-hearted. He would go to the glen once, and no more, to prove to the Laird that it was foolish to waste good food on corbies and curlews, as well as to show that he was not afraid.

"But there's no laddie would stay in such a place," he declared.

After his first venture, however, he began to feel great pride in the undertaking, and planned all sorts of devices to give Jock his suppers without discovery.

Strange things might have been seen then about the Glen of the Fairies, if anybody had gone that way, little well-covered pots of porridge sitting on a flat stone, baskets hung on a low limb of a tree, or a slab of gingerbread wrapped in gay paper growing, as it were, in a thorn bush.

The steward and the Laird, too, were never tired of planning for the poor orphan laddie, as Andrew

MacAndrew always called Jock. It was a sad day if he had to report that a sweetmeat, or perhaps a cake, had not been found.

“I mistrust I hid it over-well,” he would lament.

For the most part, though, the supplies were gone when the steward went with more. And that Jock Barefoot, and not the crows, got them the old men were sure, for the bowls and pots were always returned as well washed as even the minister’s wife could have wished.

The Laird enjoyed all of his dinners these days, and when a specially nice dish was brought to the table he was sure to say, “Jock Barefoot must have some of this.”

One plan succeeding so well, he soon had another. Andrew MacAndrew must take a plaid to the glen, one of the Laird’s own red, blue and green tartans. There was a nip of cold in the air sometimes, and Jock Barefoot must have something warm for cover and comfort.

The plaid hung on the bushes for a day or so flapping in the wind, but at last it disappeared and Andrew MacAndrew brought the news.

“He’s taken it. He was a bit backward at first but he’s clever. He knew very well it was for him.”

Now nothing would do but that the village tailor must make a suit of clothes for Jock Barefoot.

“He must not run about in rags like a child that has no friends to care for him,” said the Laird, and for the size the minister’s wife was consulted.

“You’d better have Davy Davit measured,” she advised, at once, “for it was Davy’s outgrowns that Jock always wore.”

Davy Davit was not at all unwilling to accommodate the Laird, especially when he was rewarded by a bright new shilling.

“Andrew MacAndrew tellit the tailor that the clothes were for a laddie who could not come to fit them,” he reported to his playfellows.

Robin Mucklewraith had this to say, “There’s more to it than ye think. It’s queer!”

The suit, which was a bright blue cloth with brass buttons, was carried to the glen a piece at a time.

“If I should take them a’ at once the laddie would be fairly knocked down with pride,” the steward explained, so it was not until the trousers, or “breeks” as he called them, disappeared that the coat was left in the glen. There was a good deal of noise among the birds on the day that it hung stretched out over the bracken like a new kind of scarecrow, but by next morning it was gone.

“Now,” said the steward, “if he so much as shows himself for a moment in the bonny blue clothes I’ll spot him.”

Wherever Jock was he kept well hidden in the day. He only came out at night to do a good deed for Granny Blair or some other friend, or to play a prank on a playmate. The Laird took great delight in every report that was brought, and all the more because the village people still gave credit to the fairies for Jock’s doings.

“He will have the laugh on all of them yet,” he said one day when he had stopped to consult the minister’s wife about a pair of boots, red-topped boots, that he was planning to have made for the boy.

“Whose foot will do for the fitting?” he asked anxiously but it was a question that could not be answered hastily. There was Davy Davit to be sure, or Jamie, though there was no trusting feet. Robin Muckle-wraith’s might be best even if they were a trifle large.

“Better too large than too small,” said the minister’s wife, “and the laddie’s feet will have grown with all his running about. It would be a pity to cramp them and he not liking shoes besides.”

“Do not tell me that he will not like boots. Every laddie in his senses likes boots,” roared the Laird. But

he took no more pleasure in his plan till Kirsty assured him that Jock would be terribly proud of his boots, whether he wore them or not.

"He's never had new ones, I'm thinking," she said. The Laird was all eagerness then.

"We'll give him plenty of room for his toes," he declared in high good humor and nothing would do but that Robin must be sent for without delay, though there was nobody harder to find. He might be wading in the mill stream, or he might be bird-nesting though his mother had forbidden that, or he might be in a dozen other places.

"You could leave word with Mrs. Mucklewraith," suggested the minister's wife, but that was too slow a way for the Laird.

"Why shouldn't you ride with me to find him?" he asked Kirsty, who was so taken back by the thought of such a thing that she had no answer at all but, "O!" To ride in the Laird's carriage behind those high-stepping horses was beyond all words. "O!" she said again, "O."

The Laird understood very well, but he pretended not to see how pleased she was.

"Come away then," he said in his usual abrupt manner. "I've no time to be wasting on boots for run-away boys." He would not even wait for her pinafore to be changed nor her hair smoothed.

“She is well enough as she is,” he told her mother and what he said was true. Kirsty was never one to get herself mussed and untidy. And she sat beside the Laird as if she had been riding in carriages all the days of her life.

It made a stir in the village when she passed by and one naughty boy made bold to call:

*“Kirsty, Kirsty, have a care
Or you will soon be—you know where.”*

He pointed openly to the churchyard which served as the village graveyard, but Kirsty turned her head the other way.

“My father says boys do not think before they speak,” she explained to the Laird, for she was full of happy chatter as they rode along. She pointed out everything and everybody to him.

“There’s Granny Blair. She’s the one Jock stays with mostly when he’s home. And there’s Crippled Dick blowing the flute that I tellit you about. And there’s his big brother who is going to America to make money to buy Dick a fine chair with red velvet cushions. And there’s Robin Mucklewraith—”

“Stop the horses,” the Laird commanded and almost before this could be done he was leaning from the window and calling: “Robin Mucklewraith, come here.”

Robin was engaged in playing marbles and the game was at the stage where he had no mind to stop for anybody's calling.

"For what do you want me?" he answered, taking a careful aim with his taw as he spoke, and giving a whoop of delight as the marbles in the ring scattered before his charge.

The Laird's face grew red with indignation, and he was ready to jump out of the carriage to seize the impudent laddie when Kirsty whispered, "If you speak angry-like he'll run the other way."

Even then the Laird had to sputter and growl a little before he could bring himself to ask in a reasonable tone, "Do you want to make a shilling, Robin Mucklewraith, or do you not?"

"What to do?" demanded Robin who was not to be bribed from a victory by shillings or anything else. The other children looked at him in amazement and Kirsty hastened to remonstrate.

"I wonder at you putting questions to the Laird when all he wants is to give you a shilling for letting the shoemaker fit his last to your foot. It's Davy Davit that he should be asking."

"Oh, well," said Robin, who had the grace to look ashamed, "since it's yourself and the Laird, Kirsty, I'll let the shoemaker do the fitting for nothing at all



“For what do you want me?” he answered.

if you'll wait for me to knock Jamie Ferguson out. He's the only marble left."

Kirsty turned a little doubtfully to see what the Laird thought of this but he was leaning forward with interest.

"Do not let yourself get fashed, laddie," he called. "We'll wait."

The next instant Jamie's marble—it was the very white and blue one that Jock Barefoot had thought to buy—went spinning out of the ring and into the gutter. And the Laird was shouting at the top of his voice, "Well done, Robin Mucklewraith, well done."

Robin took the praise calmly enough, but when it came to climbing into the Laird's carriage he lost some of his bold looks. And he hadn't a word to say until, just as they reached the shoemaker's door, he astonished the Laird and Kirsty and maybe himself by blurting out, "Is it for Jock Barefoot that you're wanting shoon?"

CHAPTER IX

FOR some time it had been told in the village that the Laird had gone daft because of his treatment of an orphan boy. The first to notice anything out of the way was Mistress Margot, at whose shop the steward bought sweets so often.

“The Laird has turned child in his old age,” she told her neighbors. “Andrew MacAndrew took him a gingerbread horse yesterday, and to-day it was a candy bool.”

Then it leaked out, through the castle servants, that the Laird was sending the steward on mysterious errands with food and what-not wrapped up in bundles. Nobody was positive where he went, until a shepherd looking for a lost sheep came upon a little covered pot close to the entrance of the Fairies' Glen. And when he lifted the lid what should he see inside but broth, still hot. He clapped the cover on and left the place, sheep or no sheep, to tell in the village what he had seen.

“The Laird thinks that the Little Good People have

Jock Barefoot, poor man," said Mistress Margot when she heard the tale, "and he's afraid the laddie will go hungry on fairy food."

Very much the same reasons were given when the tailor made the fine blue suit with brass buttons. It was fair pitiful, people said, to think of putting out food and having clothes made for a laddie that was dead and gone. But no doubt Andrew MacAndrew had to humor his Lairdship.

The steward himself kept the secret as tight as if it were locked up in a strong-box and the key thrown away. If anybody asked him why he went out so late and so often he replied, "The Laird will tell you if you ask him maybe." He felt very sure that nobody would ask the Laird anything, not for a golden purse.

Nobody did ask till the day Robin Mucklewraith rode to have his feet measured. He got no answer to his question, but that only made him the surer that he was right. And he thought of other things, too. As soon as he came from the shoemaker's he called Jamie Ferguson and Davy Davit into a corner.

"The Laird and Andrew MacAndrew are trying to toll Jock Barefoot away from the Little People with sweeties and fine togs," he whispered. And, as soon as they had taken that in, he added, "There's somebody ought to go and get him."

“Who?” asked Davy Davit, who would have been a timid boy if it had not been for his bold comrades.

“Ourselves!” answered Robin. “I’ve thought it all out. We’ll not tell our mothers or anybody. We’ll slip it off as if we were going to play, and then we’ll run like blazes and not stop till we get to the Glen.”

“When do you mean?” asked Davy, growing pale to the lips at the idea of such an adventure.

“The first night that the moon is bright,” said Robin making a rhyme unexpectedly, though now that it turned out that way he took it as a sign of good luck.

“We’ll get Jock Barefoot,” he told his willing listeners.

