

"By the Bonny, Bonny Banks o' Loch Lomond."

A Romance of the Old Loch and the New

WRITTEN FOR PROGRESS.

"Have some pity, Miss Graeme! I'm only a poor Englishman, not even claiming Scotch descent you know, and I haven't lived here long enough to be able to run up hills after a day's climbing! Pity the weak, Miss Graeme, and in your strength show mercy!"

A low, merry laugh was the only answer the stalwart young laughing Englishman received, but the pace setter slowed up a little, which kindness the Englishman appreciated less than the answering laugh to hear which he had made his little speech.

The sun had just set in the waters of Loch Lomond, far away in bonny Scotland, the last rays had just kissed the dark, frowning mountain piles which guard its shores, and the purple shades of evening were deepening and thickening, when two men and a girl all evidently wearied out by a long walk plodded up the hill towards home.

Only to speak true, you could not ascribe the word plodded to the step of the winsome brown haired girl, leading the van, for truly.

"A fort more light a step more true;
Near from the heath-flower dashed the dew."

With a slow swaying motion the girl was mounting the incline, her regular steps in time with an old Scotch war song which she was softly humming to herself.

More appropriately can we use the word to describe her father's gait. Poor, clever old Professor Graeme! How many weary tramps had he made in search of his beloved specimens of plants, nearly always in the company of his daughter Margery.

How often had he returned home after a long day's climbing, tired to death, but so uplifted in mind over his new discoveries, that he could not reckon in his mind the weariness of his flesh!

Yes! As the third of the trio watched the long ungainly figure of his old professor, stumbling on before him, he could not but wonder again how the dainty little Scottish maiden, lilting like a wood bird; yet with all the pretty airs and graces of a spirit beauty could have sprung from this uncouth, eccentric, yet strangely lovable old botanist. High spirited she was too, and that Eric Wyman knew well, for he had had many a tussle with the loyal little Scotch woman, for Eric was not a co-patriot. The son of a wealthy English shipper, he had come to Edinburgh to take a course in the University, and now that his last session was over, was spending a few weeks holidays in viewing some of the unsurpassable lochs of Scotland, before returning home for the summer vacation, which was to precede his start in the actual work of life.

Right soon had he learned to appreciate the beauties of Loch Lomond. The day after his arrival he had discovered with pleasure that his favorite professor with his daughter was staying at the same little hotel or inn, and had been made heartily welcome by his old friend to partake in their long rambles in search of specimens. While the professor searched, his daughter taught the Englishman the beauties of the spot and the songs of her country, for nature had endowed her not only with a sweet sympathetic voice, but also a wonderful power of retaining the words of the old ballads. There were few occasions which Margery could not suit with an apt quotation from some old Scotch verse.

When at last the three wanderers had reached the door of the primitive picturesque little inn and were taking another glance at the grandeur of the night the old professor exclaimed: "Dear me! dear me! surely you've got my spectacles, Eric, I had them a few minutes ago, and I can't find them now." "Why, no, professor I haven't got them. Surely you must have left them on that last rock where we were resting at the end of the Loch."

"Oh, Daddy, Daddy! You would have lost me, and forgotten me a thousand times over if I didn't know how to follow you! But you can't go back for them, father, you are far too tired already!"

"I'll go professor, for it would not do to risk them out all night, but—" with a side long glance at Margery, "I'm not so sure of my way up to that favorite seat of Miss Graeme! If anything happens to me just let the old folks know!"

"Dear me, how pathetic, Mr. Wyman! I see I must be your guide. Well, come on! We won't be long, father, for I'll sing the 'Keel Row' and that will take us at a good rate! And off went the young girl, followed by Wyman leaving her father quite taken aback at the loss of his spectacles.

But the Keel Row did not last long.

Margery was tired after all, and by the

time they had regained their former resting place was glad to sit down once more and rest. And indeed who could have hastened away from the magnificent scene which spread itself out before them.

