

CHAPTER XV

THE GREAT CONVENTICLE. On our way to the conventicle we came to the place that is called the Moat of the Duchrae Bank, and found much people already gathered there. It is a very lonely place, on the edge of a beautiful and still water, called the Lane of Grenoch. In the Margaret of Glen Vernock clung to her hand midst of the water and immediately opposite and wept as she listened. But Kate McGhie to the most there is an island, called the Hollan Isls, full of coverts and hiding places among hazel bushes, which grow there is their, matted copses. Beyond that again to whom was given the art to see what the confusion I could see stern-faced men only looked away over the water off the Hollan Isls, full of coverts and hiding places among hazel bushes, which grow there is the confusion I could see stern-faced men only looked away over the water off the Hollan Isls, full of coverts and hiding places and stern rigging of the Orthogonal in their hands. These were the disciplined in their hands. The confusion is the confusion of the province in the confusion there are only the moors and the mountains for thirty miles. The country all about is lairy and boggy, impossible for horaes to ride, while over to the eastward a little the road passes to Kells and Carsphairn, but out of

might, behind the shoulder of the hill. There was a preaching tent erected on a little eminence in the middle of the round bare top of the moat. The people sat all about, and those who came late clustered on the further bank, across the ditch.

fully I observed that every man came armed, for the oppression of Lauderdale in Scotland, and especially the severities of John Graham and Robert Grier in Galloway, were bearing their own prop r fruit. three maids sat down together, and Wat Gordon and I sat down near them-I as near to Maisie Lennox as I dared, because, for old acquaintance sake, my fiking was chiefly toward her. Also, I perceived that Kate McGhle was more interested to talk to me of my cousin than to hear concerning myself, a thing that I never could abide in taiking to

But Maisie kept her head bent and her face hidden by the fold of her shawl, for she had, even at that time, what I so sadiy lacked, a lively interest in religion.

From where I sat I could see the watchers on the craigs above the Hollan Isle, and those also over on the hills by the Folds. So many were they that I knew that not a mulr fowl would cry nor a crow carry a stick to its nest without a true man taking note of it. I heard afterward that over by the fords of Crae they had come on a certain informer lying crouched in the heather to watch what should happen. Him they chased for three miles over the heather by Slogarie. clodding him with divots of peat and sod, yet not so as to do the ill-set rascal overmuch harm. But a clouring does such like

Then there arese the sweet sound of singing; for Mr. Cameron had gone up into the preaching tent and given out the psaim. We til stood up to sing, and as I noted my sousin standing apart, looking uncertainly about, I went over to him and brought him to my side, where one gave us a book to to my side, where one gave us a book to look upon together. As they sang I watched to see the sentinel on the craigs turn him about to listen to us, and noted the naket on which he leaned. For these little write to be used to be us but stuck to their singing, as indeed it was

their duty to do. But, even to me, the sound of the psalm was unspeakably solemn and touching out ere in the open field. It seemed as we sang God that was our refuge and our strength that as we looked on Gronoch we we will not bow down and worship your were indeed in a defenced city, in a place of glaiks—no, not though ye gar every held herbroad rivers and streams, wherein should go | weigh its tail and the wind whistle through no galley with oars, neither should gallant

no galley with the pass thereby.

I had never felt so near God or had so great silence.

'Hush! I hear the sound of a great host "Hush! I hear the sound of a great host with the pass of heaven beset. The throng when I heard my father and mother speak of them that are to be saved through suffertogether. There seemed a gale of the spirit upon the meeting, and I think that from that moment I understood more of the mind of them that suffered for their faith, which, in-ieed, I think a man cannot do till he bimself

is ready to undergo his share of the suffering. But when Richard Cameron began to speak easily forgat everything else. He had a lominating voice, the voice of a strong man erying in the wilderness, "We are here in a kenned place," he said, "and there are many witnesses about us. Today the bitter is taken out of our cup, if it be only for a moment. Yea, and a sweet cup we have of it now. We works—the works of the Lord's hands. When we look up to the moon or the stars, lo! the hand of the Lord is in them, and we are also enter in!" See ye the cornrigs up ayont us there. sweet springing of them when the sun shines for the chariot which it had been foreto'd apon them efter rain, and it is He who sendth forth every pile of the grass that springs



THERE SAT OLD ANTON.

so sweetly in the meadows by the water I own it was very pleasant for me to sten to him, for I had not thought there was such tenderness in the man. He went

Be not crabbit with us, O Lord! It is true we have gotten many calls, and have not litten through so many calls as we have here that bes o. God will make the tongues that

not easy-not easy even to come to Him for that He hath put into your mouths to popple

And here I saw the people begin to yearn most part of the people fell into a rapture of calm weeping, which, strange enough, taken in a wrong.

