

## CHAPTER XXI--THE VOYAGE INTO HOLLAND

The ship lay at a single anchor, well outside the pier of Leith, so that all we passengers must come to it by the means of skiffs.

This was very little troublesome, for the reason that the day was a flat calm, very frosty and cloudy, and with a low shifting fog upon

the water. The body of the vessel was thus quite hid as I drew

near, but the tall spars of her stood high and bright in a sunshine

like the flickering of a fire. She proved to be a very roomy,

commodious merchant, but somewhat blunt in the bows, and loaden

extraordinary deep with salt, salted salmon, and fine white linen

stockings for the Dutch. Upon my coming on board, the captain

welcomed me--one Sang (out of Lesmahago, I believe), a very hearty, friendly tarpaulin of a man, but at the moment in rather of a bustle. There had no other of the passengers yet appeared, so that I was left to walk about upon the deck, viewing the prospect and wondering a good deal what these farewells should be which I was promised.

All Edinburgh and the Pentland Hills glinted above me in a kind of smuisty brightness, now and again overcome with blots of cloud; of Leith there was no more than the tops of chimneys visible, and on the face of the water, where the haar {24} lay, nothing at all.

Out of this I was presently aware of a sound of oars pulling, and a little after (as if out of the smoke of a fire) a boat issued.

There sat a grave man in the stern sheets, well muffled from the

cold, and by his side a tall, pretty, tender figure of a maid that brought my heart to a stand. I had scarce the time to catch my breath in, and be ready to meet her, as she stepped upon the deck, smiling, and making my best bow, which was now vastly finer than some months before, when first I made it to her ladyship. No doubt we were both a good deal changed: she seemed to have shot up like a young, comely tree. She had now a kind of pretty backwardness that became her well as of one that regarded herself more highly and was fairly woman; and for another thing, the hand of the same magician had been at work upon the pair of us, and Miss Grant had made us both BRAW, if she could make but the one BONNY.

The same cry, in words not very different, came from both of us, that the other was come in compliment to say farewell, and then we

perceived in a flash we were to ship together.

"O, why will not Baby have been telling me!" she cried; and then remembered a letter she had been given, on the condition of not opening it till she was well on board. Within was an enclosure for myself, and ran thus:

"DEAR DAVIE,--What do you think of my farewell? and what do you say to your fellow passenger? Did you kiss, or did you ask? I was about to have signed here, but that would leave the purport of my question doubtful, and in my own case I KEN THE ANSWER. So fill up here with good advice. Do not be too blate, {25} and for God's sake do not try to be too forward; nothing acts you worse. I am

"Your affectionate friend and governess,

"BARBARA GRANT."

I wrote a word of answer and compliment on a leaf out of my pocketbook, put it in with another scratch from Catriona, sealed the whole with my new signet of the Balfour arms, and despatched it by the hand of Prestongrange's servant that still waited in my boat.

Then we had time to look upon each other more at leisure, which we had not done for a piece of a minute before (upon a common impulse) we shook hands again.

"Catriona?" said I. It seemed that was the first and last word of my eloquence.

"You will be glad to see me again?" says she.

"And I think that is an idle word," said I. "We are too deep friends to make speech upon such trifles."

"Is she not the girl of all the world?" she cried again. "I was never knowing such a girl so honest and so beautiful."

"And yet she cared no more for Alpin than what she did for a kale-stock," said I.

"Ah, she will say so indeed!" cries Catriona. "Yet it was for the name and the gentle kind blood that she took me up and was so good to me."

"Well, I will tell you why it was," said I. "There are all sorts of people's faces in this world. There is Barbara's face, that everyone must look at and admire, and think her a fine, brave, merry girl. And then there is your face, which is quite different-  
-I never knew how different till to-day. You cannot see yourself, and that is why you do not understand; but it was for the love of your face that she took you up and was so good to you. And everybody in the world would do the same."

"Everybody?" says she.

"Every living soul?" said I.

"Ah, then, that will be why the soldiers at the castle took me up!"

she cried,

"Barbara has been teaching you to catch me," said I.

"She will have taught me more than that at all events. She will

have taught me a great deal about Mr. David--all the ill of him,

and a little that was not so ill either, now and then," she said,

smiling. "She will have told me all there was of Mr. David, only

just that he would sail upon this very same ship. And why it is



you go?"

I told her.