The corner of Mistress Margot’s shop was set as a meeting place, and, on the next night but one, the boys were there. Davy Davit was the first to come because he did not want the others to think he was afraid, and Robin, the last, sauntering along as if he were not going anywhere at all. No one paid any attention to them but they took all sorts of precautions, starting in the opposite direction to the one they intended going, and turning back through lanes and by-ways and around houses. By the time they reached the moor’s edge they were as nervous as flittermice. Everything startled them. Was it possible that the

lank black shadows that went before them belonged to themselves! Davy Davit was short and thin, Robin was long and thin, and Jamie Ferguson, like Jack Sprat's pig, was not very little and not very big. Yet here were these shadows all of a size and tall as the beanpole in the old story. It almost seemed as if there were six, instead of three, going to find Jock Barefoot. And there was no use to run. The faster they went the faster those shadows hurried along. And what was that tall white thing yonder? It was a whole minute maybe before Jamie Ferguson called out that it was the Mucklestane, and they then could breathe freely again.

The Mucklestane, which was a great white boulder, stood at the opening of the glen, and now that they were so near, Robin began to unfold his plans.

"The Little Good People will let Jock out to stretch his legs when the moon's up," he said, just as if he were well acquainted with the habits of fairies, "and we'll just lie quiet and wait till he's as close to us as I am to Jamie, and then—" he stopped to consider the next step so long that Davy Davit called out nervously, "Then what?"

"We'll grabit him," said Robin, "'round the ankles for that's the best hold there is."

"But suppose he does not want to come with us?"

asked Jamie, who for all his love and admiration for Robin had his own thoughts. "To live with the Little People might be grand."

Robin took high ground at this. "You'd better not let the minister hear you, Jamie Ferguson," he cried. "He's awful set against such talk."

The little valley, that was called the Glen of the Fairies, lay among cliffs and rocks. It was a wild enough place even in the broad daylight. The boys had more than once taken daring peeps at it on their roamings over the moor, but never had it seemed so eerie and forbidding as now. To their excited fancy the very stillness was terrifying. The tangle of bushes and bracken and vines that grew on every side might hide anything, and, at the sudden call of a home-flying rook, they fairly tumbled backward.

"I will not go inside," cried Davy, catching Robin's sleeve. "There's nobody can make me."

"Do not drag me back," retorted Robin. "It's maybe best for us to go all together, and do you not run till I do."

They stood huddled close to each other till Jamie had the thought of lying down in the heather, not inside the glen but close enough to see or hear anything that might happen there, and yet far enough away to have a good start if they wanted to run.

Soon they were lying so snug and quiet that Andrew MacAndrew MacPherson, who was a little late with Jock's supper, stumbled over them. He fairly tumbled in their midst before they knew he was anywhere near. They were too frightened to move, and, for that matter, so was the steward. He felt certain that he had fallen into a trap set by the fairies. Then Davy Davit began to scream.

"A bogie! Oh, a bogie!"

"Oh, ho," cried the steward catching hold of his shoulder. "So it is you that it is, Jock Barefoot. And do not try your capers with me. I have you fast."

"You have not! Let me go!" screamed Davy struggling to be free.

"Do not be afraid, laddie," said the steward soothingly. "It is only your old friend Andrew MacAndrew MacPherson that brings ye your supper. Come away home, laddie, come away."

It was as hard to persuade him that the boy he held was not Jock Barefoot, as it was to convince Davy that the steward was not a bogie. By the time Jamie and Robin had straightened things out, and had gathered up the bannocks and scones that Andrew MacAndrew had scattered in his fall, they were ready to give up their project and go home.

"We'll not see Jock Barefoot this night with all the



He fairly tumbled in their midst.

screeching and screeching," said Robin glowering at Davy. The whole adventure would have ended right then and there if the steward had not insisted that Jock would come for his supper. Just let Andrew hang the basket on a branch and be off and the boys would see what they would see. And as for the noise, the laddie was likely to think it was nothing but old Andrew MacAndrew MacPherson at his grumbling, and that he was used to hearing.

He could not stay to watch with them but he wished them well.

"If you once get your hands on him, do not for the love of me let go," he begged as he left them, "for it is high time to put an end to such doings."

After he had gone the boys lay down in the heather again. Since they were there they might as well stay, Robin decided.

"But not a sound from you, Davy Davit," he warned, "if you want to come here again."

The moon was so bright now that the whole glen was filled with a silvery mist. It seemed a fairy place indeed. Even Davy began to lose some of his fear in such a peaceful spot, and all three were hopeful that before long they would spy their old playmate slipping out for his goodies.

Robin had other hopes which he had not told his

friends. Perhaps they might see more than Jock Barefoot. No matter how much they talked in the village of the Little Good People, nobody, from the oldest to the youngest there, had ever seen a fairy. What a grand tale it would be if he and Jamie and Davy could catch a glimpse—just a glimpse—of one. As to what they looked like he was divided between two opinions. They might be, as some people said, wee little men in green coats and red caps, or they might have wings. He was about to ask Jamie what he thought when he saw something moving on a rock a little way down the glen.

At first he thought it was a bush stirring in the wind, then an animal. But as he watched, with a growing fear in his heart, the figure of a little man climbed into view. He had horns on his head like the antlers of a deer, or so it looked to Robin, and four legs and four feet! Two of them in boots began to wave in the air above the creature's head, and two bare ones pranced on the rock. A bogie, and no mistake this time!

“Run! Run! Run!” cried Robin scrambling to his feet and dragging Davy after him. Jamie followed, and not a moment too soon. They were not well started when a terrible cry rang through the night:

“Who-Be-Ye-e-e-e-e? Who-Be-Ye-e-e-e-e?”

It sounded just as if the bogie were asking them, "Who-Be-Ye-e-e-e-e?"

"Do not answer, but run," cried Robin. His companions needed no urging. Davy, who was sometimes last in a race, was first now, and Jamie went over the heather with great leaps and bounds. And behind them the bogie still called, "Who-Be-Ye-e-e-e-e-e?"

It was not until they were beyond the sound of that awful voice, and well into the town, that they dared to stop and draw breath.

Now that they were safe the adventure took on another color, and Robin would have had his grand tale to tell after all if it had not been for Jamie Ferguson.

"I'm thinking," he said, "that there was a look of Jock Barefoot about yon bogie."

"But Jock hasna four feet and legs," objected Davy Davit.

"No, but he has arms and hands."

"And boots," cried Robin suddenly. "The shoemaker finished them on Tuesday and Andrew MacAndrew fetched them away."

Davy, to whom all this talk was a mystery, had another question. "Why should Jock Barefoot wear boots on his hands?"

"To frighten folks like ourselves," said Robin,

speaking with great bitterness. "And make silly loons of them."

His companions had never seen him so worsted before, but by the time the parting place was reached he had recovered himself enough to propose a plan that cheered him mightily. They must make a pledge to keep the whole thing secret. He would tell them just what to say, and then they would repeat it all together.

It was awesome to hear him, too, as he whispered, "We, Robin Mucklewraith, Jamie Ferguson, and Davy Davit, do solemnly promise and vow never to let out where we have been, nor what we have seen and heard this night, and hope the bogie will catch us if we do."

What bogie he meant he did not explain, though that made no difference. Jamie and Davy were too much impressed by his high sounding words to ask questions.

CHAPTER X

THE boys kept their secret well, though Davy Davit weakened when his mother declared that he must be dosed with camomile tea for his pale looks.

“And ye’re tossing about in your sleep and calling out for that feckless laddie, Robin Mucklewraith,” she said.

The reason for all this was on the tip of Davy’s tongue, but in the end he swallowed the dose and told nothing. It was only when he and Robin and Jamie could get away into corners with their heads close together, that they dared so much as mention the Glen of the Fairies. Yet if they had but known it others besides themselves had adventures in the very same place.

One of these was Larry Lickleladle, the young fiddler. Nobody could play livelier tunes than Larry, nor sing sweeter songs, and when he grew tired of the old ones he could make new ones as easily as Mistress Margot could make her gingerbread toys, or so it was told. And besides his fiddling and singing he was a

fine fellow whom everybody liked. No merry-making was complete unless Larry and his fiddle were there.

On the night after the boys were frightened from the glen, the fiddler was playing at a wedding supper, and playing his best. His bow went dancing over the fiddle strings as if it were alive, and nobody who heard the music could keep his feet still.

“He’s as good a fiddler as Donald Calder was before he heard the fairies sing,” said one of the company. “Afterwards he was always trying to remember the words and the tune of their song and this he could not do. The Little Good People took care of that.”

“I wish I could hear a fairy’s song,” said Larry Lickladle. “It would never get away from me I’ll promise you.”

“Oh, it’s all very well to make such wishes when you have a roof over your head, and four walls around you and plenty to keep you company,” laughed another lad. “But I’ll wager you a new shilling that you would not go to the Glen of the Fairies at their time of night for all the songs that were ever made.”

“Wouldn’t I?” asked Larry as bold as a popinjay. “I’ll go this very night, for there’ll never be a better one, and collect the shilling as surely as the cock crows for morning.”

Nothing else was talked of after this, and when the

wedding feast was done all the wedding guests went with Larry to watch him into the glen.

“If the fairies take you away be sure you leave your fiddle and bow, so we may know what’s gone with you,” said one of his friends.

“It’s little you’ll find in a fairy ladle to lick, I’m thinking,” teased another and a third had a warning to give, “Whatever ye do, don’t look behind ye.”

But warnings or jesting, Larry paid no attention to them except to laugh.

“If the fairies take me they’ll have to take fiddle and all,” he said as he marched away.

At this end of the Glen stood two birch trees shining like silver in the moonlight, and when Larry had passed them it seemed to him as if he had stepped into fairyland itself. The whole place was filled with silvery light. The ground under his feet was covered with little white flowers, and a stream that ran through the bracken was like a twisted ribbon of silver.