But he went on his way as one that cries way and I confess my hard way.

And I confess my heart went out to him, slain man lies.

In a little the sounds came fainter on our and all my sins stood black and threatening "Ye think that there hath been bloodshed ears, and the swing and trample of the hoofs And I contess my heart went out to him, stain man lies.

"Ye think that there hath been bloodshed before me as I listened. I vow that at the time I feared his words far more than ever I did Lag and his riders—this being my first been is but as the dropping of the morning.

In a little the sounds came fainter on our ears, and the swing and trample of the hoofs grew so far away that we could not hear them any more.

But the great crowds of people stood for

living experience of religion and the day living experience of religion and the day from which I and many another ground our from the hill on the east.

Then, ere he commanded himself to speak again, I took a glance at the maid Maisie Lennox beside me, and the look on her face was that on the face of a martyr that had come through the torture and won the victory. But the little lass that was called Margaret of Gien Vernock alternations. In made decay. Some rose up in the act to flee. But Anton Lennox, who had the heart of a soldier in him and the wit of a general, commanded the men to stand to the were her inner thoughts. Richard Cameron went on:

prayed for the Spirit to come on these poo-folk, that were soon to be scattered again over the moors and bags as sheep that wanted shepherd, the wind of the Lord (for so think it was) came breathing upon us. The gray of the clouds broke up and the sun shone through so kindly and warm that many let their plaids fall to the ground. But the mists still clung about the mountain tops of the Bennan and Cairn Edward.

Then, after he had prayed not long, he went on again to speak to us of the love and sufferings of Christ, for the sake of whose cause and kingdom we were that day in that wild place. Much he pleaded with us to make sure of our interest, and not think that because we were there at a field preaching, therefore all was well. Oh, but he was faithful to us that day, and there were many who felt that the gate of heaven was very near to them at the great conventicle by the Water of Dec.

And even after many years, I that have been weak and niddering, and that have taken so many sins on my soul since I sat there on the bank by Maisle L nnox and trembled under Mr. Cameron's words, give God thank and service that I was there to hear the Lion of the Covenant roar that day upon the mountains of Scotland.

Yet, when he spoke thus to us at this part of his pleading, it was most like the voice of a tender, nursing mother, that would wile her wayward bairns home. But when he had done with offering to us the cross, and commending Him that erewhile hung thereon, I saw him pause and look about him. He was silent for a space, his eyes gleamed with an inner fire, and the wind that had arisen drave among his black locks.

I could see the storm gather to break.
"There are the Bennan and Cairn Edward and the Muckle Craig o' Dec-look over at them-I take them to witness this day that I have preached to you the whole counsel of There be some great professors among you this day who have no living grace-of whom I only name Black MacMichael and Muckle John, for their sins are open and patent, going before them into judgment. There are also some here that will betray our plans to the enemy and carry their re-port of this meeting to the Malignants. To them I say: Carry this word to your masters Ye may blaw your bagpipes till you burst

bones as we hang on the gallows tree.

-I hear the gate of heaven beset. The throng ing are about it. And One like unto the Son of Man stands there to welcome them. What though they set your heads, as they shall mine, high on the Netherbow Port, or cast your body on the Gallows' dunghill, as they will Sandy's here? Know that there waiteth for you One at the door with face more marred than that of any man-One with His garments red coming up from Bozrah. One that hath trodden the winepress alone, And He shall say as He sees you come through the swellings of Jordan: have come out of great tribulations and hav

So he made an end, and all the people were astonished at him, and they looked even then should come and snatch him out of mortal

CHAPTER XVI. PEDEN THE PROPHET.