"Ah, well," said she, "we will be some days in company and then (I suppose) good-bye for altogether! I go to meet my father at a place of the name of Helvoetsluys, and from there to France, to be exiles by the side of our chieftain."

I could say no more than just "O!" the name of James More always drying up my very voice.

She was quick to perceive it, and to guess some portion of my thought.

"There is one thing I must be saying first of all, Mr. David," said she. "I think two of my kinsfolk have not behaved to you altogether very well. And the one of them two is James More, my father, and the other is the Laird of Prestongrange. Prestongrange will have spoken by himself, or his daughter in the place of him. But for James More, my father, I have this much to say: he lay shackled in a prison; he is a plain honest soldier and a plain Highland gentleman; what they would be after he would never be guessing; but if he had understood it was to be some prejudice to a young gentleman like yourself, he would have died first. And for the sake of all your friendships, I will be asking you to pardon my father and family for that same mistake."

"Catriona," said I, "what that mistake was I do not care to know.

I know but the one thing--that you went to Prestongrange and begged

my life upon your knees. O, I ken well enough it was for your

father that you went, but when you were there you pleaded for me

also. It is a thing I cannot speak of. There are two things I

cannot think of into myself: and the one is your good words when

you called yourself my little friend, and the other that you

pleaded for my life. Let us never speak more, we two, of pardon or

offence."

We stood after that silent, Catriona looking on the deck and I on

her; and before there was more speech, a little wind having sprung

up in the nor'-west, they began to shake out the sails and heave in

upon the anchor.

There were six passengers besides our two selves, which made of it a full cabin. Three were solid merchants out of Leith, Kirkcaldy, and Dundee, all engaged in the same adventure into High Germany. One was a Hollander returning; the rest worthy merchants' wives, to the charge of one of whom Catriona was recommended. Mrs. Gebbie (for that was her name) was by great good fortune heavily incommoded by the sea, and lay day and night on the broad of her back. We were besides the only creatures at all young on board the Rose, except a white-faced boy that did my old duty to attend upon the table; and it came about that Catriona and I were left almost entirely to ourselves. We had the next seats together at the table, where I waited on her with extraordinary pleasure. On deck, I made her a soft place with my cloak; and the weather being

singularly fine for that season, with bright frosty days and  
nights, a steady, gentle wind, and scarce a sheet started all the  
way through the North Sea, we sat there (only now and again walking  
to and fro for warmth) from the first blink of the sun till eight  
or nine at night under the clear stars. The merchants or Captain  
Sang would sometimes glance and smile upon us, or pass a merry word  
or two and give us the go-by again; but the most part of the time  
they were deep in herring and chintzes and linen, or in  
computations of the slowness of the passage, and left us to our own  
concerns, which were very little important to any but ourselves.

At the first, we had a great deal to say, and thought ourselves  
pretty witty; and I was at a little pains to be the beau, and she  
(I believe) to play the young lady of experience. But soon we grew

plainer with each other. I laid aside my high, clipped English  
  
(what little there was left of it) and forgot to make my Edinburgh  
  
bows and scrapes; she, upon her side, fell into a sort of kind  
  
familiarity; and we dwelt together like those of the same  
  
household, only (upon my side) with a more deep emotion. About the  
  
same time the bottom seemed to fall out of our conversation, and  
  
neither one of us the less pleased. Whiles she would tell me old  
  
wives' tales, of which she had a wonderful variety, many of them  
  
from my friend red-headed Niel. She told them very pretty, and  
  
they were pretty enough childish tales; but the pleasure to myself  
  
was in the sound of her voice, and the thought that she was telling  
  
and I listening. Whiles, again, we would sit entirely silent, not  
  
communicating even with a look, and tasting pleasure enough in the  
  
sweetness of that neighbourhood. I speak here only for myself. Of

what was in the maid's mind, I am not very sure that ever I asked myself; and what was in my own, I was afraid to consider. I need make no secret of it now, either to myself or to the reader; I was fallen totally in love. She came between me and the sun. She had grown suddenly taller, as I say, but with a wholesome growth; she seemed all health, and lightness, and brave spirits; and I thought she walked like a young deer, and stood like a birch upon the mountains. It was enough for me to sit near by her on the deck; and I declare I scarce spent two thoughts upon the future, and was so well content with what I then enjoyed that I was never at the pains to imagine any further step; unless perhaps that I would be sometimes tempted to take her hand in mine and hold it there. But I was too like a miser of what joys I had, and would venture nothing on a hazard.

