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48-24

# Kit Kennedy

BY S. R. CROCKETT.

CHAPTER II.—(Cont'd.)

Mrs. Armour, who had been listening as near the door as she dared to come, obediently went into the courtyard, and in a few minutes Bell the byre-lass, a tall dark girl, with some remnant of good looks not yet coarsened out of her, entered with a kind of sullen defiance in her manner.

"What's your wull wi' me?" she said, standing her ground with her hands thumb down upon her hips.

Matthew Armour looked at her with a certain stern calmness which was not without its effect.

"Bell Kirkpatrick," he said, "is it true that you were witness to a private marriage between my daughter Liliass and a man named Christopher Kennedy?"

"Na!" said the hoyden boldly; "it isna true. No a single word o' it. I ken nocht about ony Christopher Kenn."

"Take care!" said the Elder; "my daughter assures me it is true!"

"Then your dochter tells a lie!" asserted Bell Kirkpatrick. "I never heard a word o' ony marriage!"

"As I thought," said Matthew Armour, turning to Liliass; "he has well chosen his witnesses, and I doubt not paid them with other people's money. He hath deceived and mocked you, my daughter. He who mocked at his Creator might well mock at the creature. But I, Matthew Armour, am your father. Fear not! I will stand beside you in the gate. You are well rid of a man so coward and forsworn, a man debauched and rotten of heart."

"It is true, it is true; what I tell you is God's own truth!" cried Liliass Armour, holding a folded paper in her hand. "See—read. Here it is, in the handwriting of Alister French, and with his name and that of Christopher Kennedy upon it, together with Bell Kirkpatrick's mark."

"Give the paper to me, my daughter!" said her father.

With a strange reluctance to let the precious strip out of her hands, the girl gave it to her father.

The old man adjusted his spectacles and read it as calmly as he would a text of the Scripture.

Then, without a moment's hesitation, he walked across to the fire that burned in the grate of the house-place of the Black Dornal, and thrust it deep into the midst.

With a strange, breaking cry Liliass threw herself forward towards it.

"Father, father," she cried, "give it to me. It is my all!"

Her father kept her back with his left hand, while with his right hand he held the paper down till it was consumed, and the fragments swirled up the chimney, with fiery little dots still crawling crablike across them.

"It is but the worthless forgery of a villain," he said, "and if it were not, I would burn it a thousand times rather than give you up body and soul to a man accursed and outcast like Christopher Kennedy."

The girl stood gasping, her hands still fighting to pass the strong arm that held her back, her mouth squarely open, her eyes with the wild blank terror of the utterly forsaken in them.

"Oh, you know not what you have done," she said. "I am his, body and soul; I am his! If he fail me now, I know not what I shall do!"

And without another word she turned and went slowly and heavily out of the room. Matthew Armour watched her go, and as the sound of her footsteps died down the narrow passage which led to her own little chamber, he turned swiftly on Bell Kirkpatrick.

"And now, lying woman, leave this house instantly. You have witnessed a lie and have doubtless been paid for it. Sabbath though it be, I also will pay you that which is owing between us. But God will one day give you your wages in full reckoning for the evil you have brought upon me and mine this day."

The woman stood silent and watched him, at intervals ostentatiously humming a dance tune. Old Matthew Armour turned upon her on his way to the little locked drawer where he kept his money.

"Silence, woman!" he cried, "silence, lest I be tempted to strike you to the ground."

And so threatening was his gesture that the defiance was smitten from the face of the false witness as quickly as a boy wipes a slate with a wet sponge. She held out her hand mechanically for the money.

And as the last coin was told into it she made towards the door.

On the threshold the woman turned, and with a certain flier of bravado she said, "Matthew Armour, this is not the end, either for you or for your daughter. I warn you!"

The old man raised his hand, and pointed to the door with a motion so large and commanding that the evil woman went out without another word, like Judas, bearing the price of innocent blood.

Then Matthew Armour laid his hand upon the open Word of God and looked upward.

He stood a long while thus praying his face softening strangely as he did so with a kind of inner light shining out from it.

"Perhaps I have done wrong," he said, "as well as that poor young lassie."

