

CHAPTER XVIII--THE TEE'D BALL

On the morrow, from the justices' private room, where none could see me, I heard the verdict given in and judgment rendered upon James. The Duke's words I am quite sure I have correctly; and since that famous passage has been made a subject of dispute, I may as well commemorate my version. Having referred to the year '45, the chief of the Campbells, sitting as Justice-General upon the bench, thus addressed the unfortunate Stewart before him: "If you had been successful in that rebellion, you might have been giving the law where you have now received the judgment of it; we, who are this day your judges, might have been tried before one of your mock courts of judicature; and then you might have been satiated with the blood of any name or clan to which you had an aversion."

"This is to let the cat out of the bag, indeed," thought I. And that was the general impression. It was extraordinary how the young advocate lads took hold and made a mock of this speech, and how scarce a meal passed but what someone would get in the words: "And then you might have been satiated." Many songs were made in time for the hour's diversion, and are near all forgot. I remember one began:

"What do ye want the bluid of, bluid of?"

Is it a name, or is it a clan,

Or is it an aefauld Hielandman,

That ye want the bluid of, bluid of?"

Another went to my old favourite air, The House of Airlie, and

began thus:

"It fell on a day when Argyle was on the bench,

That they served him a Stewart for his denner."

And one of the verses ran:

"Then up and spak' the Duke, and flyted on his cook,

I regard it as a sensible aspersion,

That I would sup ava', an' satiate my maw,

With the bluid of ony clan of my aversion."

James was as fairly murdered as though the Duke had got a fowling-

piece and stalked him. So much of course I knew: but others knew

not so much, and were more affected by the items of scandal that

came to light in the progress of the cause. One of the chief was

certainly this sally of the justice's. It was run hard by another

of a juryman, who had struck into the midst of Coulston's speech

for the defence with a "Pray, sir, cut it short, we are quite

weary," which seemed the very excess of impudence and simplicity.

But some of my new lawyer friends were still more staggered with an

innovation that had disgraced and even vitiated the proceedings.

One witness was never called. His name, indeed, was printed, where

it may still be seen on the fourth page of the list: "James

Drummond, alias Macgregor, alias James More, late tenant in

Inveronachile"; and his precognition had been taken, as the manner

is, in writing. He had remembered or invented (God help him)

matter which was lead in James Stewart's shoes, and I saw was like

to prove wings to his own. This testimony it was highly desirable

to bring to the notice of the jury, without exposing the man

himself to the perils of cross-examination; and the way it was

brought about was a matter of surprise to all. For the paper was

handed round (like a curiosity) in court; passed through the jury-

box, where it did its work; and disappeared again (as though by

accident) before it reached the counsel for the prisoner. This was

counted a most insidious device; and that the name of James More should be mingled up with it filled me with shame for Catriona and concern for myself.

The following day, Prestongrange and I, with a considerable company, set out for Glasgow, where (to my impatience) we continued to linger some time in a mixture of pleasure and affairs. I lodged with my lord, with whom I was encouraged to familiarity; had my place at entertainments; was presented to the chief guests; and altogether made more of than I thought accorded either with my parts or station; so that, on strangers being present, I would often blush for Prestongrange. It must be owned the view I had taken of the world in these last months was fit to cast a gloom upon my character. I had met many men, some of them leaders in

Israel whether by their birth or talents; and who among them all had shown clean hands? As for the Browns and Millers, I had seen their self-seeking, I could never again respect them.

Prestongrange was the best yet; he had saved me, spared me rather, when others had it in their minds to murder me outright; but the blood of James lay at his door; and I thought his present dissimulation with myself a thing below pardon. That he should affect to find pleasure in my discourse almost surprised me out of my patience. I would sit and watch him with a kind of a slow fire of anger in my bowels. "Ah, friend, friend," I would think to myself, "if you were but through with this affair of the memorial, would you not kick me in the streets?" Here I did him, as events have proved, the most grave injustice; and I think he was at once far more sincere, and a far more artful performer, than I supposed.

But I had some warrant for my incredulity in the behaviour of that court of young advocates that hung about in the hope of patronage.

The sudden favour of a lad not previously heard of troubled them at first out of measure; but two days were not gone by before I found myself surrounded with flattery and attention. I was the same young man, and neither better nor bonnier, that they had rejected a month before; and now there was no civility too fine for me! The same, do I say? It was not so; and the by-name by which I went behind my back confirmed it. Seeing me so firm with the Advocate, and persuaded that I was to fly high and far, they had taken a word from the golfing green, and called me THE TEE'D BALL. {14} I was told I was now "one of themselves"; I was to taste of their soft lining, who had already made my own experience of the roughness of

the outer husk; and one, to whom I had been presented in Hope Park,
was so aspired as even to remind me of that meeting. I told him I
had not the pleasure of remembering it.

"Why" says he, "it was Miss Grant herself presented me! My name is
so-and-so."

"It may very well be, sir," said I; "but I have kept no mind of
it."