"Come, now, Mr. Wyman, own you cannot in all the lands of merrie England find a scene to equal this?"

The witchery of the night made Wyman feel strangely quiet. By this time the moon had risen and its beams lay broad across the waters at their feet, making the mountains in contrast, grander and darker—veritable guardians of the strand; and the sweet low voice of the girl he had learned to love, speaking to him—everything was so hushed and still, almost solemn in its grandeur.

Wyman thought of the busy life that lay before him, of the very different scenes in which he would so soon be sharing, of the other women that he knew, clever, gay, accomplished women, but when weighed in the balance with this simple mountain girl, strangely lacking in something, he could not tell what.

"Has father told you, Mr. Wyman, that he has at last finally decided that we are to take our long talk of trip to Canada? You know he has two brothers out there, who have always been so anxious that we should go out some summer and see their homes. They say father would be so interested in the country, and so we are at last going. You know, when father once takes up an idea, he wants to act upon it at once, so we shall soon be far away from bonny Scotland for a time at least."

Wyman could say nothing at the moment. He thought of the vast separating ocean, he thought of the months that must pass before he would see her again, he thought of the many different people and places she would see that would all help to crowd him from her life.

"Are you not glad for me, Mr. Wyman. Do you not think I shall like it?"

"Glad! Margery, glad that you are going to the other side of the world from me! Glad that I may never see you again! Oh, Margery, rather are you not 'wae for me'?"

And as the wild rose color spread softly over her cheek, and her deep blue eyes were lowered from his passionate gaze.

"Margery, will you not promise that you will only go out there, as my promised bride?"

The saucy look crept into her eyes as she sang softly half under her breath, "O, I canna canna, winna winna, muna—"

"Stop, there, Margery. Do not finish it."

"I'm owre young tae marry yet
I'm owre young tae marry yet
T'would be a sin tae marry yet
Tae take me frae ma mamma yet"

went on Margery, changing her tune.

"That's true, Margery, but tell me when you will say 'yes' to me, and do not make it long, or I warn you, I won't wait."

Margery thought a moment 'not till we meet again on the bonny bonny banks o' Loch Lomond' lifted the saucy little maiden, and as she sprang from her high seat, and began the descent, "mind, Mr. Wyman, you forfeit all right to the question, if you do so before."

Next day, Wyman went home to 'try and exist' as he put it to Margery, till he heard of their return, when he knew the Professor would come to his favorite loch, before a new college session opened. "And I'll expect you, then Margery, but a warning look, and I'm no sae sure, sae very sure," changing the words of another song to suit her convenience, finished the scene.

A few days later the Graeme's had bidden them to 'Auld Reekie,' there to make hurried preparations for their voyage across the Atlantic.

As Margery had said, this was a long talk of trip. Professor Graeme had two brothers who had made their homes in Canada many years back before Margery's young mother had died, and they had been constantly striving to get their learned brother and his daughter to come out and pay them a visit. Now, the Professor had suddenly decided that he would. They would see a large part of Canada, for Dr. Wm Graeme, the elder brother, had a large practice in the West while the younger was a prosperous lumber merchant in the northern part of New Brunswick.

The voyage across, was altogether a new experience for Margery, and a most pleasant one. The winsome Scotch face, with its true eyes, and glowing colour, attracted friendship, while the happy, merry temperament, retained them. They found the weeks went all too quickly as they visited the great rivers and mountains, homes and haunts of the new land. The Professor searched and sought, studied and discovered, among the prairies and forests of Canada, and all too soon they found the summer waning, and hastened to New Brunswick to spend the remaining weeks of their visit there.

The subject of the grave discussion between the two young English girls was Eric. It was evidently a puzzling subject, if we can judge by the serious expression in the bright young faces;—

"What is it, Ethel, what can it be? Something has changed Eric completely. He tries to hide it, and pretends to be just as interested in our picnics, and the boys cricket, and games as he used to be, but even old Laddie notices it, for he takes his own time when Eric drives him, and that is a pretty slow time, too."