And as he shut the book he said

again yet more gently than before, "My poor, poor lassie!"

CHAPTER III.  
AFTER EIGHT YEARS.

It was a mellow July afternoon nearly eight years after that Sabbath morn when Liliass Armour walked out of the house-place of Dornal with her finger nails gripped into her palms, and no marriage lines in the bosom of her dress to stir with the fluttering of her heart.

Matthew Armour sat on a bench beside the door, leaning upon the head of his staff, and looking out over the green springing corn, through the spaces of the trees in the hollow, down to the meadows by the waterside. He had grown older even to the casual eye during these last years. His hair was less abundant, and the hand that had been so strong quavered upon the tough oaken head of the staff on which he leaned thoughtfully.

But under the heavy grey brows the eyes of the Ruling Elder were still grey and unconquerably clear. His lips were firm, and lay close one upon the other with the old precision and determination. His "yea" was still "yea" and his "nay" still "nay" to all within the precincts of the Black Dornal.

Yet withal there was something warmer and kinder than of yore—a light from within the gates, as Mr. Osborne expressed it. Mr. Osborne was the minister of the Cameronian Kirk, and he knew his Ruling Elder well.

As Matthew Armour sat thus with his broad bonnet of blue on his head, his eye caught the glint of the mower's scythe somewhere down in the hollow. And at intervals there came to the old man a wail of song, the gay lilt of an air, the plaintive note of a psalm tune, or again, the strident *rish-whish* of the sharpening strake on the scythe as the mower set it with its point to the ground, and put an edge on the broad shining blade with long alternate sweeps of his arm.

It was very still about the old man until, sudden as a swallow's swoop, something passed behind him.

From the open door of the milk-house, which stood at the end of the farm buildings of Dornal, a little boy of six or seven came with a rush, and a brisk, stirring voice followed him with the snell Scottish scolding "tang" in it, which is ever more humorous than alarming to those whom it addresses.

"Ye ill-set blasty, Kit Kennedy, gin I catch ye in here again! I declare a body canna turn about for ye, but ye are at the cream. Or if ye are na at the cream, ye are thumping the guid fresh butter ontill your bread-piece as if it were common as clay. I hae neither rest nor peace in my life for ye—I declare, so I do!"

The figure of Mrs. Armour of the Black Dornal appeared at the door of the milk-house—wrathful, gesticular, voluble, but somewhat ineffective. For the small boy addressed as Kit Kennedy did not wait to be more nearly approached, but fled helter-skelter to the knees of the Ruling Elder. These he seized with both chubby hands and forced apart, wedging himself between them as if he had been ensconcing himself in a citadel from which it was impossible to dislodge him.

Mistress Armour stood a moment shaking her fist at the small culprit. Then she went discontentedly within, but the gist of her meditations were permitted to reach the ears of her husband, for whom doubtless they were intended.


"A bonny like thing," she went on, shrilly, among her milk pails, "that after bringin' up his ain in the fear o' God and a guid hazel stick, Matthew should be turned about the wee finger o' a bairn like that. It's easy seen that some folk are growin' early doited. Preserve us a—we mauna raise a finger against the brat, as if he were a king in his ain right and the Lord's anointed!"

She resumed her butter-making, still muttering to herself.

"No that he's sic an ill bairn either," she said, relentingly, "but

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only that mischevious and worritin'. Ye'll meet the loon wi' a face on him like a thanksgivin' service, an' ye think what a grand wiselike bairn. But a' the same ye are safe in giein' him a daud on the side o' the head, for I'se warrant ye that he's either on the road to some ill-doin', or comin' direct frae a mischief! Either way, he'll be pleased wi' himse!"

(To be continued.)

### Wine Made From Roses.

The rose long figured in the pharmacopeia. Pliny gives over thirty remedies compounded of rose-leaves and petals and elioabalus used to drink rose wine as a tonic after his periodical bouts, while in much more recent times sufferers from nervous complaints have been advised to seek relief by swallowing rose-leaf compounds or sleeping on pillows stuffed with rose-petals.

Rose-water, too, was at one time widely used for flavoring foods and the Chinese still have rose fritters, while the Hindus delight in rose-candy.

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