The Bradford Reporter.

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E. F. GOFF, ATTORNEY-AT-LAW, Main Street (4 doors north of Ward House), Towanda, Pa. [April 12, 1877.

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DAVIES & CARNOCHAN, ATTORNEYS-AT-LAW, SOUTH SIDE OF WARD HOUSE. Dec 23-75. TOWANDA, PA.

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WILLIAMS & ANGLE, ATTORNEYS-AT-LAW. OFFICE.—Formerly occupied by Wm. Watkins, Esq. H. S. WILLIAMS. (oct. 17, '77) E. J. ANGLE.

WM. MAXWELL, ATTORNEY-AT-LAW, TOWANDA, PA. Office over Dayton's Store. April 12, 1876.

C. L. LAMB, ATTORNEY-AT-LAW, WILKES-BARRE, PA Collections promptly attended to. July 27, '76.

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CHAS. M. HALL, ATTORNEY-AT-LAW AND JUSTICE OF PEACE TOWANDA, PA. FIRE INSURANCE IN RELIABLE COMPANIES. Office over Dayton's Harness store. Nov. 21, '78.

DR. S. M. WOODBURN, Physician and Surgeon. Office over O. A. Black's Grocery store. Towanda, May 1, 1872ly*.

W. B. KELLY, DENTIST.—Office over M. E. Rosenfield's, Towanda, Pa. Teeth inserted on Gold, Silver, Rubber, and Aluminium base. Teeth extracted without pain. Oct. 24'72.

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G. W. RYAN, COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT. Office—day last Saturday of each month, over Turner & Gordon's Drug Store, Towanda, Pa. Towanda, June 20, 1878.

MRS. H. PEET, TEACHER OF PIANO MUSIC, TERMS.—$10 per term. (Residence Third street, 1st ward.) Towanda, Jan. 13, '79-1y.

W. S. VINCENT, INSURANCE AGENT, Towanda, Pa. Feb. 6th, '79-tf.

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INSURANCE AGENCY. The following RELIABLE AND FIRE TRIED Companies represented; LANCSHIRE, PHŒNIX, HOME, MERCHANTS, March 16, '74 O. A. BLACK.

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FIRST NATIONAL BANK, TOWANDA, PA. CAPITAL PAID IN.....$123,000 SURPLUS FUND.....80,000

This Bank offers unusual facilities for the transaction of a general banking business.

N. N. BETTS, Cashier. JOS. POWELL, President. 14, 1878.

Poetry.

[For the REPORTER.]

TRANSLATED FROM GOETHE.

Strive not with restless brain to penetrate
And comprehend the hidden things of Fate;
Ere many days the snow will melt, and then
Earth lies once more uncovered to men.
What good the future's sealed book to know?
For if it roses hide, they'll surely blow.

Carlsruhe, Germany. L. M.

DO NOT FORGET ME.

Do not forget me!
The hours full freighted with a joy too deep
For words have flown too swiftly by. Oh keep
That joy undimmed!
And though henceforth we two should dwell apart,
Let no sad memories linger in your heart,
Or cloud your brow with care.

Do not forget me!
Think of the happy days when first we met!
Their golden radiance is around us yet—
That afterglow
Of the blest time, when earth and sea and skies,
Revealed new glories to our wondering eyes,
Transfigured by love's power.

Do not forget me!
Go where you will you are not far from me,
My thoughts will not follow you o'er land and sea
Unceasingly.
And in the stillness of some lonely hour,
Your soul and mine by strange magnetic power,
Shall hold communion sweet.

Do not forget me!
Think of the love that patiently waits for you,
Think of the heart that ever clings to you,
All trustingly,
Content, if sunshine falls around your way,
To brighten every path wherein you stray,
In loneliness to dwell!

Do not forget me!
A kind remembrance is not much to ask.
Surely it will not be too hard a task
Sometimes to think
Of one, for whom the world can yield no bliss
So deep, so true, so exquisite as this,
To love and care for you.

Selected Tale.

Love Me, Love My Dog.

A STORY IN SIX CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER I.

In Farmer Applegarth's lower meadow a bull was being baited, and from all the moor and fell-side huts and villages around, miners had come trooping in, with dogs at their heels, to enjoy the sport. Nay, boys and women were not wanting, for those were rough times, and unless the poor beast had been duly tortured, his flesh would not have been esteemed sufficiently tender for a gentleman's table. Beef was wanting for a banquet at Derwentside Hall, and hence there was a call for the bull-bait. Women then worked in the depths of the coal-pits, not merely on the banks, and were naturally Amazons of a coarse and brutalized type, mingling freely with the men in their rough games, just as they shared their labors.