Yet the chariot of fire came not, for the time was not yet, though the grinding of its wheels was even then to be heard at the door. But the Lord had yet a great day's darg to do in Scotland with Richard Cameron. another minister rose up to speak to us. A murmur went about, and wonder and joy sat y face. He His hair, gaunt. His hair, lyart and long, fell upon his shoulders. His beard descended upon his

"Peden the prophet!" was the whisper that went about. And all bent eagerly forward to look at the famous wanderer, whom all held hands three times. And in a minute there at that time to have gifts of utterance and befel a wonderful thing. For even as his befel a wonderful thing the ridges of prophecy beyond those of mortal. He it was hands beckened, from behind the ridges of that had been a thousand times hunted like the Duchrae and Drumglass arose the level that had been a thousand times numbed like it partridge upon the mountains, a hundred tops of a great sea of mist. It came upon the land suddenly as the "haar" that in the He it was for the love of whom men had laid the land suddenly as the "haar" that in the autumn drives up the eastern valleys from the land suddenly as the "haar" that in the own their lives like water, that Alexander

Bowed he was and broken; yet when he ing with a sound like runnig water very far spoke his natural strigth was in no wise away, abated, and at his first word the fear of the Lord came upon us. I looked at Lochinvar, back to us. who in his time had ridden so hard on his "Move no

a daze of awe in his look.

Alexander Peden had hardly spoken a sentence to us when the spirit of prophecy broke upon him, and he cried out for Scotland, as was his wont in those days. His voice rose and rang—not like a war trumpet, as did and rang—not like a war trumpet, as did and rang—whose I could not tell,

"A bloody sword, a bloody sword for thee,
O puir Scotland! Many a mile shall they
travel in thee and see nought but waste
places, nor so much as a house reeking pleas-"We are hirsled over moss and moor, over rags and rocks, and after us the devil drives."

antly on the brac. Many a conventicle has been wared on thee, my Scotland, and Weish and Semple, Cameron and Cargill have cried. to thee, but ere long they shall all be put to with the bloody sword. Have ye ever with David, cockered and pampered nessed for the cause and covenants? Or have Not even the wild highlands have ye been dumb dogs that will not bark? If in Galloway and the south.

"For I bear testimony that it is not easy to bring folk to Christ. I, that am a man, weak as other men, bear testimony that it is
"Speak, sirs, or He will gar these tongs." owned Him not to fry and flutter upon the

"Speak, sirs, or He will gar these tongues and play in the pownet of hell?" As he said these words his eyes shone upon us like to burn us through, and his actoward him, and in the gray light I saw the upon us like to burn us through, and his actears running silently down his cheeks. And it seemed as if the minister and also the great oaken staff and shook it over us. And

for vengeance over an open grave in which a and Kenmuir.

cloud ere the sun rises in his strength, to mid-noon the thunder plump that is yet to come."

"Not since the black day of Bothwell have I slept in a bed! I have been Nazarite for the vow that was upon me. Have any of you seen me in New Luce? Not even Ritchie here could have overcrowded me then for strength and stature. I stood as a young tength in the stature of the company a day did I. cannol tell whither Lockinivar fared or who accompanied him. Nor for many a day did I see him, though I both Sought and mourned for him. Such were the chances of our life at that dark time, when brother might part from brother and meet no more, and when a father might go out to look the lambs and be found by his daughter fallen on his face on the heather by the sheep ree, with that on his breast that was not benny to see when they turned him over. As for me, I went home with Maisie Lennox and her friend, the young lass of Gien Vernock, as was indeed my plain duty. We walked side by side in silence, for we had great thoughts within us strength and stature. I stood as a young tree by the rivers of waters. Look upon me now-so crooked by the caves and the mosshags that I could not go upright to the scaf-The sword handle is fit for your hands, and the Lord of Battles give you long arms when you measure swords with Charley Stuart. But old Sandy is good for nothing now but the praying. He can only bide in his hole like a toothiess tyke, lame and blind, and girn his gums at the robbers that spoil his Master's house. "Crook-back, crab-heart, sayeth the proverb," he cried, "but I think not so, for my heart is warm this day toward you that sit silence, for we had great thoughts within us of Cameron and Peden and of the blue banner here, for but few of you shall win through the day of wrath that is to come in Scotland." of the covenant that was not yet wholly put

He turned toward the place where we sat together, the maids, my cousin, and I. A great fear in my heart chilled me like ice.

the confusion I could see stern-faced men

close behind:

CHAPTER XVII BIRSAY THE COBBLER.