"I've just been thinking, Winny, and I think he is just like what Mona was when she got engaged. Do you think it could be the same, Winny? Surely, Eric is not going to get engaged," and the voice fell very low

at the thought of such an impending calamity.

"He's always just reading, and reading, and once when I looked at the book he had laid down, it was all some dry stuff about Canada. What does Eric want to know about Canada? With a stress of contempt on the name of the country, yet only a name to the little Briton."

"Well, I heard him say to father last night that he would like a trip across to America, but I didn't take any notice, for I thought he was only joking. Only I hope he doesn't really want to go for father would be sure to let Eric do just anything he wants to!"

All too pleased in the interest his son was taking in his shipping, and quite ready to let him see what he wanted of the world Eric was easily granted a trip to America in one of his father's steamers. Two weeks in New York, and around it, would give him a breathing space before the steamer leaves again for home.

Eric had persuaded the professor to send him occasional accounts of their doings and was endeavoring by means of books to make himself familiar with the rights they were seeing. But this would be far better!

As the 'Aronic' steamed into New York harbor, Eric tried to feel that he was now quite near Margery, but oh the weary distances of the 'New World.' The first week was spent in visiting New York, and some of the other large cities, among them Boston, which seemed more like many of the cities of old England, and through which he lived to wander.

One evening after a day's sight seeing, on his return to the hotel, a re-addressed letter from the professor was handed to him.

"Not many weeks, now, Eric till we are home again. We leave in a couple of weeks for New Brunswick, where my brother advises me to spend a few days in the old city of St. John, before sailing up the river to his home—sorry you can't be here to enjoy it all with us! Margery likes it all fine, but the lassie seems to be as eager to get back to our old Loch at home, as I ever was."

Aha, Daddy Graeme! Letting out secrets quite unconsciously! Eric suddenly felt like leaving a dollar for the postman who had brought him his letter.

St. John is it! and from the date of the letter they will be there now. And didn't I pass a wharf and see a steamer start this very day for St. John and by a strange coincidence, and the blessings of the Fates won't I be in St. John too!

What of it, though he was on board a whole hour before the boat started? That was no reason why they should be a whole hour late in starting 'ye gods and little fishes' muttered Eric, as he impatiently strode up and down the deck, if they don't hurry up and start, I'll get out and swim.

Well, it was all very fine to feel that he was going straight to Margery but he had not forgotten his promise, and how could he meet her, after his long separation, and talk everyday nothing, that he might talk to his grandmother with perfect propriety! 'No' thought he as he paced up and down among the many tourists enjoying the cool breeze after the heat of the big city, 'No I'll bide my time I'll see Margery and wait my chance.'

It was late in the afternoon, almost evening, when the steamer entered the harbor, and entered at the same time a thick grey fog which seemed to hang like a protecting veil over the city to hide it from the rays of the scorching sun, which had burnt up the towns and cities he had just left.

Restless and eager for movement Eric passed the clamorous cabmen and by dint of enquiry easily found his way to the principal hotel, where he hoped to see the names of his friends registered. He determined to have a glimpse of Margery while she still thought him far away. 'If,' he sadly pondered, 'she thinks of me at all!'

Yes! there were the names, the dear old familiar names 'Professor Graeme, Miss Margery Graeme.' They had been there a few days, the clerk said, and he believed they were still to be there two. 'They have gone up the Kennebecasis to-day, sir, and will not be back for a few hours yet. I know because Miss Graeme came to me and asked me how to pronounce the name.'

Eric could just hear the merry laughing voice trying to pronounce the long name.

"Don't let them have any word of my arrival, tonight! And Eric went off to dinner.

Afterwards, stationing himself in a position where he would be sure to see them on their return, he scanned the many, many strange faces, passing him, eagerly watching for the only two he would know.