A strong stake being driven securely into the ground, a fine young bull, with sleek brown hide and fiery eyes, was fastened to it, with length of chain just sufficient to leave him free to throw himself about in impotent attempts to break away. Then, one by one, thick-set, black-muzzled, strong fanged bull-dogs were let loose upon him—dogs trained to the sport, and expected to grip the bull firmly by the nostril and pin to the earth.

But the proud animal, already chafed by the chain and the vociferous spectators, was not likely to brook this onslaught; and they who ventured their dogs were prepared to see them caught on the ready horns of the bull, and tossed high in the air over his head, gored, maimed, and bleeding, to lie down and die, or return to the charge more furious from defeat, while the chained beast champed and bellowed, and bending down its strong and massive head, brought its defensive horns low enough to catch his foes one after another on their formidable points, and fling them to their defeated fellows; or, wild with pain, strove in vain to shake his tormentors from frothy lip, or bleeding flank and dew-lap, till he sank exhausted, the dogs were choked off, and the butcher with his pole-axe put an end to the brutal sport.

Common as were such scenes, it is not to be supposed that the whole of the community countenanced or upheld them. They were sanctioned by custom and long usage, but humanity and intelligence shrank from such spectacles, and tender-hearted women shuddered at the very thought.

Such, though reared on the moor-side, with none of the educational advantages of the present day, was Hope Wolsingham, dairy-maid on the Applegarth Farm, which was situated near the confines of the Derwentside woods, sheltered and almost shadowed by the oak-crowned rocks, below which rose and fell with many curves, the mile-long byway to the river and the hall. Between the woods and the farm, round which it swept, ran the broader lane common to the scattered population, and was cut up into deep ruts by the wheels of coal wagons and farmers' carts. Not far away was a side gate into the woods, and any one crossing thence to the moors must pass the farm-yard gate.

At this moor-side farm Hope Wolsingham had been placed by her grandmother when she was little over nine years of age. Her father and mother had both been killed by choke-damp in the bottom of the coal-pit where they worked together, and Betty Wolsingham—nurse and doctress to the whole moor-side—thought she had done well for her orphan grandchild when Gilbert Applegarth and his wife agreed to take the little one and find her work on the farm. She patted Hope's fair head as she left her standing by the oak settle in the big kitchen, and bade her be "gude bairn;" but she had no oppressive forebodings of how the little back would ache with stooping to pick stones and weeds all day long, week in and week out; or how lonely and monotonous it would be to stand in a field all the sunlit hours to frighten birds from the farmer's crops with clapper, voice, and wild gesticulations, till arms and throat alike were weary. Indeed, had any philanthropist, born out of due time, so much as hinted that a growing child's strength should not be overtaxed, Betty, wise in her own generation, would, no doubt, have asked in indignant response: "Wey, what div ye think lads and lasses wor myed fur, but te wark? Wark's gude fur th' bairn, and wark she mun, iv she myens to live."

And really, judging from appearances, work did not seem to have done the girl much harm. She had had a good and sensible mistress. Dame Applegarth had taken her into favor, not the favor of indulgence, but judicious training for her walk in life; and at nineteen, Hope had much to thank her work and her mistress for. The fresh breezes of moor and fell had fanned the roses of her cheeks and elbows into perennial bloom. Her foot was firm and free; she was straight as a willow-wand, and as supple, and balanced the laden milk-pail on her head as easily as a Countess might carry her coronet.

Be sure, many a shy glance was cast toward Gilbert Applegarth's rosy-cheeked dairy-maid at fair or market, or at the parish church on a Sunday; but Hope seemed provokingly unconscious, and would-be wooers had small encouragement.

Perhaps the right one had not glanced her way. Perhaps Amos Hedley, the new game-keeper at Derwentside, might have found her less indifferent had he sought her out. But though the buxom maid might be seen in the farm-yard at all hours—or on her way to field or byre with stool and pail, or decorating the barkless dairy-tree with cans that shone like silver, or, if it were Summer time, churning in the open air—Amos Hedley would cross the road, and stalk past the farm-gate with his gun over his shoulder, and two or three dogs at his heels, whistling, in utter disregard of the clear gray eyes that followed his footsteps, until trees or the rocky banks of the descending lane swallowed up dogs, man, and the last glint of his gun-barrel.