At which he desisted; and in the midst of the disgust that commonly
overflowed my spirits I had a glisk of pleasure.

But I have not patience to dwell upon that time at length. When I

was in company with these young politics I was borne down with shame for myself and my own plain ways, and scorn for them and their duplicity. Of the two evils, I thought Prestongrange to be the least; and while I was always as stiff as buckram to the young bloods, I made rather a dissimulation of my hard feelings towards the Advocate, and was (in old Mr. Campbell's word) "soople to the laird." Himself commented on the difference, and bid me be more of my age, and make friends with my young comrades.

I told him I was slow of making friends.

"I will take the word back," said he. "But there is such a thing as FAIR GUDE S'EN AND FAIR GUDE DAY, Mr. David. These are the same young men with whom you are to pass your days and get through life:

your backwardness has a look of arrogance; and unless you can
assume a little more lightness of manner, I fear you will meet
difficulties in the path."

"It will be an ill job to make a silk purse of a sow's ear," said

I.

On the morning of October 1st I was awakened by the clattering in
of an express; and getting to my window almost before he had
dismounted, I saw the messenger had ridden hard. Somewhile after I
was called to Prestongrange, where he was sitting in his bedgown
and nightcap, with his letters round him.

"Mr. David," add he, "I have a piece of news for you. It concerns

some friends of yours, of whom I sometimes think you are a little

ashamed, for you have never referred to their existence."

I suppose I blushed.

"See you understand, since you make the answering signal," said he.

"And I must compliment you on your excellent taste in beauty. But

do you know, Mr. David? this seems to me a very enterprising lass.

She crops up from every side. The Government of Scotland appears

unable to proceed for Mistress Katrine Drummond, which was somewhat

the case (no great while back) with a certain Mr. David Balfour.

Should not these make a good match? Her first intromission in

politics--but I must not tell you that story, the authorities have

decided you are to hear it otherwise and from a livelier narrator.

This new example is more serious, however; and I am afraid I must alarm you with the intelligence that she is now in prison."

I cried out.

"Yes," said he, "the little lady is in prison. But I would not have you to despair. Unless you (with your friends and memorialists) shall procure my downfall, she is to suffer nothing."

"But what has she done? What is her offence?" I cried.

"It might be almost construed a high treason," he returned, "for she has broke the king's Castle of Edinburgh."

"The lady is much my friend," I said. "I know you would not mock me if the thing were serious."

"And yet it is serious in a sense," said he; "for this rogue of a Katrine--or Cateran, as we may call her--has set adrift again upon the world that very doubtful character, her papa."

Here was one of my previsions justified: James More was once again at liberty. He had lent his men to keep me a prisoner; he had volunteered his testimony in the Appin case, and the same (no matter by what subterfuge) had been employed to influence the jury.

Now came his reward, and he was free. It might please the authorities to give to it the colour of an escape; but I knew

better--I knew it must be the fulfilment of a bargain. The same

course of thought relieved me of the least alarm for Catriona. She might be thought to have broke prison for her father; she might have believed so herself. But the chief hand in the whole business was that of Prestongrange; and I was sure, so far from letting her come to punishment, he would not suffer her to be even tried.

Whereupon thus came out of me the not very politic ejaculation:

"Ah! I was expecting that!"

"You have at times a great deal of discretion, too!" says

Prestongrange.

"And what is my lord pleased to mean by that?" I asked.

"I was just marvelling", he replied, "that being so clever as to draw these inferences, you should not be clever enough to keep them to yourself. But I think you would like to hear the details of the affair. I have received two versions: and the least official is the more full and far the more entertaining, being from the lively pen of my eldest daughter. 'Here is all the town bizzing with a fine piece of work,' she writes, 'and what would make the thing more noted (if it were only known) the malefactor is a protegee of his lordship my papa. I am sure your heart is too much in your duty (if it were nothing else) to have forgotten Grey Eyes. What does she do, but get a broad hat with the flaps open, a long hairy-like man's greatcoat, and a big gravatt; kilt her coats up to GUDE KENS WHAUR, clap two pair of boot-hose upon her legs, take a pair of CLOUTED BROGUES {15} in her hand, and off to the Castle! Here

she gives herself out to be a soutar {16} in the employ of James More, and gets admitted to his cell, the lieutenant (who seems to have been full of pleasantry) making sport among his soldiers of the soutar's greatcoat. Presently they hear disputation and the sound of blows inside. Out flies the cobbler, his coat flying, the flaps of his hat beat about his face, and the lieutenant and his soldiers mock at him as he runs off. They laughed no so hearty the next time they had occasion to visit the cell and found nobody but a tall, pretty, grey-eyed lass in the female habit! As for the cobbler, he was 'over the hills ayout Dumblane,' and it's thought that poor Scotland will have to console herself without him. I drank Catriona's health this night in public.