This was all well enough to see, but the Glen would have been more to Larry’s liking if there had been even so much as a cricket’s chirp to break the quiet. He had more than half a mind to play a tune to keep himself company.

He had a curious feeling, too, that someone was watching him though he told himself that it was noth-

ing but a fancy. It was easy enough to get fancies into your head in a place as still as this one. Or it might be that some of his teasing companions had followed him to play a trick on him. Well, they would not find him napping. He was just about to call out that he knew they were there, when he heard someone singing one of his own songs. Oh, ho, so that was the trick?

“Come away, come away,” he called in great glee. “You’ll not be fooling Larry Lickladle this night.”

The words were scarcely spoken, though, when he knew that the voice he heard could not belong to any of the wedding company. A child might have sung in the same way, but no grown man or woman. The words of the song tinkled out like the notes of a little bell.

*Have you seen? Have you seen?
Bonny Ailsie on the green?
A wee lass, a fair lass,
Have you seen? Have you seen?
Bonny Ailsie on the green.*

In spite of all he had said about wishing to hear fairies sing, Larry was very much inclined to run back to the nearest house. But his second thought was a better one. That the hidden singer was one of the Little Good People he felt certain, but why should he, who

had been making music ever since he could hold a fiddle bow, be afraid of a little elf singing in the night.

“Well done, little Goodman,” he called, “and, if you’ll save your breath till I tune my fiddle, I’ll play for your singing.”

The elf, if elf it were, seemed to agree to this for there was not another sound from him till Larry scraped the bow across the strings and called out, “Now for it!” The fiddler’s courage had all come back to him with the first note of the fiddle and when the second verse of the song began Larry sang too.

*Have you heard? Have you heard?
Bonny Ailsie like a bird?
A gay lass, a blithe lass,
Have you heard? Have you heard?
Bonny Ailsie like a bird?*

They sang so well together that as soon as the first song came to an end Larry proposed another. He started it alone, but the elf joined in as merrily as ever.

*Oh, on my way to Tipple Tine
The bonny moon began to shine,
Come laddie, come lass,
Trip it lightly over the grass,
Over the grass to Tipple Tine;
You bring your cake, I’ll bring mine.*

It was not only Larry's songs that they sang after this, but old ones as well. And there is no telling how long they might have kept it up, if when they stopped to rest, Larry had not asked, "Can you whistle as well as sing, Little man?"

Instantly a voice answered, "I'll not be whistling on the Laird's land." And, though Larry called more than once and coaxed him with other tunes, not another note would the fay sing that night.

Larry put his fiddle under his arm and began to wish himself at home. Fairies were skittish folks to deal with that was plain to see, though why a question about whistling should vex an elf or anybody else Larry could not guess. It was enough to make any man scratch his head and think.

While he was thinking, he walked along so quickly that he would soon have been free of the glen, fairies and all, if, just as he reached the Mucklestane, he had not looked back. The light in the Glen was fading and the mists were gathering fast, but in one clear spot he saw what, at any other time or place, he would have thought was a child dancing. Shake a leg, wag a leg, such jigging it was! Almost without knowing what he was about Larry put his fiddle under his chin and began to play a tune that he had never played nor heard before. Over and over he played it till the moon

was gone, the dancer had vanished, and the fiddler was left to find his way home in the dark. The cocks were all crowing when he came to the village street.

He had earned his shilling, but he did not go to



Over and over he played it.

get it. He had no mind to be questioned about the night's venture.

“If I should tell what I have seen and heard folks would think I was out of my head. And maybe I was,” he said to himself.

There was one thing though, Larry had not forgotten the tune that he played, and by and by he made a song for it.

*As I was going through Fairy Glen
I saw one of the Little Men
Fiddle, diddle and fiddle dee
I played for him and he danced for me—
Oh, I never shall see such sight again
As I saw there in the Fairy Glen.*

He did not regret the shilling then, for a new song was more than money to Larry Lickladle at any time.

CHAPTER XI

THE next to go through the Glen of the Fairies was a piper called Tall Tammias, but he had his own reasons for keeping quiet about it, and it was no fault of his that the story of his adventure got out.

Tammias was a great brawny man, with a fine pair of lungs for his music-making. When he blew his best it was said that his bagpipes could be heard as far as Next Town and that they would set the dishes there rattling on the cupboard shelves.

The louder he blew the better the children liked it. Robin Mucklewraith thought that if the King of France and forty thousand men should come marching over the hills to Wraye, Tall Tammias would drive them back with a tune, just as he had driven the Laird's Derby ram when he broke from his pasture and came charging into the town. Robin was always hoping, too, that the piper would let him have a blow on the pipes, but so far he had not dared ask, bold and daring as he was. It took almost as much courage to face the piper when he was vexed as it did to stand up to the

Laird in one of his tempers, and it was told that the piper was not afraid of the Laird or anybody else.

Certainly he was not afraid of the Good Little People. If he gave them a thought on the night that he came to the Glen, it was only as things that children clavered about. A man, he was very fond of saying, did not fash his brains with old wives' tales.

And he did not give a thought to the beauty of the place. It was the time for the moon to shine and the season for flowers so what else could a body expect to see. If his attention had been called to the silvery mist that filled the glen, he would likely have answered, "Oh, aye, we'll have a fog before morning. I'll be hasting on."

He had come this way because it was late and he was seeking a short cut to the village. What with his long strides he was already half-way down the glen when a saucy voice called out, "Goodnight to you, Tall Tammass the piper."

The piper whirled about ready to defend himself against thieves and robbers, for he could think of no other folk who would be wandering in such a lonely spot at so late an hour. It was true he was there, but he had good reason and was an honest man besides. For all his looking he could discover no one, but this only made his suspicions a certainty. Who but a thief

would hide away, though he was a foolish fellow to have called out, thought Tammas. Well, the piper was not one to be afraid. The fear should be on the other hand as the rascally coward would soon learn. Tammas felt bold enough to wrestle with a Welsh giant to save the hard-earned pennies which he carried in a sporran, or bag, fastened to his kilt. A challenge to come out and fight was on the tip of his tongue, when his caution bade him go slow. If I cry out upon him for a thief he will know I have something to be robbed of, he argued to himself.

Instead of the great words he intended to use he called out peaceably, "It is not everyone that is as well known as the piper so you'll take no offence, I'm hoping, if I ask who it is that walks by himself in the Glen of the Fairies?"

"Oh, maybe a kelpie, or maybe one of the Little People, or maybe just Jock Barefoot, the poor orphan laddie," answered the voice, though the speaker did not appear.

"Jock Barefoot!" cried the piper bristling with indignation, for like many another he believed that the lost lad was long ago dead. To hear his name spoken so idly angered him. "Have done with your fooling," he called, casting all caution aside, "and let the dead rest."

"But for why should you not believe the laddie you

gave a penny to, and no longer away than New Year's morn?" asked the hidden one.

In spite of all his courage a cold prickle ran down the piper's back at this. He did not give away enough pennies to forget any of them, and that he had paid the orphan boy for carrying his pipes for him he remembered as if it were yesterday.

"Eh, sirs," he whispered to himself. "It's the ladie's ghostie that I hear."

He peered cautiously on every side but nothing was there, and, except for a tiny ripple that sounded very much like a mischievous giggle, he could have believed that he had imagined the whole thing. It was plain, beyond mistake, that somebody or something was laughing, and laughing at Tall Tammass, which was none to the piper's liking. Yet what could he do? This was another thing to frightening rams with a rousing tune, or challenging thieves. His bagpipes were useless here, and his wits as well.

Tammass was just considering that the best way out might be to take to his heels before worse happened, when the voice inquired, "Ye are not frightened, are ye?"

"I never did you any harm while you were living so why should I be afraid of your wee ghostie?" asked the piper and his own question brought him to his senses. Why indeed should the tallest man and the

boldest man north of the Border, to say nothing of the finest piper, be afraid of a wean like Jock Barefoot, dead or alive.

And he had another thought, besides, for Tall Tammas, in addition to all the things that have been told of him already, and all that he believed of himself, was a rare good bargainer. What he had in mind that very minute was no less than to make a bargain with the ghost.

“Come away, laddie, come away,” he called coaxingly. “Give me a sight of you and you shall have another penny, and a bright new one at that.”

“Would you make it two?” inquired the voice, after a moment of silence.

“I would,” said Tammas, for the reward for news of Jock Barefoot had never been taken down from the window of Mistress Margot’s shop where Andrew MacAndrew MacPherson had posted it. To lay down a tuppence and take up five pounds was a bargain after the piper’s own heart. He even hastened to repeat his offer, “A tuppence it will be if you are quick.” But there was no hurrying this one.

“Did you say trippence?” he asked, as if there was time and to spare.

“I did not but I will,” said the piper. “Three pennies if you will have done with your clavering.”

“It is worth a sixpence,” said the voice. “Just think of the stir there’ll be when ye tell it at home.”

The piper had thought of this very thing, but the sixpence went hard with him.

“I’ll not promise it until I have seen you,” he objected, “for how do I know that you are not that wild Robin Mucklewraith at his tricks?”

“Oh, well then,” said the child, or whatever it was, “I’ll gang home with you for nothing at all if you’ll come and get me.”

“But where are you?” cried Tall Tammas, fired with the idea of marching into the village with Jock Barefoot, for by now he had no thought of ghosts. No, this was a live laddie and a lively one, but let the piper once lay hold of him and he would not get away in a hurry. And what a feather in Tall Tammas’ bonnet it would be to bring home the lost child. The king himself might hear of it as far away as London Town. And perhaps he would send Tammas a medal to wear on his coat.

“Where are you?” he called again. “Tell me that and you shall have your sixpence.”

“You might look behind the whinbush,” came the answer promptly enough, but when the bush was reached a cry sounded far beyond.

“Here I am. Why don’t you come and get me?”

Tall Tammias laid his bagpipes on a stone, threw his plaid aside and went scrambling through bushes and over rocks.

"Where? Where?" he asked breathlessly.