He was a firmly-built, keen-eyed young fellow, with crisp amber curls and fresh ruddy complexion, and Hope was not the only damsel who had speculated whether the newcomer had left a sweetheart behind him elsewhere.

It so happened that Amos had been out on the moors in attendance on his master and a party of sporting friends, and on his way homeward laden with grouse and moor-fowl, took a short-cut through Applegarth's meadow during the progress of the bull-bait.

Gipsy, a favorite black-and-tan setter, ran by his side, with eyes that sparkled like crystals in his graceful head, with every motion of which his pendulous ears flapped and shone like silk; but the drooping curve of his feathery tail, and the dark earthy clots on the fringe of his limbs, told of a heavy day's work, and a readiness for the kennel.

Whether weariness or curiosity, or both combined, prompted Amos to take the field path rather than the lane, he soon had cause to regret his choice. Your gamekeeper is never a favorite with the dregs of a rural population, more particularly if he be a faithful conserver of his master's interests, and Amos Hedley had not won his way into favor by familiarity.

His appearance on the scene was a signal for scowling and whispering. It was observed and hinted that his gun was slung at his back, and that he had only one dog with him.

Presently some one—it was afterward said Nick Faw, the traveling tinker—suggested that it would be fine fun to see Gibsy set a bull; his cronies, Joey Dobson and Mat Laing, about whom hung a flavor of poaching, catching and communicating the "gran lairk" to others. No coal-pit ever fired more rapidly than the refuse of that crowd, already excited to explosion.

Amos had loitered to look on. Gipsy wagging his tail and putting down his head dubiously, as cries of "Naw, Grip!" "Naw, Holdfast!" "Pincher fur ivvor!" "Naw Grip's pinned un by'r lakins!" "Dom ye, Pincher hez him!" half drowned the stifled bellowing of the bull.

There was a simultaneous movement among the crowd, the setter was caught up by experienced hands, and before Amos, who was hustled aside, could interpose, the dog was flung into the open ring right in the face of the maddened beast. Nature and training were against his attacking so formidable a foe, yet Gipsy was too well-bred to turn tail even had there been time. The bull, with Holdfast on his flank, Grip hanging to his lip, and Pincher on his shoulder, yet made a final spurt to shake them off, and meet the new assailant. Down went the strong short horn, and Gipsy flew into the air, and landed far behind with a great gash in his side and broken foreleg.

"Who did that?" cried Amos angrily, as he caught sight of the setter in the ring. "Gip, Gip!" but the good dog was past recall; and the gamekeeper, descrying a grinning face before him, clutched the owner by the collar, and well shook the grimy fellow, whom he accused of the cruel deed in no measured language.

Nick Faw had both hands free, and helpers ready. Tearing himself loose he struck out at Amos, who was cumbered with his load of game.

The mischievous conspirators closed round with shouts and yells; the birds were torn from him, and tossed from hand to hand; the flagging bull was forgotten, now that there was an obnoxious item of humanity to bait; and though the shrill voices of women, and the gruff tones of sturdy men called loudly for fair play, and though Farmer Applegarth hurried up and strove with strength of limb and authority to part the swaying crowd, Amos was battered right and left, his one pair of muscular hands availing little against the shower of kicks and blows which fell upon him and threatened a fatal issue.

Already his manful bearing had created a diversion in his favor among the miners and other non-plotters. An attempt at his rescue, which might have resulted in a general fight, was being made, when there was a simultaneous cry from the skirts of the noisy crowd: "Sir William!" "Sir William!" and almost at the same moment was heard the authoritative demand. "What is the meaning of this?"

The unlooked-for appearance of the Baronet and his friends cowed the turbulent spirits, that is, as soon as the silence which fell on the fringe of the dispersing crowd communicated its warning to the writhing knot of brutes who had Amos Hedley in their midst struggling for his life, now up, now down.

Nick Faw slunk away on the first alarm, leaving his two associates, Joey and Mat, to bear the brunt of the Baronet's displeasure; and when Amos rose staggering to his feet, a bleeding, bruised, and disordered libel on the fresh-looking young fellow who had come so fearlessly into their midst, hands were not wanting to secure the delinquents, or tongues to tell their demerits.