Was he to denounce us as traitors? But he only said slowly these words in a soft and So many of the wanderers abode at the Duchras that Maiste Lennox was much cummoving voice, as one that bath the tears bered with serving, yet in her quiet, sedate way she would often take a word with me in 'And there are some of you, young maids the bygoing, as if to let me feel that I was not lonely. And it cheered me much to find and weak, here present, that shall make a name in Scotland that shall never die!" With that he made an end and sat down. that I was not despised because I was as yet no great fighting man of many inches and noble make like my brother Sandy. Also I loved women's converse, having been much "The riders are upon us-flee quickly!" he with my mother-indeed never long away from her side till my vain adventuring forth Then, indeed, there was great confusion to Edinburgh in the matter of the estate.

As for Earlstoun we heard it was to be for-faulteed very soon, and given to Robert Grier of Lag, who was a very graball among them. Indeed, no one was better than an-other, for even Claverhouse got Freuch, "in manded the men to stand to their arms, put-ting the women behind them. And through ds consideration," it was said, "of his good serv-ice and suffering." His brother David got another estate in the Shire, and Rothes and Lauderdale were as "free coups" for the wealth of the fined and persecuted gentry. of defence and fellowship. Whenever there was a man well-to-do and of For me, I stood where I was, the maids good repute, these men thought it no shame "Are there any here that find a difficulty to close with Christ? But before we speak to that, I think we shall pray a short word."

So all the people stood up on the hillside and the sough of their uprising was like the wind among thecedars. And even as he prayed for the Spirit to come on these poor him caught harboring on his estate some in-tercommuned persons. Then they rubbed hands, nudged one another in council when

PADEN THE PROPHET.

father stood at the corner of his company. Then, because she was distressed for him doors, for the redeemed of the Lord shall and knew not what she did, she drew a halfknitted stocking out of the pocket that swung beneath her kirtle, calmly set the stitches in order and went on knitting, as is the Galloway custom among the bill folk when they wait for anything.

There was a great silence—a stillness in which one heard his neighbor breathing. Through it the voice of Peden rose.
"Lord." he prayed, "it is Thine enemies"
day. Hour and power are allowed to them.
They may not be idle. But hast Thou no other work for them to do in their Master's service? Send them after those to whom arg to do in Scotland with Richard Cameron. Thou hast given strength to flee, for our Then, after silence had endured for a time, nother minister rose up to speak to us. women among us this day. Twine the about the hill, O Lord, and cast the lap

He was an old man, tall and thy cloak over puir Sandy and thir puir air, lyart and long, fell upon things, and save us this one time." So saying, he went to the top of a little ill near by, from which there is a wide prospect. It is called Mount Pleasant, From down their lives like water, that Alexander Peden might go scatheless and speak his Master's will.

Bowed he was and broken; yet when he and came toward us over the moorland, mov-

Then Peden the Prophet come hastening this time had ridden so hard on his "Move not one of you out of your places?"
He sat open-mouthed, and there was he cried, "for the Lord is about to send upon

was his wont in those days. His voice rose and rang-not like a war trumpet, as did day." And through the darkness I tell a Cameron's, but rather like the wild wind that hand placed in mine—whose I could not tell, goes about the house and cries fearful words in at the chinks and crevices.

Lennox's hand, for, as I have said, she was in at the chinks and crevices. my gossip. At least I heard no more the click of the knitting needles.

The mist came yet thicker, and through it there shone now and then the flickering leme of pale lightning, that flashed about us all. Then we heard strangely near jangling of the accourrements of the troopers and the sound of voices.

"Curse the whig's mist, it has come We canna steer for it!" cried a again! voice so near that the bill men stood closer in their ranks, and my own heart leaped till I heard it beat irregularly within me.

We marked the sharp clip, clip, as the shod horses struck the stones with their feet. Now and then a man would clatter over his horse's head as the poor beast bogged or stumbled. Looking over between the trees, I could faintly discern the steel caps of the troopers through the gloom as they wound in single file between us and the water side. It was but a scouting party, for in a moment we heard a trumpet blow from the main body, And heard a trumpet blow from the main body, bairns which had kept the road that winds down to the old ford over the Black Water from Kirkcudbright to New Galloway

it gave them color for more exactions, and for keeping an army in the field, which, with pro and accoutring, was also very profitable for them.