"But where are you?" cried Tall Tammias.

"Here! Here!" called his tormentor, always a little ahead or a little behind him.

Never was there such a place as the Fairies' Glen for vines to trip a body up, or thorns to prick a man's face, or stones to bruise an elbow! And never was

there will-o'-the-wisp as quick and aggravating as this goblin or imp or what-not.

“You may stay with your kelpies and spunkies and warlocks for all I care. I’ll look for you no longer!” Tammas called more than once, but when the little voice pled, “Do not leave me,” the piper would turn to the search again.

The moonlight was fading fast, and the dark that comes before dawn was gathering in the glen when the voice cried suddenly, “Go you home, Tall Tammas, and tell everybody you have spoken with Jock Barefoot.”

But this is just what the piper did not do. He marched home in high dudgeon, blowing his pipes so loudly and fiercely that more than one of the villagers jumped from their beds and ran to their windows to see what the matter was, but never a word did anyone hear from Tall Tammas about what had happened that night in the Glen of the Fairies.

CHAPTER XII

KIRSTY and Crippled Dick, who knew nothing of these happenings, were growing impatient for Jock to come home. Every day they made plans to get him back, and the laddie was never far from the Laird's thoughts nor the minister's. Yet there is no telling when things would have reached a happy ending if it had not been for an old man called Gibbie Greycloak.

Like Larry and Tall Tammas, Gibbie was a musician, but the instrument on which he played was a harp. Whenever he came to the village with the old grey cloak, that gave him his name, wrapped around him, and his white hair blowing about his face like a mist, the children flocked to hear the wild sweet music that he made on his harp, or to listen breathlessly to the tales of heroes and goblins and what-not that he told. They always thought of him as belonging to the realm of fairies and the like, rather than to the world in which they themselves lived. But they loved him all the better for that.

There was no reason for the harper to go wandering over the country in the wind and weather. Everybody knew that Andrew MacAndrew MacPherson had offered him a warm corner in one of the Laird's houses. But to roam was more to Gibbie's liking than to sit snug by a fire. Up hill and down dale he went, and he found a friend in every place. He was hurrying to Wraye one summer evening, when a storm overtook him and drove him into the Fairies' Glen for shelter. The wind was so strong that he could scarcely keep on his feet, and his old cloak was lashed about him till he wondered that it was not torn into shreds. His greatest alarm was for his precious harp. He was hastening to reach a tree or rock that might shield it when he felt a sudden grasp on his cloak. Looking down he spied a small ragged boy by his side, though why such a one should be in a place that the village people shunned he could not imagine.

"Come away, come away Gibbie Greycloak," he called. "We must get into my castle or the bonny harp will be ruined entirely."

The old man allowed himself to be led along without a question, though it did occur to him that his companion might be one of the Little Good People who were said to take on any form that they pleased. Not that this would have made any difference to Gibbie. He

had lived too long with dreams and fancies to be afraid of a fairy, and besides it was a very friendly voice that cautioned or encouraged him at every step.

“Have a care, Gibbie, there’s a root in the way. It is not far to go. We are almost there. You’ll have to stoop now but it’s dry as the Laird’s house inside.”

The next moment they were safe from the storm and the little guide was saying, “Wait a bit till I light the candle that Andrew MacAndrew MacPherson put in my last bundle, and then you’ll see what a fine place I have for myself.”

The light of the candle showed Gibbie Greycloak what he had already suspected. He was in one of the caves often found in Scotland, and which had served as a refuge for many folk in many times. This one was under the deep shelf of a cliff, hidden, as he found out later, by bushes and bracken and vines. It was as snug a hidey-hole as heart could wish. Now that he looked well at him, the harper saw that his little friend was no uncanny creature, but just Jock Barefoot about whom there had been so much stir and sorrow.

Gibbie had seen the lad many times in the crowd of village children. Yes, and he remembered him for another reason. There had been no better listener than Jock Barefoot to the old tales and songs.

In one corner of the cave was a bed of heather,

partly covered by a plaid of red and blue and green. On a stick, which was thrust in a crack of the wall, hung a suit of clothes, while just beneath stood a fine pair of red-topped boots.

“They are my Sunday togs,” said Jock Barefoot, when he spied the harper looking at them. “Andrew MacAndrew MacPherson left them on the whin bushes. He brings my supper, too. I have just gotten it in, but I have not looked to see what I have.”

He unwrapped a bundle and took out a handful of bannocks, two eggs, a slice of pudding and a gingerbread animal of such a shape that it would have been hard to name. Soon he had the meal spread neatly on a stone, with the candle in the midst, and was inviting the harper to eat with him.

“But first we must ask a blessing,” he told him, “the minister will not eat without a blessing and it’s good to do as the minister does when you are in the Glen.”

He was so pleased to have company that he answered all the harper’s questions without hesitation, and told him more besides.

Yes, he had gone with a drover but only because he had no money for supper and was so far from home.

And how did he get so far? Mostly because of a man with a gig and a high-stepping horse who had offered him a ride. It had seemed a grand thing to sit



Soon he had the meal spread neatly on a stone.

in a gig and go whirling along raising a dust on the road. They had passed Sandy MacNiel, the village carrier, and he had not known Jock.

And where had he been when the gig-man saw him? Oh, maybe halfway to Next Town, he had run so fast to get away from the Laird's temper, though he did not think to be gone so long when he started. As soon as he got down from the gig he had turned back, but everything was strange. He might even have been a little frightened, that is, until he met the drover who was in need of just such a boy as Jock to help with his cattle.

Jock would have liked nothing better than to go whooping and running after cows, if only Robin and the rest had been along. And besides he felt very sure that Crippled Dick and Kirsty would be wondering what had become of him by then.

He would go no farther than the border, though the drover urged him, but he had fine company to travel home with, a wild Highland man with bonnet and tartan and all.

“He was fierce to look at but kindly,” said Jock.

The two of them traveled so fast together that Jock would have been home, long, long ago, if he had not met up with the gypsies who told him of the reward offered for him.

He had been terrified in good earnest when he learned of that, and all the more so because nobody could tell why the Laird wanted him. He did not dare go on but the gypsies hid him.

Soon he had been like one of themselves, except that when they came to towns or villages in their travels, he lay among the pots and pans and bedding in the back of a van. Once while he was hiding there he had heard talk about himself from someone who came peeping and asking questions in hopes of earning the Laird's money.

"He told it that I was a bandy-legged callant and that I had stolen away shoes because I had none of my own," said Jock, indignantly.

No matter what was told or asked, Jock's gypsy friends would not betray him. He might have been with them yet if a great longing to see his own people, and the hills and moors and lakes that he loved so well, had not made him fairly sick. Laird or no Laird, reward or no reward, he must go home, and the gypsies did not try to hinder him. Just as they had welcomed him in the beginning, they helped him away. They gave him food and oatmeal from their little stores, and other gifts which Jock displayed proudly, a knife with one good blade, a well-mended pan and a tinderbox.

Yes, and a handkerchief, but that he had put on Andrew MacAndrew's head for a night-cap.

It was from the gypsies that he got the idea of living in the Glen of the Fairies. When she heard of his purpose to go home the gypsy queen had called him to her and whispered,

*He who would from mortals hide
With the fairy folk may bide.*

And when he did not understand this, she had asked him plainly if there was no place in his own land that belonged to the Little Good People.

Jock admitted that he had been frightened when he spent his first night in the glen. The gypsies had brought him to the edge of the moor and he had hidden in the heather till dusk for fear Robin or some of his old companions might catch a glimpse of him. The stars were shining when he crept cautiously into the fairies' land with his heart in his mouth. No harm had come to him, though, and the next day he had found the cave.

"I call it my castle," he explained, "and it's rare good fun. Crippled Dick and myself have often played that we lived in one, and I'm hoping he may see mine yet."

The thought of one playmate brought others to mind and he was soon telling with delight of the pranks he had played, particularly of the frightening of the three lads on their moonlight visit.

“It’s a real pity you could not have heard Robin Mucklewraith and Jamie Ferguson and Davy Davit screeling and calling, The Bogie! The Bogie! And me with whin branches over my ears and boots on my hands,” he told the harper.

He laughed too, at the steward and his cautions, though how he had gotten word of Jock’s whereabouts, or why he would risk himself night after night for anybody’s sake was beyond all understanding. But come he did and Jock had great fun guessing what would be in the little pans and pots and bundles that he brought.

But when the harper suggested that the Laird might be behind the kindness and urged Jock to go home, the boy drew back in alarm.

“You’ll not be telling the Laird about my castle, will you?” he pleaded. “Nor the minister nor the Baillie?”

Poor Gibbie Greycloak was sorely puzzled as to what to do or say. That the Laird or the minister should hear what he had heard that night he was sure. What if the child were sick or harmed in this lonely

spot? Still Jock had taken him in and had trusted him.

“I will not tell them,” he promised at last, but never did a promise lay so heavy on his heart.

Long after the storm had passed and he had gotten to his lodging in the town he was awake with the burden of it. And, though the children crowded to meet him next morning, he had no stories to tell nor songs to sing. Kirsty found him sitting under a tree with his head in his hands, and she ran to ask what the matter was.

“Are you sick, Gibbie Greycloak?” she inquired anxiously, “and if you are my mother will brew you a remedy. She knows all about sickness.”

“It is not sickness of body,” groaned Gibbie, “but heart-sickness, which is worse.”

“Then you must tell my father, the minister,” cried Kirsty. “He’s grand for ails like that.”

“No, no,” groaned the harper. “I cannot tell him. I have passed my word.”

“But you might maybe tell me,” said Kirsty, who was beginning to understand that the harper’s trouble was out of ordinary. “I’m naught but a bit of a lassie, but I can hold my tongue as well as anybody, my mother says.”

Eager as the harper was to share his secret he had

to consider the matter before he spoke. At last he said solemnly, "I have not broken my word and I will not. I must not tell the minister nor the Laird nor the Bailie, but I'm thinking he would not mind my telling you, Kirsty."