And a demerit not to be overlooked by the men who had pitted their bull-dogs against the bull, by this time dispatched, was the outrageous unfairness of flinging a setter in the ring at a bull-bait; the onslaught on the keeper was as nothing in comparison.

Nor was Sir William likely to overlook either the loss of his four-footed favorite, which had unaccountably disappeared, or the maltreatment of his servant.

Cursing Nick Faw with every step of the long road, Joey Dobson and Mat Laing were hauled off with scant ceremony to the justice-room of the hall, and thence transition to the local house of correction was swifter than pleasant. It was no use for notorious poachers to plead that they were mere tools of Nick Faw, the tinker. They had been instrumental in the destruction or injury of a valuable dog, highly prized by Sir William, and had likewise brutally ill-used his servant.

CHAPTER II.

Although Amos Hedley had struggled to his feet on the opportune arrival of his good master, he staggered like a drunken man, and was only kept from falling by the help of others. Being a single man, he was quartered at the hall with one of the grooms; but he had bled profusely, and was in no condition to walk thither, and no conveyance was at hand.

But Gilbert Applegarth was, and though he did not throw his doors open to every fellow who got bruised in a common brawl, he was ready enough to proffer hospitable welcome and attention to any decent body in distress.

He was especially attentive to the wounded Amos, who cut a sorry figure in his torn garments, with his cut lip, swollen nose, and eyes half closed with pulpy cushions of indescribable hue. In his blunt good nature, he felt as if the onslaught on the gamekeeper in some sort reflected on himself, seeing that it occurred on his own land, and that he could not do too much to wipe out the stain.

He assured Sir William that his servant should have every attention at the farm, that his presence there would be "no inconvenience whatever;" and at the young man's earnest request, caused diligent search to be made for the missing setter, which, not being found, dead or alive, was conjectured to have been carried off by the uncanny tinker.

When Amos, supported by the farmer and his son, stumbled into the great kitchen—where a bright fire was blazing on the hearth, gleaming and glimmering again in polished oak, glowing in burnished brass and pewter—and was helped to a cushioned rocking-chair by the ingle-nook, a stooping female figure rose with a sudden exclamation, to make way for them, almost upsetting a large bowl of water as she did so. It was Hope Wolsingham, whose eyes were red with weeping, and whose clothing bore as many sanguine stains as that of Amos, who was almost too blind, dazed, and exhausted to take note of her or her occupation.

A low whine of recognition, a dog's nose against the hand which hung listlessly down, aroused him to the consciousness that Gipsy was safe, and next, that the young woman before him had been compassionately washing the wounds of the poor creature, and binding them up as carefully as though it had been human.

He could not see how she had wept over the dog, when by some instinct it had crept to her feet at the house-door, or how pitfully she had brought water for its thirst as well as its injuries, or the mental process by which the dog had been associated with its keeper. But for what he did see, his heart thanked her better than his lips.

Aye, and thanked her more than when, in conjunction with busy Dame Applegarth, her attention was transferred to himself, and he felt the fingers tremble as they bathed his poor disfigured face, or fed him with healing possets, or shook up the soft feather pillows to ease his aching head and shoulders.

Sir William came to see his gamekeeper, and then my lady, whose curiosity had been aroused by her husband's praises of the kind-hearted dairy-maid, who had so deftly bound up Gipsy's gaping side and broken limb, and was taking as much care of the setter as of the young man.

Hope courtsied and blushed, and rolled her apron over her hands abstractedly as her ladyship with condescending affability commended the maid's humanity and skill; but she jerked her hands behind her when the lady drew a long crimson silk purse from her handsome reticule to proffer a golden gift, and retreated as if the coin were a very witch's lure.

"Hout, maw leddy!" she protested. "Aw cuddn't, aw cuddn't tak' it! The puir dumb doggie's welcome twice ower. Awd be a brute mysel' te tak' pay fur th' bit of tendin' aw gied either th' puir doggie or th' canney young chep yander, they brutes nigh clooted te death!"

The money went back into the purse of the visitor, who returned to the hall undecided whether to admire or resent the singular young woman's refusal of a reward.

Amos Hedley knew, though his eyes were half-shut, and the "puir doggie" might have known, he wagged his tail so unhesitatingly at her approach, or followed her movements with his bright black eyes, before he began to limp after her on his three sound legs.