But at the Duchrae we abode fairly secure At night we withdrew to the barn, where be-hind the corn mow a very secure and quaint hiding place had be n devised. In the barr wall, as in most of the barns in that country side, there were no windows of any size in fact, nothing save a number of threecornered wickets. These were far too small to admit the body of a man, but by some exercise of ingenious contrivance in keeping with the spirit of an evil time, the bottom stone of one of these wickets had been so constructed that it turned outward upon a hinge, which so enlarged the opening that on: man at a time had no difficulty in passing through. This cunning trapdoor was in the end of the barn, and conducted the fugitive behind the corn mow, in which the harvest sheaves were piled to the ceiling. Here we law many a time while the troopers raged about the house itself, stabbing every suspected corner of the corn and hav with their blades, but leaving us quite safe behind the great mass of the mow.

Yet for all it was a not unquiet time with us, and I do not deny that I had much pleas ant fellowship with Maisie Lennox. But I have now to tell what befell at the Duchrae one Sabbath evening, when the pur-suit had waxed dull after Bothwell and be fore the San uhar affair had kindled a new

At that time in Galloway all the tailors, shoemakers and artificers did their work by going from house to house according as the several families had need of them. there was one man, who sat near us at the conventicle, whose actions it was knossible o mistake. When the troopers were jingling past beneath us he flung himself on the ground and thrust his plaid into his mouth to prevent his crying out for fear. So pitiful did he look that when an was past my cousin Wat went over and asked of him:

"What manner of hill man art thou?" For indeed the men of the broad bonne were neither cowards nor nidderlings. this follow was shaking with fear like the aspen in an unequal wind.

"I am poor Birsay, the cobbler," the man answered. "An' it please your honor, I like not to come so near thae ill loons of soldiers." "What sent you to the conventicle, then when you fear the redcoats so greatly? asked my cousin. The little man glanced up at my cousin

with a humorsome gleam in his eye. He was bent together with crouching over his lapstone, and as he walked he threw himself into all kinds of ridiculous postures. "Weel," he said, "ye see, it's no easy kennin' what may happen. I has seen a con-venticle scale in a hurry and leave as mony as ten guid plaids on the grund-forbye

Bibles and neckerchiefs." "But surely," I said to the cobbler, "you do not steal what the poor honest folk leave behind them in their haste?" The word seemed to startle him greatly.

"Na, na; Birsay steals nane, stealin's no canny," he cried. "Them that steals hings in a tow, an' forbye, burns in muckle hell.

auld man Sandy Peden sald. And the cobbler illustrated the nature of the conflagration with his hand.

bleezin' up in fuffin lows juist as the beardle

"Na, na," he cried, in the strange, yam-mering speech of the creature, "there's nae stealin' in getherin' thegither what ither folks hae strawed, surely. That's i' the guid bulk itsel'. An' then after the bizz is bye, an' the sough calmed doon, Birsay can gang frae auld wife to auld wife and say to lika yin. 'Ye wadna loss ocht lately, did ye, guid yin, 'wife? wife? 'Ay,' says she. 'I lost my Bible, my plaid or my kercher at the field preachin! 'Ay, woman, did ye?' says I. 'They're ter-rible loons than sodgers for grippin' and haudin'. Noo I make boots for a scargeant that has mony a dizzen o' that things.'
"Wi' that the auld wife begins to cock her

lugs. 'Maybes he has my bible!' 'I wadna wunner,' says L. 'O, man, Birsay,' she says. Ings. 'I hae aye been a freen' o' yours, ye micht o'en see gin he has it, an' seek it aff him! There's the texts an' heads o' mony sermons o' guid Maister Welsh and precious Ma Gothrie in the hinner end o' the buik!'

"So, says I, aff-hand like, supposin' oo, juist supposin' that Sergeant Mulfeather has gotten your bit buik, and that for freendship to me he was wullin' to pairt wi't, what wad the bit buik be worth to ye? Ye see it's treason to hae sic a thing, and rank conspiracy to thi and barter to get it back-but what wull freends no do to obleege yin anither!"

y, man, Bfrsay," I said, to encourage for I saw that the little man loved to 'Av. talk. ' an' what wull the auld body do

"Faith, she'll gie me the siller to tak' to Sergeant Mulfeather and get back her bit bukie. An' that's juist what Birsay wull do wi' right guid wull." he concluded cantily. "And has ye ony mair to tell me, Birsay?" I asked him. For his talk cheered the day and as for belief, there was no reason that one should believe more than seemed good of Birsay's convergation.