"He would not! He would not!" cried Kirsty clapping her hands joyfully, "but I've guessed it. You have seen Jock Barefoot and you know where his hidey-hole is."

CHAPTER XIII

KIRSTY was soon comforting the harper with all the assurances she could think of. He need not be troubled about Jock Barefoot. Her father, the minister, said he was best let alone for a while. And the Laird was just biding his time to bring the laddie home. They did not know of the Castle, and Kirsty would not tell them, but they could find him, never fear.

All while she was talking, though, or listening to the harper's story she was making plans to go herself to the Glen of the Fairies. Jock would never come back till he was fetched. He was too fond of his castle and all, and there was no one who could coax him as well as Kirsty. She was sure of that.

Just how or when she could get away, or what she would do when she came to the Glen, were questions that could be settled later. Crippled Dick would help her plan. He always thought of grand ways to do everything. As soon as she could leave the harper she started for his house. Oh, oh, oh, how pleased he would be!

She had not gone far when she saw a crowd of children and older people hurrying ahead of her as if something were the matter. A house might be on fire or maybe a letter had come. Everybody liked to hear what was in a letter, or somebody might be hurt. She began to run but she was too far behind the others to catch up with them. Luckily Robin Mucklewraith, who was late as well as herself, came up with her, traveling like a horse on his long legs.

“What’s all the stir?” cried Kirsty, reaching out a hand to grasp his jacket as he passed.

“That’s what I’m going to see,” said Robin, jerking away from her. But he did have the grace to call back, “It’s down at Crippled Dick’s house.”

All sorts of fears came into Kirsty’s head as she bounded along. She was almost at Robin’s heels when he reached the crowd that had gathered at the crippled boy’s door. They were laughing and talking so gaily that Kirsty knew that nothing had gone wrong with Dick. But it was some time before she could edge herself close enough to see that the cause of the excitement was a great box that stood in the dooryard.

Effie, the sexton’s daughter, was the nearest at hand, and, when she could get her attention, Kirsty learned that the box had been brought by Sandy MacNeil the

carrier who went between the large and small towns with his horse and wagon.

“If ye’ll put your head under my arm, Kirsty,” whispered Effie, “Ye can read Dick’s name on it as large as a house.”

Kirsty lost no time in carrying out these instructions, and there sure enough the writing stood out so black and plain that the smallest scholar in the village dame-school could have read it.

“FOR CRIPPLED DICK,” and then in smaller print, “To be delivered at Wraye by carrier.”

Everybody was guessing what the box held. A child who longed to own such a toy felt certain that it was a hobby-horse big enough for a laddie to ride, and a woman thought it was likely to be a cart.

“His mother has often wished for one so that he could get about easier,” she said.

“It’s red,” cried Robin, who had managed to get near enough to the box to peep through the cracks. “Red like a soldier’s coat.”

“I see rockers,” put in Jamie Ferguson, who as usual was at Robin’s elbow.

Rockers! Then maybe a hobby-horse after all or a cradle, though what Dick would do with the one or the other nobody could think.

“I will not have a cradle,” Dick called from the

doorway where he stood on his crutches to watch the stir. His eyes filled with tears at the thought, but the carpenter who had been sent for to open the box came hurrying up with his hammer and chisel and ended the



A thing never seen before in the town of Wraye.

suspense. Split went the boards and out came a chair with red velvet cushions, and velvet-covered arms, and rockers—a thing never seen before in the town of Wraye.

What was more there was no need for rockers on a chair. They were dangerous. A chair was not meant

to cavort like a horse but to stand steady on four good legs.

“He’ll be tipping himself over and breaking his neck,” said Mrs. Davit. “I’m warning you now.”

It was a good thing for Dick that his mother had something of his own adventurous spirit.

“We’ll have to be cautious,” she admitted, “but he’ll like it all the better for that. He’s always wanted something a bit dangerous.”

Dick, who was already seated in the chair, called out that it was as easy as a coach.

“I’ll call it that I’m thinking,” he told his playfellows, “and when your mothers and all gang home you can have a try in it.”

The mothers and all were in no great hurry to leave, not until they found out who could have sent such a gift. And the children were wondering, too.

“I do not believe the fairies had aught to do with it,” cried Robin Mucklewraith, just as if someone had suggested such a thing.

“Whisht,” said his mother, “or you’ll be getting your nose blacked again.” But the children, who were as curious as anybody, looked disappointed. There was nothing strange to them in fairies sending rocking-chairs or anything else. And if not the Little Good People, who then?

Dick had an uncle here and an aunt there and cousins enough for a regiment, but as each of them was mentioned his mother was sure to say, "He'd have sent it gladly but where would he be getting the money?" Or maybe, "We have not heard from him since Dick was a wean."

"Perhaps the carrier knows more than he told," suggested Mistress Margot. "Run to the inn, Robin, for he is there for his dinner, and ask him. Your legs are younger than mine."

Robin was off like a shot and back again, but he brought little more information than they already had. A stranger had put the box in the carrier's cart at Next Town with all charges paid. And Sandy MacNiel had asked no questions.

"He says if he went about peering into other folks' business he would lose his own," Robin reported. This was undoubtedly true, but not helpful in solving the mystery of the chair.

"There's nobody left to send it but the king," said a jolly fellow, who was always ready to start a laugh.

"Yes, there is," said Kirsty, who had stood by without a word, which does not mean that she had not been thinking. "You haven't guessed the Laird yet."

Every eye turned to her then and Robin asked

promptly, "Did he tell you, Kirsty? The two of you are so thick."

"No, he did not tell me," said Kirsty. "But he knew from me that Dick wanted a chair with cushions and it's like him to send it."

Well, yes, everybody agreed to that. What with Jock Barefoot and the Little Good People and all, the Laird was daft enough to spend his money for anything, even a chair with rockers.

"Not a day goes by without the steward coming for sugar plums," sighed Mistress Margot. "I often think to take it up with the minister."

"There's naught wrong with the Laird," cried Kirsty, "and my father knows all about the sugar plums." The crowd laughed good humoredly. They'd soon find out from the steward whether they were on the right trail or not. If he said the Laird had not sent the chair they'd believe him, but if he put them off by saying "Ask him," they would know as well as if he had told them that the Laird was the one. Andrew MacAndrew thought himself as cunning as an old fox, but he could not fool them.

"Come away," proposed Mrs. Mucklewraith, "let's be leaving the weans to their fun for they are getting restless-like."

The chair being a novelty not every child was willing to try it at first, but after Kirsty and Effie had taken a seat and pronounced both the cushions and the rockers grand, most of the others overcame their shyness. Dick was besieged then by would-be riders, for his idea of calling the chair a coach had taken hold of their fancy.

Every request was worded in the same way, "Leave me be the next to ride."

Dick managed the traffic with authority.

"The wee ones first," he directed, "then the lassies, and then any lad that wants to try."

Robin Mucklewraith would not take a turn.

"I'll not sit," he said, "but I'll stand by, else some of these wild ones will be breaking the rockers." And thereafter if anyone dared go beyond a steady motion Robin called out sternly, "If you tip over you'll not ride again."

All of this lasted so long that Kirsty had to go home without telling Dick any of her plans. And if she had not had the chair to talk about, her mother and father might have wondered why she was so lively and restless that night. As it was they thought her pleasure in Dick's happiness accounted for her dancing feet and laughter, and they agreed with her that the Laird was responsible for the gift. Kirsty was full of that.

“You should have seen them all when I tellit about him,” she said, “though it fretted me to hear them calling him daft.”

The minister’s wife was of the opinion that it was a good thing that Jock Barefoot had run away if it had taught the Laird to be kind and friendly.

“He hadn’t a word for our Kirsty when he first came puffing and blowing about the laddie. And now you’d think she was the queen’s self,” she said as proof of the changes that had taken place in him.

The minister agreed that the Laird had grown friendlier, though he had never been unkind in spite of his hasty temper. Did he not keep the same servants for years? And look at Andrew MacAndrew. Money could not get him from the Laird.

“Well, have it your own way,” retorted his wife, “but you need not tell me that the Laird would have given anybody a velvet chair before Jock Barefoot went.”

“I wish Jock could see the chair,” said Kirsty softly. “Don’t you, Father?”

That the minister wished this very thing with all his heart was plain to see from his anxious face.

“I had thought he would be done with his play in a day or two,” he said a little sadly. “And I was maybe wrong in advising the Laird to leave him alone. But

my mind is made up. If he does not come soon I shall go to the Glen myself."

"You cannot do that," interrupted his wife, "unless you want everybody telling that the minister believes in all the idle tales."

What people said was not likely to keep the minister from doing what he thought was right, but he looked so grave at her mother's words that if Kirsty had not put her hand over her lips the secret might have slipped out in spite of all her caution. It glowed in her cheeks though, and made her eyes so bright that her father called her his little "candlelass" when she kissed him good night.

Well, he would not be sad over Jock Barefoot long.

CHAPTER XIV

ROBIN MUCKLEWRAITH was off on some of his projects next morning, and, as usual, most of the children had followed him. Not one of them was at Crippled Dick's to interrupt the telling of the secret when Kirsty got there bright and early. She had had the mind to make Dick guess a while before she let it out, but the whole thing slipped from her tongue as soon as she spied him sitting in his chair at the doorway.

"Jock Barefoot's found. He lives in a cave that he calls his castle. Gibbie Greycloak has talked with him and I'm going to bring him home."

The suddenness of the news fairly took Dick's breath.

"A cave, say you?" he gasped. "A cave?"