She put aside the faint thanks of Amos, much as she had rejected payment for an act of natural kindness, but she gave the dumb animal many a caress, which the "canny young chep" envied, having no intuitive perception that the tender-hearted maiden was caressing himself by proxy.

He had spent a day in bed, with streaks from the brown bull upon his disfigured face, and had quite a week in the farmer's easy-chair, before the taxed-cart was sent for him from the hall; and though the farmer and his dame did their hospitable utmost toward his comfort and recovery, he was keenly sensible of the difference of touch and tone when their dairy-maid applied a poultice, or administered herbal decoctions prepared from her grandmother's recipes. And though his eyes were black and swollen, he had yet sight enough to discern the fair proportions of Hope's lissom form, the tenderness of her smiling countenance, until, as the outer wounds healed, a new and inner one opened.

Hope offered her shoulder for him to lean on as he walked to the cart, and he was not too proud to accept her aid, although he knew well he could have done without it. She ran to the barn for straw to put under his feet, and to make a bed for Gipsy. She stroked and patted the dog, which returned her farewell in demonstrative dog fashion. She shook hands with Amos heartily, bidding him come and show himself when he was quite well, and to keep out of the ill-disposed tinker's way. And when the cart had driven off, and Gilbert Applegarth and his wife had gone back into the house, she still lingered at the gate to watch the conveyance, as it turned the corner of a moss-grown grey rock, and waved her last good-bye to the young man, who chanced to look back at that moment.

Barely had Amos Hedley time to discover that he was in love with pretty, rosy-cheeked Hope Wolsingham, and to torment himself lest his disfigured face should have set her against him, or to resolve that he would not set foot again on Applegarth's floor until his lip was completely healed, and he could walk erect as of old, self-conscious of strength and comeliness; barely, I say, had he time to arrive at this stage of feeling and resolve, when news reached the hall that his two poaching assailants had escaped.

There had been iron bars to the windows of their prison, and the building was of solid stone, but the rogues and vagabonds were lodged in one common room, and it had a window easily accessible from without.

Two of the three iron stanchions, which had seen years of service, had been filed away, evidently by a practiced hand. The lead-setting of the diamond panes had been cut clean through, and the entire window with not a pane broken left outside, along with a rope which dangled from the remaining bar.

It was very plain that Nick Faw had come to the rescue of his comrades, and had satisfied them that there was honor among thieves.

Sir William and his fellow-justices were naturally incensed, threatened the warder with dismissal, and had descriptions of Joey Dobson and Matthew Laing inserted in the *Hue-and-Cry*, but they might have spared their pains; the men were not forthcoming.

A peddler brought the news with his pack to the servants's hall at Derwent side, and what more natural than for Amos Hedley to hasten with the intelligence to his kind friends at the farm, forgetful of his seamed lips and yet perceptible limp. Bearing a hare over his shoulder as a present from Sir William to the farmer, a pair of bright shoe-buckles and a gay cap-ribbon from the peddler's pack for the mistress and her maid, he crossed the park in an unwonted tremor, and had nearly stepped upon a steel man-trap, of his own setting, in his incautious hurry through the woods.

As he emerged from the shadow of the trees at the copse-gate, he saw that the peddler must have loitered by the way and left his news behied him, for all down the village street knots of women with their bare arms crossed, and smutty fellows with short pipes between their teeth, were grouped together, or dispersing to gossip elsewhere. The farm-gate stood open; burly Gilbert Applegarth, with both hands thrust into his breeches-pockets, leaned against the gate-post, demonstrating to an eager audience that none other than Nick Faw the tinker had helped the culprits out of jail. Wasn't he and them thick as thieves? And wasn't there a token of his handiwork about it?

Applegarth's tall son George, with a flail over his shoulder, stood close by his father's side, nodding his head in assent, and Amos caught a glimpse of a dark blue printed short-gown, or jacket, and a smiling face under a white linen cap between the father and son; but as he neared the group, he saw a dark petticoat disappear round the corner of the house, and his heart sank with a great fall.

He was too busy asking himself the question why Hope ran away, to pay much attention to the queries of others concerning the prison-breakers, and the farmer spoke to him twice before he received an assent to his theory of Nick Faw's tools having done the business.