"Ay, there's wan thing more that Birsay has to say to ye. You an' that braw lad wi' the e'en like a lassie's are no richt Whigs, I'm thinkin'. Ye'll aiblins be o' the same way of thinkin' as mysel'! At this I pretended to be much discon-certed, and said: "Wheesht, Birsay! Be canny wi' your tongue! Mind whaur ye are

"Trust Birsay," he returned cunningly, acking his frowsy head like a year-old "Gin the king honest man never mes to mair harm than you an' me wusses him, he'll come gey weel oot o' some o' the

ploys that they blame him for."
"How kenned ye, Birsay," I said, to humor "that we werna Whigh? "O, I kenned brawley by the fashion your shoon. That shoon were never made for Whigs, but for honest king's folk. Na. na they dinna gree weel wi' the moss-broo avathae sort wi' the narrow nebs and single soles. Only decent, sweerin', regardless folk, hat wuss the king weel, tryst shoon like

It was clear that Birsay thought us as great traitors and spies in the camp as he was himself. So he opened his heart to us. It was not a flattering distinction, but as the confidence of the little man might be ar confidence of the little man might be an element in our own safety and that of our friends on some future occasion, I felt that we would assuredly not undeceive him. But we had to pay for the distinction, for-from that moment he favored us with a prodigious deal of his conversation, which,

to tell the truth, savored but seldom of wit and often of sculdudiery.

Birsay had no sense of his personal dis-honor, and would tell the most alarming story to his own discredit, without wincing in the least. He held it proof of his superior caution that he had always managed to keep his skin safe, and so there was no more

be said. "Ay, ay," said Birsay, "these are no canny times to be among the wild hill folk. Yin wad need to be weel payed for it a'. There's the two black McMichaels—they wad think nae mair o' splatterin' your harns again the dyke than o' killin' a whutterick. Deil a hair. An' then, on the ither hand, there's ill-contrived turncoats like Westerha' that wad aye be pluff-pluffin' poother and at puir men if they were muirfowl, he's no parteecler eneuch ava wha catches, an' never will listen to a word."

"Then there's the awesome nights whar he ghaists and worlocks are about. I canna bide the nicht ava. God's daylicht is guid eneuch for Birsay, an' as lang as the sun shines there nae fear o' dell or witchwife gettin' haud o' the puir cobbler chiel! But when the gloamin' cuddles doon intil the lap o' the nicht, and the corporant's lows i' the bogs, an' ye hear the dells lauchin' and chunnerin' to themselves in a' the busses at the cadsides, I declare every stound o' manhoid fie a wa' clean oot o' Birsay's heart, an' he wad like to dee but for thought o' the Afterome. An' 'deed, in the mirkeerie midnicht whether he's fearder to dee or to leeve, puir

Birsay disna ken!" "But, Birsay," I said, "ill-doers are illdreaders. Gin ve were to drap a' this thievery an' clash-carryin' wark, ye wadna be

"Weel do I ken," Birsay said, "that siccan ploys are no for the like o' me but man, ye ee, like ither folk, I'm terrible fond of the siller. An' there's nocht so comfortin', when a' thae things and yammerin' to get haud o' ye, as the thouht that ye has a weel-filled stockin'-fit whaur nane but yersel' can ge haud o't!'

And the creature writhed himself in glee and slapped his thigh. "Yae stockin' fu', man," he said, "an' tied wi' a string, an' the ither begun, an' as far up as the instep. O man, it's blythe to

"But heard ve o' the whummel I gat aff this verra Duchrae kitchen laft?" say. He often came over in the gloaming a newsgathering expedition. For it was a pleasure to give him news of a kind, and ny cousin, who had not a great many occupations since Kate McGhie had gone back to the great House of Balmaghie, took a special delight in making up stories of so ridiculous a nature that Birsay, retailing them at headquarters, would without doubt soon find his credit gone.

