

**THE COTTAGERS OF  
GLENBURNIE: A  
SCOTTISH TALE**

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The cottagers of Glenburnie: a Scottish tale by Elizabeth Hamilton

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**ELIZABETH HAMILTON**

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BY  
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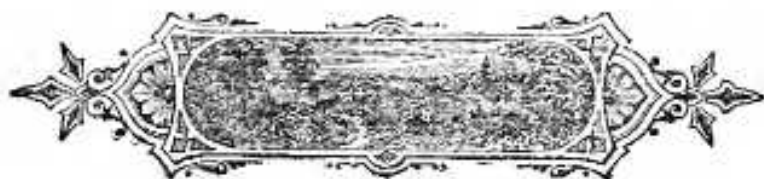
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THE  
COTTAGERS OF GLENBURNIE.

CHAPTER I.

AN ARRIVAL.



IN the fine summer of the year 1788, as Mr Stewart of Gowan Brae, and his two daughters, were one morning sitting down to breakfast, they were told by the servant, that a gentlewoman was at the door, who desired to speak with Mr Stewart on business. 'She comes in good time,' said Mr Stewart; 'but do you not know who she is?' No, sir,' returned the servant, 'she is quite a stranger, and speaks Englished, and is very lame, but has a wondrous pleasant countenance.' Mr Stewart, without further inquiry, hastened to the door, while the young ladies continued the interrogations.

'Did she come in her own carriage, or in a hack?' asked Miss Stewart. 'She came riding on a double horse,' replied the lad. 'Riding double!' cried Miss Stewart, resuming her seat, 'I thought she had been



a lady. Come, Mary, let us have our breakfast. My goodness! I hope papa is not bringing the woman here.'

As she spoke, the door opened, and Mr Stewart entered with the stranger leaning on his arm. Her respectful salute was returned by Miss Stewart with that sort of reserve which young ladies, who are anywise doubtful of being entitled to all that they assume, are apt to put on when addressing themselves to strangers, of whose rank they are uncertain; but, by her sister Mary, it was returned with a frankness natural to those who do not fear being demeaned by an act of courtesy.

'Indeed, you must breakfast with us, my good Mrs Mason,' said Mr Stewart, placing a chair; 'my daughters have often heard of you from their mother. They are no strangers either to your name or character; and therefore must be prepared to show you esteem and respect.'

Miss Stewart coloured, and drew up her head very scornfully; of which Mrs Mason took no notice, but humbly thanking the good gentleman for his kindness, added, 'that he could scarcely imagine how much pleasure it gave her, to see the children of one whom she had so loved and honoured; and she was loved and honoured by all who knew her,' continued she. 'Both the young ladies resemble her: may they be as like her in their minds as in their persons!'

'God grant they may,' said the father, sighing, 'and I hope her friends will be theirs through life.'

Miss Stewart, who had been all this time looking out of the window, began her breakfast, without taking any notice of what was said; but Mary, who never heard her mother spoken of without sensible emotion, bowed to Mrs Mason, with a look expressive of her

gratitude ; and observing, with compassion, how much she appeared exhausted by the fatigue of travelling, urged the necessity of her taking refreshment and repose. Mr Stewart warmly seconded his daughter's invitation, who, having learned that Mrs Mason had travelled night and day in the stage coach, and only stopped at —, until a horse could be prepared to bring her forward to Gowan Brae, was anxious that she should devote the remainder of the day to rest. The weary stranger thankfully acceded to the kind proposal ; and Mary, perceiving how lame she was, offered her assistance to support her to her room, and conducted her to it with all that respectful kindness, which age or indisposition so naturally excite in an artless mind.

When Mary returned to the parlour, she found her father at the door, going out ; he gave her a smile of approbation as he passed, and kindly tapping her on the neck, said, 'she was a dear good lassie, and a comfort to his heart.'

Miss Stewart, who thought that every praise bestowed on her sister, conveyed a reproach to her, now broke silence, in evident displeasure with all the party. 'She was sure, for her part, she did not know what people meant by paying such people so much attention. But she knew well enough it was all to get their good word ; but for her part, she scorned such meanness. She scorned to get the good word of any one, by doing what was so improper.'

'And what, my dear Bell, is improper in what I have now done ?' said Mary, in a mild tone of expostulation.

'Improper !' returned her sister, 'I don't know what you call improper, if you think it proper to keep company with a servant, and to make as much fuss

about her too, as if she were a lady. Improper, indeed! And when you know too, that Captain Mollins was to come here to-day; and that I had hoped my father would ask him to dinner: but my friends are never to be minded—they are to be turned out to make room for every trumpery person you choose to pick up!

‘Indeed, sister, you do me injustice,’ said Mary; ‘you know I did not bring Mrs Mason here; but when I heard her name, I recollected all that our dear mother had often told us of her extraordinary worth; and I thought, if it had pleased God to have spared her, how glad she would have been to have seen one she so much esteemed; for though my mother was born in a higher station, and bred to higher views than we have any right to, she had no pride, and treated all who were worthy of her notice with kindness.’

‘Yes,’ replied Miss Stewart, ‘it was her only fault. She was a woman of family: and with her connexions, if she had held her head a little higher, and never taken notice of people because of their being good, and such stuff, she might have lived in a genteeler style. I am sure she gave as much to poor people every year as might have given handsome dinners to half the gentry in the country; and, to curry favour with my father, you encourage him in the same mean ways. But I see through your mean arts, Miss, and I despise them.’

‘Indeed, sister, I have no arts,’ said Mary, ‘I wish to follow the example that was set us by the best of mothers, and I am sure we cannot have a better model for our conduct.’

‘Do as you please, Miss!’ cried her sister, choking with rage; and, leaving the room, slapped the door after her with a violence which awaked their guest,