Disheartened by Hope's apparent avoidance, he would have contented himself with handing the hare to the farmer with Sir William's compliments, and leaving the buckles for Dame Applegarth with his own "respectful service," but Gipsy did not answer to his call, his lip was yet too sore for whistling, and Gilbert's hospitality was not to be gainsaid; so partly to oblige the farmer, and partly to look after the stray setter, he followed the farmer into the big kitchen, where Mrs. Applegarth was drawing a smoking hot loaf from the oven. And then the gossips must have dispersed, for Geordie Applegarth's flail was heard at work in the barn.

The eyes of Amos were again disappointed. A sun-burnt hat on a peg and a pair of pattens by the door, were all the visible signs of Hope.

The dame could not leave her baking, and the farmer wanted cheese and ale. He strode to the door and called "Hope, hinny!" in a voice like a trumpet.

At the call Hope came in from the dairy with Gipsy in her wake, licking from his black muzzle the traces of fresh curds. The roses on Hope's cheeks were in their fullest bloom, but her eyes avoided Amos, and after a salutation, too brief and commonplace to satisfy his new craving, she coolly lifted a brown stone-ware jug from a hook, and descended into the cellar for the ale. Then she placed the cheese biggin, containing nearly half a cheese, beside the ale, and a fresh brown loaf by the side of that, with no more apparent concern than a daily duty called for.

Amos felt himself rebuffed. He had not the perception to realize that Gipsy stood proxy for himself when Hope stooped to pat him, or stroke his silken ears, as she went to and fro; or that she had disappeared on his approach, lest her pleasure should be too self-evident.

She had had time, since she saw him cross the lane, to see that he was well enough to put in an appearance earlier if he were as grateful as he had professed, and to collect her womanly resolution not to make herself too cheap. So Gipsy came in for the favors self-consciousness withheld from his master.

She was sufficiently well pleased, when Amos, with more parade than was at all necessary, produced the shining shoe-buckles, and begged Mrs. Applegarth to accept them; and she was ready with her admiration; but something she would have scorned to call a pain smote her when he rose to depart without offering her "so mickle as a brass thimmle," as she said to herself.

Had she followed Amos to the gate, no doubt the bright-hued ribbon would have been forthcoming, but she gave him her hand to shake as he lingered by the door, and said "good-bye" with much less heartiness than did her tall, thin mistress, going back to her butter-making before his foot was well off the threshold.

I've a notion that had he looked into the dairy and seen her wipe her arm roughly across her eyes as if half-ashamed that the process was necessary, he would not only have left the ribbon, but something else besides for a remembrance.

Gipsy seemed to have an inkling that all was not right, and came rubbing his head against her woolen petticoat, but a sharp call, repeated still more sharply, drew the dog after his disconcerted and discontented master, as fast as his three legs would carry him; and soon the russet woods swallowed up both, and it was no use straining wet eyes at the dairy lattice.

CHAPTER III.

The misunderstandings unavowed lovers are, of all others, most persistent, least comprehensible, and least open to happy solution.

Amos Hedley and Hope Wolsingham saw just so much of each other as served to widen the gap beween them, and not enough to bridge it over; yet, with perverse inconsistency of human nature, the attachment of each became strong as there seemed less likelihood of a mutual understanding.

Servants both, with set duties and hard work between them from one week's to another, they had no leisure to ruminate with folded hands and grow morbidly sentimental, but the heartache was not the less real and deep. The few days' intercourse at the farm, when the man was helpless and the woman tenderly helpful, had raised hopes which only lacked confirmation.

Alas, for hope! Their first meeting set doubt in its place, and doubt is an enemy not easily dislodged.

The brown and crimson leaves of October had grown dingy under the chilly breath of young November, and lay in sudden heaps under the dripping trees when the light frost gave away before moist and rain.

Amos, in attendence on Sir William, came and went from the park to the moors, the nearest way to which rounded to the corner of the farm-yard and crossed the Applegarth meadows, and had frequent opportunities to say a word in passing to whomsoever chanced to be about; and as they mostly passed at milking-time, whether morning or evening, and the dogs gave notice of their approach, it needed little contrivance to bring Hope within speaking distance on these occasions. But as milking-time came close upon feeding and foddering time, big Geordie Applegarth was generally there also with his pitchfork, or pails of swill for the porkers, and being fond of a gossip, effectually prevented any private tete-a-tete.

Geordie was sublimely unconscious of intrusion, but Amos read in his constant presence an intentional intervention and supervision of Hope only compatible with ulterior designs of his own, and resented it accordingly.