At last! Wyman wondered how people could resist turning and gazing with delight at the little figure in the blue traveling dress, with such a sweet Scotch face, crowned by the wavy brown hair, and a little rough sailor hat! Only a glimpse! but he knew he would soon have more, and was it not enough to feast his memory for one more night!

It was hard to prevent himself from making his presence known, but he knew Margery well, that since that promise existed, he must stick to it. There was nothing for it but to wait and see what the morning would bring.

He was early on the alert the next day, and determined to breakfast before they were likely to come to the dining-room. Not a minute too soon! As he left the room, he saw them at the other end of the corridor, walking towards him. He slipped into the shadow of a door way.

Margery's clear tones carried far—

"Well, father, we are to go to Loch

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"Her voice was lost in the distance; but 'Loch Lomond today!' Rothsay!" Had the lassie gone daft? Was he in Scotland again? What did it all mean?

Hastening to the office he asked the clerk the names of some of the places tourists generally visited. "Well, sir, there's Nauwigewauck, a fine place as you can go to, there's the Kennebecasis, as I told you—"

"Oh, stop these jaw breakers," interrupted Wyman, "and tell me some civilized names."

"English, evidently sir, and not accustomed to our Indian names! Well, how does Loch Lomond do, or Rothsay?"

"By all the shades!" muttered Wyman, as a great idea came to him, which would lead him out of his perplexities.

"See! Can I hire a bicycle here?"

"Ten of them, if you like, sir, a little further up the street."

"Have one brought to me immediately. But stay, how far is it to Loch Lomond?"

"About twelve or fifteen miles, I should say, sir."

"All right. Please have the bicycle brought at once."

"Now," thought Wyman, as he went off to prepare. "If I lived in the old Heathenish times, I would have had to give a good fat offering to my guardian goddess; and, by Jove, it does seem as if I had been born under a lucky star with a vengeance!"

In little more than fifteen minutes he was waiting in a sheltered spot opposite, where it would be impossible to notice him, unless especially sought for. As the time went on and they did not appear,—"Oh, surely they haven't changed their minds! Oh, desert me not now my luck. Ah here they were—"

A quick spring, and the little figure in blue, was in the carriage, and in a few minutes they were off. Now, was Wyman's chance, and bravely he struggled up hill, and down hill, easily keeping in view, his friends, so unconscious of his nearness.

Sometimes he would ride up, quite close behind them, so near as to hear the light hearted laugh he loved so well, and sometimes as they got out into the country a verse of the familiar songs. Once he was nearly seen. It was a narrow escape.

"Stop, driver, I must get out a minute and get some of these beautiful flowers," Margery had called out.

It happened that Wyman was just then nearer than he had ever yet been and the words were easily carried to him by the wind. It was not a thickly wooded part. What could he do? Quick as thought he had crept into a dry ditch, at the side of the road, and put his bicycle down among the long grass.

"Now," thought poor Eric, "it only she will be content with the flowers at her side. But when was the ambition of woman ever satisfied with what was so easily attained?"

"Just a minute over here father, O!" And with a cry of alarm, Eric heard her run back to the carriage. There's a man in the ditch, and from his back he seems to be just awful!

Oh, Margery, Margery, that vivid imagination!

The Professor wanted to get out and help, but Eric heard the driver saying there were always lots of tramps sleeping it off! on the roads out here, and finally the sound of the wheels disappeared in the distance.

"It's a long way to come!" muttered poor Eric to himself, "to be told that from your back you are just awful! But he was mounted again in a minute, and off in hot pursuit."

He kept at a greater distance, now, all along the beautiful road, between rows of bushes and trees reminding him of the hedges of his mother land. At the sight of the beautiful Loch Eric decided it was worthy of its name, and gazed with delight at the namesake of his try's place.

"Far along the road the carriage led and Eric followed till finally it stopped at a quaint little inn."

