

"Thrums," Gordon Head

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whose sweet music has set all our hearts dancing.

Mrs. Watson and Marjorie had heard the sad word, too, and when I joined them by their cheerful fireside, we talked about him and his books.

"My husband was James Barrie's cousin," Mrs. Watson said, "and he, too, was born at Kirriemuir—and in the same tenement. The Barries lived at one end and the Watson's at the other. My husband was ten years younger than James, but age was nothing to James. All the children and young people loved him, and when he came back from London it was like a visit of royalty, and him so humble and sweet and always a little sad, as if the world even with all its applause and success was a perplexing place after all. But he always had stories for the children and he was full of games and fancies!"

Two of Mr. Watson's sisters had gone from Canada and had visited at his London house on Robert Street where he lived with his wife for fifteen years, and had received a warm welcome both from Sir James and Mary Ansell, his wife. She was a lovely woman, much younger than James, and the Watson sisters had nothing but good words for her, though they could see neither of them were happy. In some ways James was always a child and in other ways an old man, but always the soul of kindness, and when his wife left him, he gave her two houses and a great fortune.

Then we talked about his books and what wonderful women he had created in them. "And they all patterned after his mother, Margaret Ogilvy," Mrs. Watson said, "And my husband said his picture of her was exactly to the life."

Then we talked of Jess and Leaby, and the window in Thrums and all that Jess saw as she sat there, a prisoner in her chair.

We talked of poor Jean Myles who made a bad match when she married Thomas Sandys, and went away with him to London to live in dire poverty, and of the letters she wrote back to Esther Auld, her girlhood friend, telling of her coach and pair, and her elaborate wardrobe bought for her by her devoted husband, and of how sorry she was for all the humble folk who had to bide in Thrums—while all the time her poor sad heart was breaking for a sight of her old home and its kindly people. Her son Tommy had caught his mother's spirit of indomitable, if mistaken, courage, and so when he went down the passage in the miserable lodging house, he called out, when appetizing odors floated out to him, "I dinna want none o'yer stew. My mother says I am no hungry!" And when Shovel, a man of the world, aged seven, his companion on the stair, bragged to T. Sandys, aged five, that his (Shovel's) father had once gone to see a man hanged, T. Sandys was ready with an answer which shattered Shovel's boasting. "It was my father that was hanged," said Tommy. And that might have been the truth, if every one had been given their just desserts!

I went over to see Mrs. Watson and Marjorie, her daughter, that night, when the word came. The rain was streaking the windows and guttering down the drains to make ponds in the freshly ploughed land. Ferndale Road was shining like a mirror, and though the night was heavy with clouds, the long summer evening was still light. It seemed fitting that the sky should be sorrowing for the passing of James M. Barrie, that spirit of the Eternal Child, who had "plucked at the skirts of the grey old world all these years, coaxing her to come and play with him"—the strange little Pied Piper

children and of how he had adopted a family of three boys, one of whom was killed in the war, and one lost his life in a drowning accident, but the third one, Peter Davies, was the man who sat with him at the end; and of how he dealt so kindly with women in his books, even the Painted Lady of Double Dykes with her graceful little airs. When profanity poured from her lips, he said, she "swore like a bairn who had been in ill company."

SCOTTISH women are independent and resourceful," Mrs. Watson said. "Reverence, and independence and backbone were the cardinal virtues of these humble folk." Then she told of the Sabbath and how it was kept. "Not a beast was ever put to work on that day. People walked six miles to church while their horses grazed in the fields. There was none of this racing and tearing on the Sabbath in a vain search for pleasure. When we came back from the kirk at home and had dinner, we often on a pleasant day walked to the Lynn Falls, a great band of us young folk, and sang to the falling water. Everyone sang. George was called the 'silver tenor,' and sang in Dundee and Edinburgh, and the cornet band to which he belonged played at Glamis every Saturday."

Then she showed me a picture of the Lynn Falls, where a film of water, thin as lace, came over the rocks and fell foaming into a pool below.

Our talk shifted then to the beginnings of the Gordon Head settlement, and of how she and George thought nothing of putting the baby in the buggy and coming out from town, six miles through the bush. Her people, the Grants, who still live here, owned many acres of this lovely country. This was long before the forest was cleared away.

On one of these six-mile trips the Watsons saw the spot on which the stone house stands, and suddenly knew it for their home, but it wasn't for sale. Some man had built a little house there and called it "Jersey Hall," but he was gone and no one knew who had the selling of the land. But one day, Willie, her brother, came in to see them in town and announced that "Jersey Hall was for sale, and if they did not buy it, he would. He named the price at which George Watson exclaimed, "It might as well be a million. We haven't the money!" Then spoke up Elizabeth, his wife, in true Thrums style. "Who says we haven't the money? We'll take the place, Willie, but first I have to put my bread in the pans. I'll go and see about it then."

"By night," she went on, with a quiet chuckle, "it was ours."

"And where did you get the money?" I asked forgetting my manners in my interest.

"I had it by me," she said. "I saved \$10 here, \$5 there, and we all had a little income from Scotland when we came. I just put mine by thinking I might need it for something. No, George did not know about it and he never asked."

Barrie did not create the resourceful, keen-witted Scottish women who grace his pages—he merely recorded them!

We talked about his love of