He had carried the bright ribbons in his pocket hoping to find a favorable moment for their presentation; but uncertain how his offering might be received, he could not risk it with the raw-boned fellow at her elbow. So the silken love-gift came and went away with him, until, in high displeasure at George Applegarth's association with Hope, he began to pass without glancing toward the farm-gate even when alone. Nay, if Gipsy were with him and evinced a desire to run beneath the bars and have a little quiet frolic with Hope, whose plump hand was always ready to stroke his head, a shrill and prolonged whistle summoned the grateful animal away before he could lick her hand to return.

Under this fresh slight, Hope decided that Amos was ungrateful, that he was not worth thinking about, and that she would not waste another thought upon him. But she thought of little else. True, she kept out of sight when he was near, but she watched for his coming from behind the dairy lattice, and sighed when he was gone.

Hers was not a fading color, but its brightness paled; she lost her spirits and her appetite, and then Dame Applegarth took notice of the change.

Hope insisted it was only due to the weather, but the good dame thought otherwise, and decided that her maid should have a holiday for the purpose of consulting her grandmother, the doctress, and bringing back such herbs and simples as their own garden might not afford.

Betty Walsington, when at home, which was but seldom, occupied a cottage in a sort of rift, high on the side of Black Fell. Other cottages, chiefly inhabited by pitmen and their families, were scattered here and there, singly or in groups. Hers stood alone and loof, under the shelter of a gray rock, and was distinguished by a small patch of garden-ground, in which Betty reared a few vegetables and such medical herbs as would flourish with little cultivation.

A clear spring of pure water trickled from the rock behind, and ran away in a thin rillet down the hill-side, leaping to spray here and there until it lost itself in a wider burn, inky as the coal deposits whence it flowed.

Burnhead was little more than three miles from Derwentside, but three miles of rugged, pathless road over moor and fell, intersected with yawning caverns in the shape of an old and abandoned coal-pits, with gorse and whin to impede progress if the "blind path" be deserted—three miles, I say, of such road might well count as six. So Dame Applegarth must have felt when she filled with fresh butter, new laid eggs, a piece of bacon, and a pie, a basket for Hope to carry to her grandmother and hurried the girl off early on the Saturday afternoon, with strict injections not to return until the next day, when she was to start early from Burnhead, least the mists of evening should overtake her before she got home.

Hope took the basket and trudged off, hardly feeling its weight; perhaps her heart was the heavier of the two, for as she left the house-door she saw Amos Hedley at the copse-gate, and though his foot advanced as if to meet her, he stepped back, and the sudden smile died out from his face.

She had not seen Gilbert Applegarth and Geordie together watching her from the farm-yard, or heard, as Amos had, the farmer's words to his son as he slapped him on the back encouragingly with one hand and pointed at the same time to the figure going toward the village with the other.

"There's a canny lass for thee, Gwordie; nivvor her marrow in all Durwham."

A canny lass, indeed, under the gray duffed cloak, with the gypsy hat tied down so closely and modestly under her chin, so as to cover her ears and shadow her face from either glaring sun or staring eyes.

There was little sun to stare at her that November afternoon, and the few pitmen she met, with their picks over their shoulders and their empty bait-pokes slung behind, merely said: "Gude-den, hinny," and passed on.

Never had the road to her grandmother's seemed so long and wearisome. Either she was really ill, or had been disheartend at the first start, for before she had gone half the distance she sat down to rest on a boulder gray and yellow with lichen and put her basket beside her, glad to be relieved of the weight.

As she sat there pondering what Amos Hedley really thought about her, and whether it was true he was courting the laundry-maid at the hall, and whether it would be wise to mention him at all to her old grandmother, ruminating in a desultry sort of way, looking absently before her across the fell the while, she saw a figure approaching in the distance and suddenly recognized the disreputable tinker, Nick Faw. She snatched up her basket in the instant and hastened along, with steps no longer retarded by love-dreams, but quickened by apprehension.

Apparently he was not journeying her way, for, on looking back after awhile, distance or the inequalities of the road hid him from view.

Greatly to Hope's disappointment, Betty Wolsingham's cottage was closed. Its owner was evidently abroad, smoothing some one's way either into the world or out of it, for the door was locked, which was never the case during temporary absence.

What should she do now? Go back she must, and that without delay; but she was already tired, and had no mind to carry a heavy load back with her. There was a small stone bench outside the cottage, and here she seated herself to consider—not the expanded prospects before her, but her own.