"The way o' that was this," Birsay continued. "As I telled ye, I gan frae hoose to hoose in the exercise o' my trade, for there's no sic a suiter i' the countryside as Birsay, though he says it himsel', an' no siccan watertight shoon as his ever gaed on the fit o' man. Weel, it was ae nicht last winter, i' the short days, Birsay was to begin wark at the Duchrae at sax by the clock, an' when it comes to coontin' hours wi' Auld Anton Lennox o' the Duchrae, ye maun begin or the clock has dune the strik-in'. Faith, an a' the Lennoxes are the same, they'll haud the nose o' ye to the grindstone—an' the weemen o' them are every hair as bad as the men. There's auld Lucky Lennox o' Lennox Plunton-what said ye?—aweel, I'll gang on wi' my story, gin ye like, but what's a' the steer so sudden, the nicht's afore us?

"As I was sayin', I had to start at Auld Anton's on the Monday morning', gey an' early, so I thocht I wad do my travelin' in time o' day, an' get to the Duchrae afore the gloamin; an' in that way I wad get the better o' the bogies, the dells o' the bogs, the black horse o' the Hollan Lane, an' a' sic uncanny cattle.

"But I minded that the auld tod, Anton Lennox, was a terrible man for examining in the Carritches, an' aye speer-speerin' at ye what is the Reason Annexed to some perfectly unreasonable command-an' that talk disna suit Birsay ava. what did I do but started ower in the afternoon, an' gat there just about the time whan the kye are milkit, an' a' the folk eyther at the byre or in the stable.
"So I watched my chance frae the end o

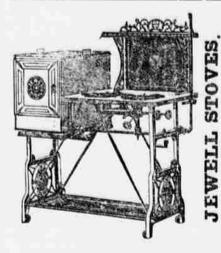
the hoose, an' when no a leevin' soul was to be seen, I slippit up the stairs, speelin' on the rurgs o' the ladder wi' my stockin' soles rungs o' as quiet as pussy.
"Then, when I got to the middle o' the

laft, wharun the big hole o' the lum is, wi' the reek hingin' thick afore it gangs oot at the riggin' o' the hoose, I keekit doon; and there at the table, wi' his elbows on the ood, sat Auld Anton takin' his lesson oot the big Bible, like the bauld auld Whig that he is, his whinger in a leather tashe swingin' ahint him. It's a queer thing that for a' sae often as I has telled the curate him, he has never steered him. There maun be something no very thorogh about the curate, an' he none so great a hero wi' the pint stoup either, man! "Aweel, as the forenicht slippit on, an' the

lassies cam' in frac the byre, an' lads frac the stable, it was just as I expected. They drew up their stools about the hearth,

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the benefit o' the exerceeses! Faith! if lassies cried oot wi' fricht an' gruppit the washa yin o' the rive but had grippet sword at either o' the twa risin's. For a' the auld carles had been at Pentland an' a' the young plants o' grace had been at Bothwell—ay, an' Auld Anton an' twa-three mair had been at them baith; an' gin there had been a third he wad hae been there, too, for he's a grim auld carle, baith gash and steeve, wi' his bible an' his brass-muntit and steeve, wi' his bible an' his brass-muntit and steeve, wi' his bible an' his brass-muntit kin' o' black iil consciences they bood has pistols an' his Effectual Callin'!

"Then bywhiles, atween the spells o' the questions, some o' the young yins fell atalkin', for even Auld Anton canna haud the tongues o' the young birkies, an' amang ither things what did the loons do but start to lay their ill-scrapit tongues on me, an begood to misca' puir Birsay for a' that was ill!" "'Listeners hear nae guid o' themselves' is an auld-ferrant say, Birsay," I said.

"Aweel," the sultor went on, "that's as may be. At ony rate it was 'Birsay this' an' 'Birsay that,' till ever porridge-fed speldron an' ili-gabbit mimmoo'ed hizzie had a lick at puir Birsay. "But at the lang an' last the auld man heard them at it, an' he was juist the man to let them hear about it on the deafest side

o' their heids. He was aye a don at provin', was Auld Anton. No mony o' the "Is it no a gey queer thing," said Birsay, breaking off his story, "that when we set to an' curse a' an' sundry, they ca' it profane sweerin', an' misca' us for awesome sinners. but when they lay their tongues to their

enemies an' curse them, it's ca'ed a testi-mony an' printed in a buik?" The thing did indeed strike me as strange, but I desired to keep Birsay to his story, so I only said: But, Birsay, what did the auld man say