Indeed, the whole town admires her; and I think the beaux would

wear bits of her garters in their button-holes if they could only get them. I would have gone to visit her in prison too, only I remembered in time I was papa's daughter; so I wrote her a billet instead, which I entrusted to the faithful Doig, and I hope you will admit I can be political when I please. The same faithful gomerl is to despatch this letter by the express along with those of the wiseacres, so that you may hear Tom Fool in company with Solomon. Talking of GOMERALS, do tell DAUVIT BALFOUR. I would I could see the face of him at the thought of a long-legged lass in such a predicament; to say nothing of the levities of your affectionate daughter, and his respectful friend.' So my rascal signs herself!" continued Prestongrange. "And you see, Mr. David, it is quite true what I tell you, that my daughters regard you with the most affectionate playfulness."

"The gomerai is much obliged," said I.

"And was not this prettily done!" he went on. "Is not this

Highland maid a piece of a heroine?"

"I was always sure she had a great heart," said I. "And I wager

she guessed nothing . . . But I beg your pardon, this is to tread

upon forbidden subjects."

"I will go bail she did not," he returned, quite openly. "I will

go bail she thought she was flying straight into King George's

face."

Remembrance of Catriona and the thought of her lying in captivity,
moved me strangely. I could see that even Prestongrange admired,
and could not withhold his lips from smiling when he considered her
behaviour. As for Miss Grant, for all her ill habit of mockery,
her admiration shone out plain. A kind of a heat came on me.

"I am not your lordship's daughter. . . " I began.

"That I know of!" he put in, smiling.

"I speak like a fool," said I; "or rather I began wrong. It would
doubtless be unwise in Mistress Grant to go to her in prison; but
for me, I think I would look like a half-hearted friend if I did
not fly there instantly."

"So-ho, Mr. David," says he; "I thought that you and I were in a bargain?"

"My lord," I said, "when I made that bargain I was a good deal affected by your goodness, but I'll never can deny that I was moved besides by my own interest. There was self-seeking in my heart, and I think shame of it now. It may be for your lordship's safety to say this fashious Davie Balfour is your friend and housemate. Say it then; I'll never contradict you. But as for your patronage, I give it all back. I ask but the one thing--let me go, and give me a pass to see her in her prison."

He looked at me with a hard eye. "You put the cart before the

horse, I think," says he. "That which I had given was a portion of my liking, which your thankless nature does not seem to have remarked. But for my patronage, it is not given, nor (to be exact) is it yet offered." He paused a bit. "And I warn you, you do not know yourself," he added. "Youth is a hasty season; you will think better of all this before a year."

"Well, and I would like to be that kind of youth!" I cried. "I have seen too much of the other party in these young advocates that fawn upon your lordship and are even at the pains to fawn on me. And I have seen it in the old ones also. They are all for by-ends, the whole clan of them! It's this that makes me seem to misdoubt your lordship's liking. Why would I think that you would like me? But ye told me yourself ye had an interest!"

I stopped at this, confounded that I had run so far; he was observing me with an unfathomable face.

"My lord, I ask your pardon," I resumed. "I have nothing in my chafts but a rough country tongue. I think it would be only decent-like if I would go to see my friend in her captivity; but I'm owing you my life--I'll never forget that; and if it's for your lordship's good, here I'll stay. That's barely gratitude."

"This might have been reached in fewer words," says Prestongrange grimly. "It is easy, and it is at times gracious, to say a plain Scots 'ay'."

"Ah, but, my lord, I think ye take me not yet entirely!" cried I.

"For YOUR sake, for my life-safe, and the kindness that ye say ye

bear to me--for these, I'll consent; but not for any good that

might be coming to myself. If I stand aside when this young maid

is in her trial, it's a thing I will be noways advantaged by; I

will lose by it, I will never gain. I would rather make a

shipwreck wholly than to build on that foundation."

He was a minute serious, then smiled. "You mind me of the man with

the long nose," said he; "was you to see the moon by a telescope

you would see David Balfour there! But you shall have your way of

it. I will ask at you one service, and then set you free: My

clerks are overdriven; be so good as copy me these few pages, and

when that is done, I shall bid you God speed! I would never charge

myself with Mr. David's conscience; and if you could cast some part of it (as you went by) in a moss hag, you would find yourself to ride much easier without it."

"Perhaps not just entirely in the same direction though, my lord!" says I.

"And you shall have the last word, too!" cries he gaily.

Indeed, he had some cause for gaiety, having now found the means to gain his purpose. To lessen the weight of the memorial, or to have a readier answer at his hand, he desired I should appear publicly in the character of his intimate. But if I were to appear with the same publicity as a visitor to Catriona in her prison the world

would scarce stint to draw conclusions, and the true nature of James More's escape must become evident to all. This was the little problem I had to set him of a sudden, and to which he had so briskly found an answer. I was to be tethered in Glasgow by that job of copying, which in mere outward decency I could not well refuse; and during these hours of employment Catriona was privately got rid of. I think shame to write of this man that loaded me with so many goodnesses. He was kind to me as any father, yet I ever thought him as false as a cracked bell.