The walk had given her an appetite. Congratulating herself on the pork pie in her basket, she broke down its wall of paste without ceremony, and finding a tin dipper at the back of the cottage, helped herself to a draught of water from the spring.

She then tried both casements, but they had been carefully secured, so there was no chance to empty her basket on the window-seat within. Her only plan was to leave the things and a message with Betty's nearest neighbor—a collier's wife, who lived some four hundred yards away down the burn-side. This would take her out of her way, but it would be better than going back so laden.

So resolving, she again lifted her basket this time with a little sigh of weariness; but the afternoon was advancing, and, though she knew every foot of the road, the knowledge came with the consciousness that it was safest trodden before the shadows closed in.

From the collier's wife she ascertained that her grandmother had only left home the previous day, and had fastened up her cottage because there were some "uncanny chaps hingin' an' keepin' aboot."

Hope's heart gave a leap as she thought of Nick Faw, and was half inclined to accept the woman's hospitable invitation to remain there until morning. She had, however, too clear a perception of the already overcrowded state of the pitmen's hut to add to its inconvenience. Contenting herself with leaving the comestibles behind for the woman's own use reserving only the bacon for her grandmother, with many profuse apologies for rejecting the hospitality pressed upon her, she turned her face homeward, not without calculating how far she would be able to travel before darkness came to obscure her path.

A stout heart had Hope. Setting fatigue aside, she stepped forward resolutely, with the gray hood of her cloak drawn over her hat, and the empty basket swinging in her hand to the motion of her feet. It was anything but a straight or a defined path; here and there she followed the downward course of the burn, once or twice she crossed the running water with a bound, now she traversed a precipitous ledge of rock, anon a cleft in which the day was quenched, and from which she only emerged to find the twilight deepening, and a thick mist blotting the outlines of the landscape. She was glad when she reached the open moorland, and knew that more than half the distance was traversed. For the first time she stopped to rest, leaning against a low gray ridge of stone, while she shook the chafing sand and pebbles out of her shoes.

As if the very stoppage had conjured up a "bogle," she heard a loud halloo, which was answered by a rough voice, apparently on the other side of the ridge, and within two yards of the spot where she stood.

Neither the call nor the answer were in choice language; but what made her heart sink was that the man hailed had answered to the name of "Nick," and that she could not pursue her road without being seen as soon as she reached the dip of the slaty screen of stone.

Hope's breath came and went. The spot was lonely. The man had an evil name, and his friends were tarred with the same brush. She was equally at a loss whether to advance or retreat, and indeed was half afraid to stir lest the crunch of loose stone beneath her tread might tell of her presence.

And now she felt that even the gathering fog was a friend to her; she might be able to pass the end of the ridge under its veil. There was no danger on the moors she dreaded in comparison with those men, of whom she had had a shuddering horror since the day she saw young Amos Hedley so bruised and battered by their brutality.

As she paused in fear and uncertainty, she heard Nick Faw abuse the others for keeping him waiting so long in the cold. Then there was a gurgling sound as of liquor passing from a bottle-neck down some one's throat, and then—well might she hold her breath and listen with mouth agape—all the details were discussed of a well-laid plan to break into Derwentside Hall on the Monday night, and carry off whatever plate and valuables they could lay their hands on, any opposition on the part of the inmates to be silenced by the knife.

Hope's ears and nerves were strained to the uttermost, her dread of discovery increased by the weight of the secret now in her keeping, and she longed to hear the men depart and leave the path open to her.

Presently there was a move, a move that appalled her. Nick Faw announced his intention to return to Black Fell. If he did, he must turn the corner of the ridge, and not even the fog would hide if he brushed against her.

Resolution came quick as thought. Gathering herself together, she darted off like an arrow from the string, passed the dip of the rock unseen, if not unheard, in the fog, and barely caught the startled "What be yan? or the jeering reply, "A hare, mon? Div ye think it be auld Clootie?" as away she scudded with all the celerity of fear and its reckless lack of perception.

In the one dread of pursuit, she kept her course, though she could scarcely see a yard before her, and landmarks had disappeared.

Soon she had a dim consciousness that she had lost her way, and moved forward with more caution. Now she began to wish she had accepted the horn-lantern offered by the pitman's wife, that she might scan the path before her feet and distinguish bushes from boulders. She was worn out with fatigue, terror, and anxiety, and what wonder if she also wished for the arm of Amos to sustain her, as she stumbled at every step?