to them when he heard them misca'in' you? "Oh, he e'en telled them tha it wad fit them better to look to their ain life an' conversation, an' that it wid be tellin' them on their life wark as Birsay made o' his bits o' shoon—a maist sensible an' just ob-serve! Faith, the auld tod is nane sae ill an auld carle, though siccan a dour and an auld carle, though steam a down when o' the neck, an' maybes because he had been maisterfu' Whig. He kens guid wark when a kennin' frichtit himsel', he gied puir Bir

faced under this reproof, whang! doon on the hearthstane fell my suitor's eishin—the can-kersome thing had slippit bot o' my pooch an' drappit ower the edge of the hole in the laft aboon the fireplace.

Preserve us, I thought to myself, 'it's ster?" a' by wi' Birsay noo. They'll be up the stair swarmin' like a bee'a byke' But when I ke:k it ower, they were a sittin' gapin' at the elshin that had stottit on to the floor. An' what wi' me steerin' an' lookin' ower the

out their stools aboot the hearth, got out their Bibles, an' warmed their tass. Lord preserve me, to see them sittin' so croose an' canty ower Effectual Callin' an' Reason Annexed, as gin they had be no crackin' an' singin' in a changehoose! They're a queer fowk that Whigs. It wad has scunnered a certael; ower he gaed among the inssies, stool An' twa three neckors cam' in by to get a certael; ower he gaed among the inssies, stool fear.

"It fell on the clean stane, an' then isp to the squad. But Jock was aye ower great wi' the weemen folk, an' sae John Gib's notions juist suited him."

Here Birsay made an end of his story, for Anton Lennox himself came in, and of him Birsay stood in great and wholesome fear. soo! An' twa-three nectors cam' in by to get an' a', wi' an awesome clatter. An' a' the

Clavers had come by the road he wad had lad they likit best, for there's a deal o' landed a bonny flaucht o' them, for there human nature even amang the Whigs, that washa yin o' the rive but had grippet sword the Covenants canna fettle, nor yet Effectual

to be feared o' a wee bit thing that was but wood an' airn. But when they showed him the knife whaur it lay glintin' on the hearth (for nae man o' them daured to touch it), Anton was a wee thing staggered himsel', an' said it was a sign sent to reprove them for speakin' aboot puir Birsay on a Sabbath 'It was a dell's portent,' nae mortal man ever forged that steel, an' gin onybody touched it he wadna wunner but it wud burn him to the bane. direc' frae sic a place as it had dootless loupit frae.'

This tickled me sae terribly that I creepit a wee nearer to see the auld tod's face as he laid it aff to them about the deil's eishin an' his leather knife-that had baith been boch! rae Rab Tamson, the hardware man in the Vennel o' Dumfries, an' wasna payed for yet! When what d'ye think happened?

"Na, ye couldna guess—weel, I creepit maybe a hair ower near the edge. The auld rotten board gied way wi' me, an' doon Birsay fell amang the peats on the hearth-stane, landin' on my hinderlands wi' a brange that nearly brought the hoose doon. yea skeloch as I fell, but, gracious me," said Birsay, waving his hands, "that was as naething to the scraich that the fowk about the fire gied. They scattered like a flock o' wild deuks when a chairge o' shot splairges amang them. They thocht the ill auld boy was comed into the midst o' them, an' we' yae consent they made for the door. Jock Wabster took the hill baa-haain' like a calf as he ran, an' even bauld Auld Anton stood by the door cheek wi' his sword point

hearthstane! "But I didna bide lang amang the reed peals, as ye may guest. I was scramblin' oot, whan the ould man grubbit me by the cuff o' the neck, an' maybes because he had been "So when they were a sittin' gey an' shame-lear dang me stupit. Gin I had gane laft to escape Effectual Callin', he didna scruple to gin me Effectual Daudin', an' that without any speerin' or as muckle's a single reason annexed!" "And what." I said. "same of Jock Wab-

"'Deed as for Jock," said Birsay, "he got great experience o' religion and gaed to join John Gib and his company on the Flowe o' the Deerslunk, where Maister Lennon vanedge, clash fell my braid knife, that I cut the leather wi oot o my pooch. the leather wi' oot o' my pooch.
"It fell on the clean stane, an' then lap to o' the squad. But Jock was aye ower great

(To be Continued.)