What we spoke was usually of ourselves or of each other, so that if anyone had been at so much pains as overhear us, he must have supposed us the most egotistical persons in the world. It befell one day when we were at this practice, that we came on a discourse of friends and friendship, and I think now that we were sailing near the wind. We said what a fine thing friendship was, and how little we had guessed of it, and how it made life a new thing, and a thousand covered things of the same kind that will have been said, since the foundation of the world, by young folk in the same predicament. Then we remarked upon the strangeness of that circumstance, that friends came together in the beginning as if they were there for the first time, and yet each had been alive a good while, losing time with other people.



"It is not much that I have done," said she, "and I could be telling you the five-fifths of it in two-three words. It is only a girl I am, and what can befall a girl, at all events? But I went with the clan in the year '45. The men marched with swords and fire-locks, and some of them in brigades in the same set of tartan; they were not backward at the marching, I can tell you. And there were gentlemen from the Low Country, with their tenants mounted and trumpets to sound, and there was a grant skirling of war-pipes. I rode on a little Highland horse on the right hand of my father, James More, and of Glengyle himself. And here is one fine thing that I remember, that Glengyle kissed me in the face, because (says he) 'my kinswoman, you are the only lady of the clan that has come out,' and me a little maid of maybe twelve years old! I saw Prince

Charlie too, and the blue eyes of him; he was pretty indeed! I had his hand to kiss in front of the army. O, well, these were the good days, but it is all like a dream that I have seen and then awakened. It went what way you very well know; and these were the worst days of all, when the red-coat soldiers were out, and my father and uncles lay in the hill, and I was to be carrying them their meat in the middle night, or at the short sight of day when the cocks crow. Yes, I have walked in the night, many's the time, and my heart great in me for terror of the darkness. It is a strange thing I will never have been meddled with by a bogle; but they say a maid goes safe. Next there was my uncle's marriage, and that was a dreadful affair beyond all. Jean Kay was that woman's name; and she had me in the room with her that night at Inversnaid, the night we took her from her friends in the old, ancient manner.

She would and she wouldn't; she was for marrying Rob the one minute, and the next she would be for none of him. I will never have seen such a feckless creature of a woman; surely all there was of her would tell her ay or no. Well, she was a widow; and I can never be thinking a widow a good woman."

"Catriona!" says I, "how do you make out that?"

"I do not know," said she; "I am only telling you the seeming in my heart. And then to marry a new man! Fy! But that was her; and she was married again upon my Uncle Robin, and went with him awhile to kirk and market; and then wearied, or else her friends got clought of her and talked her round, or maybe she turned ashamed; at the least of it, she ran away, and went back to her own folk,

and said we had held her in the lake, and I will never tell you all

what. I have never thought much of any females since that day.

And so in the end my father, James More, came to be cast in prison,

and you know the rest of it as well as me."

"And through all you had no friends?" said I.

"No," said she; "I have been pretty chief with two-three lasses on

the braes, but not to call it friends."

"Well, mine is a plain tale," said I. "I never had a friend to my

name till I met in with you."

"And that brave Mr. Stewart?" she asked.

"O, yes, I was forgetting him," I said. "But he in a man, and that  
in very different."

"I would think so," said she. "O, yes, it is quite different."

"And then there was one other," said I. "I once thought I had a  
friend, but it proved a disappointment."

She asked me who she was?

"It was a he, then," said I. "We were the two best lads at my  
father's school, and we thought we loved each other dearly. Well,  
the time came when he went to Glasgow to a merchant's house, that

was his second cousin once removed; and wrote me two-three times by  
the carrier; and then he found new friends, and I might write till  
I was tired, he took no notice. Eh, Catriona, it took me a long  
while to forgive the world. There is not anything more bitter than  
to lose a fancied friend."

Then she began to question me close upon his looks and character,  
for we were each a great deal concerned in all that touched the  
other; till at last, in a very evil hour, I minded of his letters  
and went and fetched the bundle from the cabin.

"Here are his letters," said I, "and all the letters that ever I  
got. That will be the last I'll can tell of myself; ye know the  
lave {26} as well as I do."

"Will you let me read them, then?" says she.

I told her, IF SHE WOULD BE AT THE PAINS; and she bade me go away

and she would read them from the one end to the other. Now, in

this bundle that I gave her, there were packed together not only

all the letters of my false friend, but one or two of Mr.