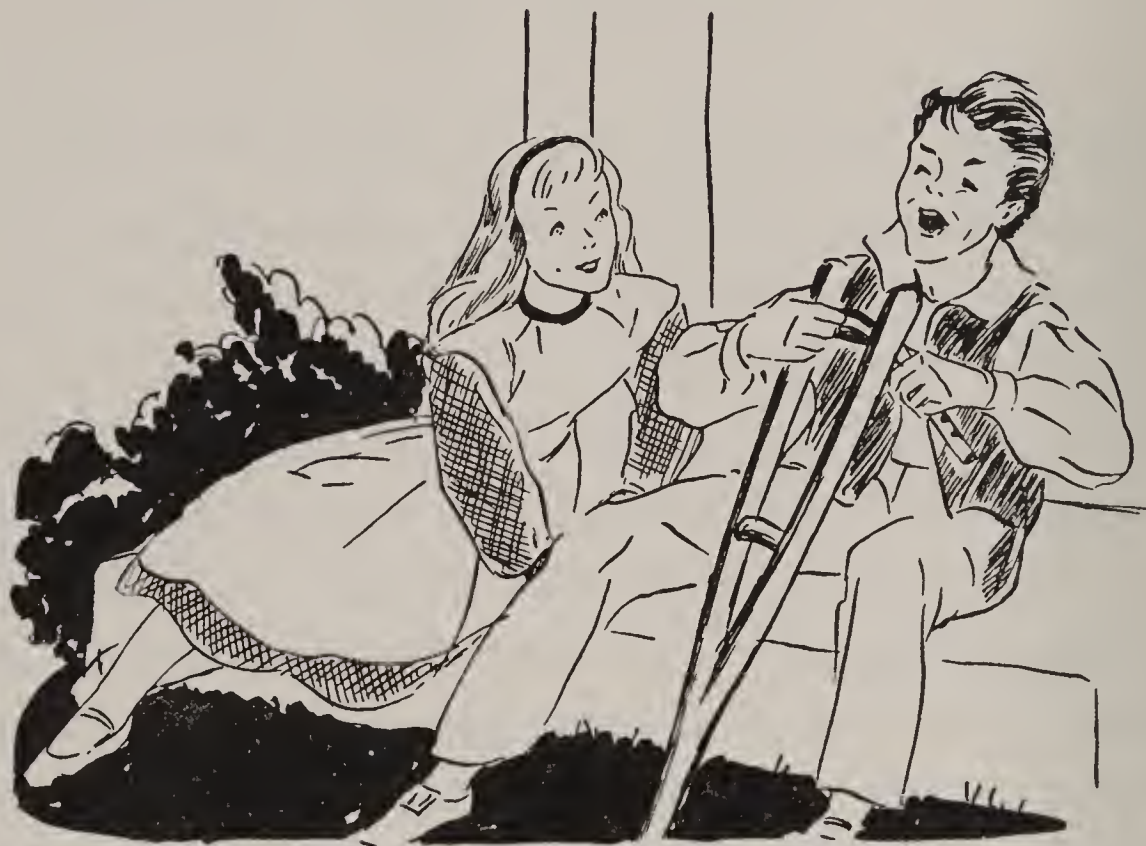
"Yes, a cave," said Kirsty who was as excited as he was. "In the Glen of the Fairies and—"

"Has he—has he—" interrupted Dick in a solemn whisper. "Has he seen the Little Good People, or did you think to ask?"

Well, Kirsty had not asked, that is, not exactly.

“All I said was that I wished I knew,” she explained, “but Jock had not tellit Gibbie.”

“He’ll tell us, though,” cried Dick who was carried away with the wonder of it all.



“Jock Barefoot’s found.”

Kirsty had to repeat the harper’s every word, and then Dick had questions in plenty to ask.

Was it Jock who had brought the flute, and had he made it himself or gotten it from the gypsies? Did he go to the Dingle to see them, and did he have the thought to slip away again when they went? Had he worn the boots?

Kirsty answered everything as best she could, and

when there was no more to tell Dick gave a great sigh.

“If I could take my chair with me,” he said, “there’s no place I’d rather live than a cave.”

“I wouldn’t mind it myself for a while,” agreed the little girl, “but Jock must come away now. My father is grieving over him, and, besides, he will forget all he knows running wild like the hares about the moorland.”

She and Dick would have to put their heads together, for Jock would be a hard one to coax.

“I’m depending on you, Dick,” said Kirsty, “to think of a way.”

Nothing suited the crippled boy more than this, but first he must sit by Kirsty on the doorstep.

“I’m not used to thinking in my chair yet,” he told her, as she handed him his crutches. “The cushions are too soft.”

That Jock might be tolled home to see the chair was Dick’s first suggestion.

“You must tell him that he cannot hope to keek at it in the night, Kirsty,” he advised.

Another important inducement might be that Jock could get no book-learning if he stayed in the glen or wandered about with gypsies. And Jock was always one for books.

Then there was no one to keep Robin Muckle-

wraith and his bragging within bounds since Jock was away.

“He’ll not be liking that I’m thinking,” said Dick.

And he’d maybe want to see the hole that Davy Davit’s ball had made by accident in the Baillie’s window, though he might have been there already. The Baillie had gone by in a great fret that morning, talking of birds and worse that troubled folk.

After all the great thing was to see Jock and the sooner the better. Why not that very day? Kirsty could slip away from the garden where she spent hours undisturbed, or she could ask boldly if she might go out to play; nobody would dream that she did not mean with some of the village children.

“You would not take Effie with you, would you?” Dick asked a little anxiously.

“Effie?” cried Kirsty. “You could not get her to the Glen for all you could offer her. She believes in fairies. And I’m not afraid.”

“I’m frightened for you,” said Dick. “I would not have pleasure in my chair nor anything else if harm came to you, Kirsty.”

He was so much in earnest that Kirsty, who had started away, sat down on the door-step again to consider who might keep her company. But the more they talked the more she was convinced that she would

have to go alone. The lassies were too timid and the boys too forward.

“They would outstrip me to the Glen and spoil everything,” she said.

Shep, the Laird’s dog, would have done well for a protector if he could have been found. Often he was in the streets with the steward, but today there was no sign of him. More than likely he was on some far hillside with the shepherds and their black-faced sheep.

“I dare not wait for him,” said Kirsty, “and there’s no one else—yes, yes, there is. I’ve just thought. I’ll send the gypsy queen’s broken coin, that I have in my pocket, this very minute to Beta. She’ll not be as frightened as I will.”

Dick’s mother was off gossiping with a neighbor, which was a very good thing, for, in their delight, the children forgot all caution.

“I’ve been wearying to try the token ever since I had it,” cried Kirsty, “but I could not find a reason.”

She took the broken coin out of her pocket, and the two children examined it with fresh curiosity. How fortunate it was that she kept it by her all the time, and how glad she was that her father did not think it was a heathenish charm as her mother did. It was naught but a friendly gift he had said, and there could be no harm in friendliness.

“But how will you get it to Beta?” asked Dick. “Do you know that, Kirsty?”

Kirsty did not know but she was hopeful. Gypsy women might come to the village with their laces and beads, or a gypsy man to mend pans and pots. Her mother had one in the house right then waiting for a tinker. And gypsies often bought at Mistress Margot's shop.

She ran to take a look there, but she might as well have saved herself the trouble.

“Mistress Margot thinks they've all flitted,” she said when she came back, “but it's no matter. I tellit you I could go by myself and I can.”

She was already turning away when she caught a glimpse of a man just entering the village street. He was a gypsy, she was sure. As the sunlight flashed on the gay reds and yellows and blues of his turban and coat and sash, she realized with joy that he was Beta's father.

“The queen's son! The queen's son!” she shouted, and before Dick recovered enough from his astonishment to speak she was out of hearing.

The gypsy was astonished, in his turn, when a moment later Kirsty reached him and thrust the token in his hand. She explained breathlessly, “Your mother bade me send it, and I'm needing Beta.”

His face lighted up with a smile when he saw who she was, and he was ready enough to act as her messenger.

“Where shall the gypsy lass meet the little lady?” he inquired respectfully. “And when? At morning or noonday or when the stars are bright?”

Kirsty wished that Dick were there to help her decide. The garden at the Manse was too near for a meeting place. The Mucklestane, which she thought of next, seemed too far, but there was a sycamore tree, where the crows liked to build, at the moor’s edge. Anyone could find that for there was always a nest or two hanging dark and ragged in the branches. The crow’s tree, then, between dinner and tea—if gypsies had tea. She did not like to ask, but to her relief the gypsy understood. After the noon hour Beta would wait at the trysting tree.

“Romanies keep their word,” he assured her proudly.

“And so do I,” said Kirsty. “My father, the minister, has taught me.”

There was no time to lose after this. As soon as she had called to tell Dick that all was right she hurried home. Only one small question had to be settled now, but that very question kept her from being as happy as she had expected to be. She could eat her

dinner and go into the garden, or she could eat her dinner and ask to go and play, but suddenly neither way was to her liking.

“It’s just plain deceiving no matter which I do,” she said aloud, “and deceiving is wicked.”

Neither Dick nor Beta could help her about this. She must find a better plan for herself, though what that could be with the harper’s promise to Jock binding her as well? Not that Kirsty was one to give up. The next instant she was in the kitchen inquiring of her mother, “When you were a lassie did you tell granny everything?”

“I did not,” said the minister’s wife, who was pouring the dinner’s pudding into the baking pan. “She had no time for foolish questions and no more have I. And do not fash your father for he’s sermon-making.” She was hasty but not cross, for she called after the little girl that the pudding pan would soon be ready for scraping.

Sweet batter could not lighten Kirsty’s heart just then, nor was it a whit lighter when she passed the study door and her father called.

“Is that my little Trusty-True?”

Often she went in to sit by him and listen to him read from the Bible, it might be about a wandering sheep or it might be about the laddie whose father was

so glad to get him home, just as everybody would be glad when Jock Barefoot came back. She thought of this today as she stood hesitating in the doorway of the study. All at once it came to her what she could do with her burdensome secret.

Only a little while later the minister looked up to find her at his elbow with a glowing face.

“Father, Father,” she cried. “I’ve a parable for you but it is not in the Bible.” And without waiting for comment she began.