"I daresay it's quite true that love can fly on wings!" thought Eric, "but it must be a jolly lot easier than on a bicycle on a hilly road."

Eric waited till he had seen Margery and her father wander down to the shore, when he left his bicycle at the house, and followed.

It was very easy to keep them in sight—Bye and bye they got into a little boat, which was lying by the shore, and Margery rowing it, to near the middle of the loch, the professor produced fishing tackle and cast his line. It was easy for Eric to wait. Now that the moment seemed just within his grasp, he preferred to prolong the delightful anticipation a little longer. Presently the rowing ceased, the little

brown hands drifted in the water, and, as the professor drew more and more intent in his sport, the voice came over the waters to the listener, behind the bushes.

"My heart is sair I daurna tell,
My heart is sair for somebody,
I would give, what would I no?
For the sake o' somebody!"

"Father, you've got a bite! Oh, what a silvery little thing. Let it go, Father!"

"Oh why left I my hame,
Why did I cross the sea,"

Unkind Eric! most unkind! Have you not feeling for the pathetic words, sung in such a wistful voice? No, indeed, but the brown knickerbocker's danced a "passant" behind the bushes.

"See that pretty little boat-house or club-house at the end of the Loch! We must row up and see it, later, Father."

"Row in, Margery, row in, I want some more hooks. These are no good! and with a few light strokes the boat was crunching on the shore,

"Wait for me, Margery, I'll just be a minute!"

The professor was off, and Margery was left standing by the side of the water; the little brown head thrown back, the deep blue eyes reflecting the lights of the waters.

"I lo'e nae a lassie but one
He lo'e's nae a lassie but me
He has promised to make me his ain
And his ain I have promised to be!"

"Not yet, Margery, but you're going to!" and with a bound Wyman was at her side.

"Take care! take care Margery, my 'ain' was with a great start of astonishment the girl stepped almost into the water. But his arm prevented it, and retained her.

"Mr. Wyman, where have you come from?" and as she became conscious of his hold "you are forgetting our bargain. That you were not to speak to me—like that, till we met on the bonny, bonny, banks o' Loch Lomond! Oh!" as it dawned upon her where they were."

And another "oh," and a faint gasp made them both turn to see the astonished professor, regarding them as if they had been new specimens.

"Eric! what does it all mean?" "It's the man in the ditch that wants your daughter, my dear old professor," answered Eric, as he wrung the man's hand.

"Was it you, Eric, was it you, why, did you do it?"

"Because I knew my lady dignity would not allow that her condition be broken, and I waited till we should both be on this lovely spot, and I think the jolly beggar that gave this place its name, and so has given me my love, weeks before I could otherwise have won her. Yes, Margery, I have come across the seas for you, and although I know 'from my back, I look just awful!'"

Full explanations of such a happy nature were soon made to the professor, although it seemed strange that Margery was the one who needed a longer explanation, which was given after lunch, when the professor had gone off to make discoveries, and the other two were trying to find their way through the woods to the club house.

They never found it! How lucky that the driver was not only able to ride a bicycle, but after a clasp of Eric's hand was perfectly willing to do so, to the city's limits!

Need I tell you they both got out at the place where Eric had lain in the ditch, and had a right merry laugh over it. But the merriment gave place to quieter and deeper feelings, as the shades of evening fell, and as they saw the spires of the old city before them Eric whispered to Margery that old St. John would now always hold a very warm place in his memory.

For the professor may have found some valuable specimens, but I have got the most valuable of all, and some day we shall come back together to the bonny bonny banks of the new Loch Lomond."

Of course Eric went home on the same steamer as the Graemes, and Margery thought as they strolled on the deck watching the shores of the new country losing themselves in the distance, that of all the spots she had seen there, of all the magnificent mountains and rapid rivers none would be more dearer to her than the waters up among the hills behind the 'City of the Loyalists,' and which men call 'Loch Lomond.'

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