Campbell's when he was in town at the Assembly, and to make a

complete roll of all that ever was written to me, Catriona's little

word, and the two I had received from Miss Grant, one when I was on

the Bass and one on board that ship. But of these last I had no

particular mind at the moment.

I was in that state of subjection to the thought of my friend that

it mattered not what I did, nor scarce whether I was in her  
presence or out of it; I had caught her like some kind of a noble  
fever that lived continually in my bosom, by night and by day, and  
whether I was waking or asleep. So it befell that after I was come  
into the fore-part of the ship where the broad bows splashed into  
the billows, I was in no such hurry to return as you might fancy;  
rather prolonged my absence like a variety in pleasure. I do not  
think I am by nature much of an Epicurean: and there had come till  
then so small a share of pleasure in my way that I might be excused  
perhaps to dwell on it unduly.

When I returned to her again, I had a faint, painful impression as  
of a buckle slipped, so coldly she returned the packet.



"You have read them?" said I; and I thought my voice sounded not wholly natural, for I was turning in my mind for what could ail her.

"Did you mean me to read all?" she asked.

I told her "Yes," with a drooping voice.

"The last of them as well?" said she.

I knew where we were now; yet I would not lie to her either. "I gave them all without afterthought," I said, "as I supposed that you would read them. I see no harm in any."

"I will be differently made," said she. "I thank God I am

differently made. It was not a fit letter to be shown me. It was

not fit to be written."

"I think you are speaking of your own friend, Barbara Grant?" said

I.

"There will not be anything as bitter as to lose a fancied friend,"

said she, quoting my own expression.

"I think it is sometimes the friendship that was fancied!" I cried.

"What kind of justice do you call this, to blame me for some words

that a tomfool of a madcap lass has written down upon a piece of

paper? You know yourself with what respect I have behaved--and

would do always."

"Yet you would show me that same letter!" says she. "I want no such friends. I can be doing very well, Mr. Balfour, without her-- or you."

"This is your fine gratitude!" says I.

"I am very much obliged to you," said she. "I will be asking you to take away your--letters." She seemed to choke upon the word, so that it sounded like an oath.

"You shall never ask twice," said I; picked up that bundle, walked a little way forward and cast them as far as possible into the sea.

For a very little more I could have cast myself after them.

The rest of the day I walked up and down raging. There were few names so ill but what I gave her them in my own mind before the sun went down. All that I had ever heard of Highland pride seemed quite outdone; that a girl (scarce grown) should resent so trifling an allusion, and that from her next friend, that she had near wearied me with praising of! I had bitter, sharp, hard thoughts of her, like an angry boy's. If I had kissed her indeed (I thought), perhaps she would have taken it pretty well; and only because it had been written down, and with a spice of jocularly, up she must fuff in this ridiculous passion. It seemed to me there was a want of penetration in the female sex, to make angels weep over the case of the poor men.

We were side by side again at supper, and what a change was there!

She was like curdled milk to me; her face was like a wooden doll's;

I could have indifferently smitten her or grovelled at her feet,

but she gave me not the least occasion to do either. No sooner the

meal done than she betook herself to attend on Mrs. Gebbie, which I

think she had a little neglected heretofore. But she was to make

up for lost time, and in what remained of the passage was

extraordinary assiduous with the old lady, and on deck began to

make a great deal more than I thought wise of Captain Sang. Not

but what the Captain seemed a worthy, fatherly man; but I hated to

behold her in the least familiarity with anyone except myself.

Altogether, she was so quick to avoid me, and so constant to keep

herself surrounded with others, that I must watch a long while

before I could find my opportunity; and after it was found, I made

not much of it, as you are now to hear.

"I have no guess how I have offended," said I; "it should scarce be

beyond pardon, then. O, try if you can pardon me."

"I have no pardon to give," said she; and the words seemed to come

out of her throat like marbles. "I will be very much obliged for

all your friendships." And she made me an eighth part of a

curtsey.

But I had schooled myself beforehand to say more, and I was going

to say it too.

"There is one thing," said I. "If I have shocked your particularity by the showing of that letter, it cannot touch Miss Grant. She wrote not to you, but to a poor, common, ordinary lad, who might have had more sense than show it. If you are to blame me--"

"I will advise you to say no more about that girl, at all events!"

said Catriona. "It is her I will never look the road of, not if she lay dying." She turned away from me, and suddenly back. "Will you swear you will have no more to deal with her?" she cried.

"Indeed, and I will never be so unjust then," said I; "nor yet so ungrateful."

And now it was I that turned away.