“There was once a king’s daughter who had to go into a far country; at least if it were not far it was where she had never thought to go. And she could not tell her mother or father where she was going nor what she was going to do.”

“Why?” asked the minister, as she paused to take breath.

“Because she had promised not to, but it was nothing wrong. If she did what she wanted to do she would bring home something more precious than—than—than fine gold or rubies and there would be great rejoicing.”

“Was there no one who could go with her?” asked the minister, puckering his brow as he always did when he was puzzling over his sermons or matters as serious.

“There was,” answered Kirsty promptly. “Another princess!” But at the thought of herself and Beta as royalty, she lost her own solemnity and



“Oh, Father, I love you, I love you.”

laughed so gaily that there was nothing for the minister to do but laugh with her, though he did not know the cause.

Presently they grew grave again and Kirsty took up her story.

“The king’s daughter went to her father to ask for his blessing and—”

“He gave it to her,” interrupted the minister laying a hand gently on the little girl’s head. All the world was happiness for Kirsty then.

“Oh, Father, I love you, I love you,” she cried so joyfully that her mother came hurrying in to find out what the matter was. That the minister was pleased to be loved and praised in the midst of all his thinking seemed a very strange thing to her.

“I’ll never understand the two of you,” she said.

CHAPTER XV

OF all the days in the year the little girl's mother had selected this one for a dozen pieces of work in which the child could be of use. Kirsty must gather a handful of rose petals to scatter in the linens when they were packed away after bleaching. Kirsty must run to Mistress Margot's for a bit of wax for the smoothing iron. Kirsty must dust her father's books before he sat down to study again. She might have been late at the trysting place if the minister had not called her just then.

"The dusting can bide a wee for I've an errand for the lassie myself." When his wife inquired what that might be he answered to her great surprise and Kirsty's as well, "To get me a bunch of white heather."

"White heather!" exclaimed his wife, "And what would you want with white heather unless you've gone queer and believe in luck."

"There is no luck in white heather but there's beauty," said the minister. "I've seen it shining on

the moor like snow in the sun." But this did not appease her.

"Would you be sending a child to the moor," she cried, "to fall into peat holes, or maybe to be frightened to death with loneliness? I wonder at you!" Kirsty was wondering, too, but her father only smiled.

"The beekeepers are on the moor with their skeps," he said, "and she can find a playmate to go along, can you not, Kirsty?"

The little girl nodded rapturously. Was there ever a father so kind and wise as hers! After she had started on her way, though, her heart hurt a little because her mother was left out of her confidence, and she ran back to kiss her and say, "I love you, too."

"And why should you not love me?" asked her mother, more perplexed than re-assured by this burst of affection. She stood at the window watching anxiously till the child was far down the road. The minister called in his kindly way, "You need not worry about our Kirsty. She'll not give you cause."

With such quick feet as hers Kirsty was soon in sight of the moor, where, just as her father had thought, the beekeepers had set up their straw-covered hives or skeps as they were called. Even before she got there she could hear the humming of hundreds of bees in the heather. There was no honey like heather-honey,

everybody knew that, and no place like the moor for heather bloom. As far as she could see it was covered with purple.

To find white heather there would be no easy task, she thought, but never mind that. She would look for nothing till Beta came. She was feeling a little disappointed that the gypsy child was not already there when she spied her, standing behind the sycamore as still as the monument in the village square.

“I thought it would have to do with the lost laddie,” she said, when Kirsty explained why she had sent for her, “and so did my granny. She has been troubling herself for fear he would flit before you found him, and we dare not go near him nor bid him come to us because of the Laird.”

“Oh, we’ll bring him home,” said Kirsty confidently. “I’ll not come without him. And I’ve another errand. I must pick my father a bunch of white heather, though I’m thinking he only wanted it to get me away.”

Two pairs of eyes searched the moor on every side and more than once were deceived.

“I see it! I see it!” called Kirsty, but no, a cloud of white butterflies rose before her. And again it was the down of cotton grass that the wind had scattered. Then, just beyond a little rise of ground, Beta’s

brown finger pointed it out, a whole patch of whiteness.

“Just like a wee garden,” cried Kirsty, running to gather her hands full. Now if she could only find Jock Barefoot as well she would have nothing else to wish for, she thought.

There was no loneliness on the moor, even when the beekeepers were out of sight. A goldfinch passed singing *ts-sweet, ts-sweet* on his way to get thistle seed. A curlew made a great ado about her nest, which, late as it was in summer, she had hidden in the bracken. There went a corncrake calling “Craik! Craik!” And here came a buzzing bee as close to them as if he were mistaking the little girls for heather bloom.

“Bless you, bless you, burnie bee,” called Kirsty.

*Tell when my wedding be,
If it is to-morrow day,
Spread your wings and fly away.*

Off he flew and here came another. Kirsty must repeat the old rhyme, asking for Beta this time,

Tell when will her wedding be.

Next, roused by their chatter and laughter, an Alpine hare rose on his haunches to look gravely at the children. He still wore his summer coat of brown but

streaks of white showed on his breast, and Kirsty nodded her head wisely. It was high time for Jock Barefoot to come home when the hares began to change their color. Before anybody dreamed of it winter would be here.

“Let’s run,” she said and catching hands she and Beta scurried through the grasses and flowers as if they, themselves, were little wild creatures.

At the opening of the Glen of the Fairies they had a surprise, for, as they stopped to peep ahead before venturing farther, a great dog bounded to meet them, wagging his tail as if to welcome them. Then he hurried away.

“Shep,” cried Kirsty. “He’s been to see Jock, maybe, and it’s likely he’s known all the while where he was hidden.”

She was so taken up with the thought of this that they were well into the Glen before she remembered a caution that Crippled Dick had given her as a parting word.

“You’d best put fern seed in your shoes, Kirsty. It might please the Little People.”

Kirsty had no idea of doing such a thing.

“My father, the minister, would not like me to,” she told Beta, “but your granny might not care.” Beta, however, had about her neck on a string a curious

stone that protected her, or so she believed, from dangers of every kind.

Kirsty had not dared inquire too particularly into Jock's whereabouts for fear the harper would guess her purpose, but from his talk she had learned that the cave was near a wimple of water where the laddie washed his pots and pans and clothes, and not far from a ravine called Redcleugh because of the color of its banks. Gibbie had spoken, too, of a tree twisted by the wind which had the look, at a distance, of an old woman.

Yes, there it was, and just beyond it a little waterfall bright in the sunshine. And there was the cleugh.

For a moment the children stood close together uncertain what to do next, then Kirsty called softly, "Jocky, are you there?"

Almost immediately an answer came, "If it's yourself, Kirsty."

"It is, it is, and Beta too," cried Kirsty, trying to be calm and not succeeding. "We've come to see you and I've a giftie for you."

The gift was an apple which she had concealed in her pocket with no little difficulty. She was struggling to get it out when the bushes opened and there was Jock, a little taller than he had been when he left

home, but not a whit the worse for all his adventures. Kirsty looked him over and said accusingly,

“You’ve been crying.”

“I have not,” said Jock, “or if I have I’ve stopit.” But Kirsty was not satisfied.

“Where are you hurt?” she asked in her mother’s own tones, for she was not all her father’s daughter. “I might maybe bind it for you.”

“I’m not hurted,” said Jock, drawing the back of his hand across his eyes to wipe away the telltale tears. “I was just wishing that Shep was my own doggie and could live in my castle with me and never have to leave me. Whiles I have to drive him off for fear he’ll bring the enemy on me.”

“Who are you talking about?” asked Kirsty promptly.

“Oh, just maybe Robin or Jamie or anybody that comes hunting me out,” said Jock. Seeing that Kirsty was a little downcast by this he added hastily, “I’m not meaning you.”

“Well then,” said Kirsty, “I’ve a thought. We might play that Beta and myself have slipit in to save you from starving. I’ve an apple for you. My father brought it to me from Next Town but he’ll not mind if I give it to you.”

“And since you are friends,” cried Jock, who was



The bushes opened and there was Jock.

more elated with having playfellows than with the apple, "I'll let you into my castle. But you must shut your eyes and let me lead you."

The journey was a short one but full of excitement. What with coming up against trees and stumbling over stones and ducking their heads at Jock's warning cries, the visitors were fairly out of breath when he announced at last, "It's all right. You can look."

The harper had given Kirsty a fairly good description of the cave, but she went about delightedly, poking at the bed to see if the heather were spread thickly enough, and feeling the clothes to find out if they were damp from hanging on the rocks.

"It's grand," she sighed at last, "and I'll not blame you for hating to leave it."

"I'll not leave it," cried Jock taking alarm at once. "There's no use asking me."

"But what will you do when winter comes and the glen's locked with snow? Andrew MacAndrew cannot get through with your supper then."

"I'm saving for that," said Jock, "a bannock a night and I'm gathering for a fire."

Beta who had been a quiet listener to all that had passed put in a word now, "My granny bade me tell you that she sees good fortune for you, but it is in a great house and not the Glen."

“The minister does not believe in fortunes and I will not,” Jock declared stoutly.

Not even the news of Dick’s fine chair made any impression on him.

“I’ll likely get a keek at it,” he told Kirsty, just as Dick had thought he would. And when she insisted that the only way to see the chair was to come like other folk in the broad daylight he did not seem discouraged.

Dick had been right about the Baillie’s window, too. Jock Barefoot had not only called there like a rook and a crow and a curlew till the Baillie came running with his nightcap awry, but had hung a fish in the hole as well.

“I had meant it for Granny Blair,” he chuckled, “but I’ll get her another.”

“But how can you learn if you live to yourself,” persisted Kirsty. “You’ve already forgotten all that you knew I’m thinking.”

“I have not,” said Jock, and taking a stick he printed in bold letters on the smooth floor of the cave,

JOCK THE BAREFOOT.

Kirsty was a little taken back by the grand look of it, but not for long. In no time at all she had printed beneath his name in letters just as bold,

KIRSTY THE MINISTER’S LASS.

“Now it is your turn,” she said handing the stick to Beta, but the gypsy child had roved about too much for learning.

“I’ll make my mark,” she told them, and she drew on the earth a sign that seemed very mysterious to the other children. It was really nothing but a ring with a dot in it, and stood for nothing more than Beta the Gypsy.

“I’ll put leaves over them so they’ll not be trampled out,” said Jock, looking at the names and sign with pride. “Then when you’ve gone I’ll have them for company.”

At this Kirsty gathered up her heather to leave, though she still had an argument untried.

“Well,” she said as she turned away, “I’m thinking Robin Mucklewraith is right.”

“What about?” asked Jock, which was just what she had hoped he would do.

“Oh, about marble-playing,” she answered as carelessly as if it were nothing after all to tell. “And running and other things, too. He goes about bragging that there’s no one can beat him.” She was already out of the cave when Jock called after her.

“Do you think the Laird is angry yet?” And Kirsty was severe in her reply.

“If he is why should he be sending you sweets and

pudding and togs. It's you haven't forgiven him and it's wicked not to forgive. My father says so."

"I've naught against him," said Jock, hanging his head.

"Then you must go and tell him," said Kirsty, "or what good would it be to him."

Jock cast a glance around as if he were looking for a way to escape, but if he had this in mind he soon gave it up.

"I do not know what to say," he faltered, "but I'll go if you'll go with me."

"That's just what I came for," said Kirsty, "but first you must put on your fine clothes, boots and all."

CHAPTER XVI

THE clothes fitted surprisingly well except maybe that the boots swallowed up too much of his legs. Though Jock was a bit bashful and awkward in such finery he was very proud of it. The little girls could see that. They, themselves, were open in their admiration, and Kirsty borrowed her mother's terms to assure him that he was "real bonny."

The rest of his little possessions were left in the cave.

"I'll be coming back off and on I'm thinking," said Jock casting a regretful look at his precious castle. "And there's naught in the glen to harm the bit things, just blackbirds and hares and maybe badgers."

His eyes met an inquiring glance from Kirsty right here and fell before it, for he knew very well what she wanted to ask. He knew, too, that there was no getting round an answer. Having once made up his mind he blurted out, "I do not believe there are any fairies at all."

Even when the Laird threatened to drive the gypsies from the Dingle, Kirsty had felt no sadder than she did when she heard this.

“Why do you say such a thing?” she demanded for all the world as if she, the minister’s daughter, had to defend the Little People.

“Because,” said Jock, falling back on the explanation that he and all the other children gave for so many unaccountable things, “because they are just play.”

He looked a little abashed as he spoke, but nothing he could have said would have pleased Kirsty more. Why of course, the fairies were play, just like Dick’s horses and Jock’s castle and the harper’s stories. And it was no harm to think and talk of them when you knew that.

“Oh, Jock,” she cried, “let’s pretend that they will take care of your castle while you are gone.”

The whole glen was filled with the glamour of make-believe then. The names left on the floor of the cave were messages to the Little People, the stick that Jock laid before the entrance was a great iron door studded with nails, the mullein stalk that grew close by was an elfin warder.

And there was Jock Barefoot ready to lead them into more adventures.

“We’d best go by my brig,” he told them, “and then nobody will see us.”

The brig or bridge was a slippery log that lay across the ravine with the water of a little stream rushing beneath it. It was none too easy a way. Jock went ahead but first he took off his boots.

“I’ll put them on when we come to the Laird’s house if you say so, Kirsty,” he promised, “but I’ll not be risking myself in boots on a brig.”

Kirsty came next, as light-footed as the Little Good People might have been, and Beta followed without a thought of danger.

“I call it the Brig o’ Peril,” said Jock, “but I would not tell you till you crossed.”

Next they must scramble up what Jock had named the Wee Stair. The steps were a few roots and stones that gave a foothold, and then, by the aid of a vine, they pulled themselves up to the road that led to the Laird’s house.

As they stood there, tired but well pleased with their efforts, Beta took the broken coin out of her waist-bag and gave it to Kirsty.

“All’s done,” she said solemnly, “and we must part.”

“Part,” cried Kirsty, “but we must not part till we have been to the Laird’s. Do you not want to hear

what he and Andrew MacAndrew say when they see Jock Barefoot? There will be a grand stir.”

The gypsy child was not to be persuaded. Her people were all packed and ready to leave the dingle. They were only waiting till Beta had kept faith with Kirsty to start. And where they were going who could tell? Beta made a wide sweep with her hands as if to take in the whole world as she said, “Romanies must go their way and giorgios theirs.”

Giorgios was the name given to all outsiders by Beta's people, but it sounded very important to Kirsty when applied to herself and Jock. She wished that Crippled Dick and Robin Mucklewraith might have been there to hear. And she was thrilled even more when Beta cried out, “We must part but we will not forget one another. I have a precaution against that.” Without any further explanation she began to walk around and around her friend chanting a doggerel rhyme.

*Briar, bramble, dill, rose,
One stays, one goes,
Windle, wind, bindle bind,
Bind heart, bind hand
Bind them with a willow strand,
Withy, dithy, domine,
So let this be.*

“Now stay or flit we are friends forever,” she told Kirsty when the chant came to an end, and without another word, or even a backward glance, she hurried away.

Kirsty was almost in tears as she watched her disappearing among the bushes by the roadside, but Jock Barefoot took it all as a matter of course.

“The wheatears are leaving the moor for winter and the gypsies always go when they do,” he told her.

Well, to be sure, the Gypsy Dingle would be no better winter home for them than the Fairy Glen for Jock, and now that she had thought of this the little girl’s spirits rose again. By the time they reached the Laird’s gate she was full of talk and laughter.

“Look, Jock,” she said as they went in, “the bonny tree has never missed the branch you broke.”

“Broke?” cried Jock indignantly. “I did no such thing and I don’t care who says I did. I picked it up from that very spot—”

“But if you did not break it for what did you think the Laird was angry?” interrupted Kirsty in astonishment.

“I was thinking it was my whistling he did not like,” said Jock, sitting down under the tree to put on his boots. “I could not make out all his talk but it was whistling that he spoke the loudest.”

Kirsty could not wait to tell the Laird this. Even though Jock had on only one boot he must come, come that very minute.

“I’m glad you are back before he found it out,” she cried as she pulled him after her to the house, “else he would have broken his heart.”

At the door of the great house they met Andrew MacAndrew MacPherson but he was too recently wakened from an afternoon nap to recognize them at first.

“If you want anything of the Laird,” he said, “it’s no time to ask. He’s quiet and I’ll not be having him fashed.” Then, throwing his hands above his head, he began to cry, “The laddie! The laddie! He’s back. Jock Barefoot’s come home and there’ll be no more carrying and fetching for Andrew MacAndrew.”

The Laird who had been sitting quietly in his room, wondering if he might not learn from Kirsty how Crippled Dick liked his chair, heard the ado and came out to make more stir by calling.

“What is all this noise I’d like to know.”

“The laddie! The LADDIE!” shouted the steward. “Have you no eyes to see?”

“It’s Jock Barefoot,” explained Kirsty, keeping fast hold of her companion. “He did not break the branch but he’s forgiven you. I’m telling you for he doesn’t

know how to say it for himself." Just what happened next nobody could ever positively tell.

"We were so carried away with joy that we did not know what we were about," Kirsty always said, but Andrew MacAndrew would have it that they caught hold of hands, Laird and all, and danced around like daft folks to the tune of "Rantie, cantie, rollicking rantie," or something just as lively.

This, however, is certain, when Jock's story and Kirsty's part in it had been reviewed from start to finish the Laird made a proposal that took his hearers' breath away.

"How would you like," he asked Jock Barefoot, "to live in this great house and be company for Andrew MacAndrew MacPherson and me and, maybe, have Shep for you own doggie?"

The steward opened his mouth so wide that it is a wonder he ever got it closed again, and Kirsty expected nothing less than that Jock would dart out of the door and run away for good and all. But to her surprise he appeared quite willing to consider the matter.

"Could I play whiles with Robin Mucklewraith and Jamie Ferguson and Davy Davit?" he asked. "And go sometimes to my own castle?"

"To be sure," said the Laird. "I played in just



They caught hold of hands and danced around.

such a place when I was a laddie, though this may be hard for you to believe because I am old now and you are young."

Andrew MacAndrew, who was eager for the arrangement, frowned and shook his head to warn the laddie to have done with his talking, but Jock went on as boldly as if he had never run away for fear of the Laird.

"And shall I have leave to go to see Crippled Dick and Kirsty and to help Granny Blair?"

The Laird was too pleased with his plan to be impatient.

"You shall go to your friends and they shall come to you," he promised. "And the more you are at the minister's house the better you'll be," he added, to Kirsty's great satisfaction.

"Well, then," said Jock, "I'll stay if you'll not be making me wear shoon—"

"Except on the Sabbath," cried Kirsty. "Everybody must wear shoes on the Sabbath."

"I'll wear them on a Sabbath," agreed Jock Barefoot and the bargain was made.

Nothing would do the Laird then but that the four of them, for Andrew MacAndrew would not hear to being left behind, must ride to tell the good news. First they went to the Manse where the minister was

waiting to hear, for he had guessed Kirsty's secret and had long known the Laird's plan. Then they went to Crippled Dick's house, and so on, till everybody in the village knew that Jock Barefoot had come home and was to be the Laird's boy.

"But I'll beat you at marbles just the same," threatened Robin Mucklewraith. "You'll see if I don't."

This was a challenge that could not be borne without immediate settlement. The Laird's carriage was stopped and Jock Barefoot got out for such a game as was never seen before. The Laird and Kirsty and the steward stood by to watch and the Laird's big voice boomed out impartially, "Well done, Robin Mucklewraith! Well done, Jock Barefoot!" And came in at the end to say triumphantly, "We put it over you this time, Robin, and fairly, but we'll play you again."

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