

# KATE CARNEGIE

BY

IAN MACLAREN



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KATE CARNEGIE

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*John Wilson*

TO  
A CERTAIN BROTHERHOOD

*Faithful in Criticism*  
*Loyal in Affection*  
*Tender in Trouble*

## CONTENTS.

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CHAPTER	PAGE
I. PANDEMONIUM . . . . .	1
II. PEACE . . . . .	20
III. A HOME OF MANY GENERATIONS . . . .	32
IV. A SECRET CHAMBER . . . . .	46
V. CONCERNING BESOMS . . . . .	56
VI. A PLEASAUNCE . . . . .	70
VII. A WOMAN OF THE NEW DISPENSATION .	85
VIII. A WOMAN OF THE OLD DISPENSATION .	102
IX. A DAUGHTER OF DEBATE . . . . .	117
X. A SUPRA-LAPSARIAN . . . . .	133
XI. IN THE GLOAMING . . . . .	148
XII. KILBOGIE MANSE . . . . .	162
XIII. PREPARING FOR THE SACRAMENT . . .	177
XIV. A MODERATE . . . . .	192
XV. JOINT POTENTATES . . . . .	207
XVI. DRIED ROSE LEAVES . . . . .	222
XVII. SMOULDERING FIRES . . . . .	238
XVIII. LOVE SICKNESS . . . . .	252
XIX. THE FEAR OF GOD . . . . .	268

CHAPTER	PAGE
XX. THE WOUNDS OF A FRIEND . . . . .	283
XXI. LIGHT AT EVENTIDE . . . . .	300
XXII. WITHOUT FEAR AND WITHOUT REPROACH	316
XXIII. MARGET HOWE'S CONFSSIONAL . . . . .	329
XXIV. LOVE IS LORD . . . . .	344



## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

---

	Page
Carmichael had taken his Turn . . . . .	10
"Many a Ploy we had together" . . . . .	23
Peter was standing in his Favourite Attitude . . . . .	29
"I am the General's Daughter" . . . . .	38
Janet Macpherson was waiting in the Deep Doorway . . . . .	42
"It's a Difficult Key to turn" . . . . .	50
Kate in her Favourite Position . . . . .	59
One Gardener who . . . works for Love's Sake . . . . .	72
Among the Great Trees . . . . .	79
"Mr. Carmichael, you have much Cause for Thank- fulness" . . . . .	96
Carmichael sang a Solo . . . . .	108
"Here iss your Silver Piece" . . . . .	121
"I should call it a Deliberate —" . . . . .	128
"She had an Unfortunate Tendency to meddle with my Books" . . . . .	146
Mother Church cast her Spell over his Imagination . . . . .	153
"Ye 'll be hanging Dr. Chalmers there" . . . . .	166
A Tall, Bony, Forbidding Woman . . . . .	171
Gathering her Berry Harvest . . . . .	179

	Page
He was a Mere Wisp of a Man . . . . .	188
"Will you let me walk with you for a Little?" . . .	204
"Private Capaucity" . . . . .	210
☉ Standing with a Half-Dried Dish in her Hand . . .	215
The Old Man escorted her Ladyship . . . . .	226
Would gossip with him by the Hour . . . . .	241
The Driver stops to exchange Views . . . . .	254
Two Tramps held Conference . . . . .	257
Wrestling in Darkness of Soul . . . . .	280
His Attitude for Exposition . . . . .	292
"Ay, he's in, but ye canna see him" . . . . .	309
"To put Flowers on his Grave" . . . . .	322
"You have been awfully Good to me" . . . . .	338
He sat down by the River-side to meditate . . . .	353

# KATE CARNEGIE.

## CHAPTER I.

### PANDEMONIUM.



It was the morning before the Twelfth, years ago, and nothing like unto Muirtown Station could have been found in all the travelling world.

For Muirtown, as everybody knows, is the centre which receives the southern immigrants in autumn, and distributes them, with all their belongings of servants, horses, dogs, and luggage, over the north

country from Athole to Sutherland.

All night, express trains, whose ordinary formation had been reinforced by horse boxes, carriage trucks, saloons and luggage vans, drawn by two engines, and pushed up inclines by a third, had been careering along the three iron trunk roads that run from London to the

north. Four hours ago they had forced the border, that used to be more jealously guarded, and had begun to converge on their terminus.

Passengers, awakened by the colder air and looking out still half asleep, miss the undisciplined hedgerows and many-shaped patches of pasture, the warm brick homesteads and shaded ponds of the south. Square fields cultivated up to a foot of the stone dykes or wire-fencing, the strong grey-stone farm-houses, the swift-running burns, and the never-distant hills, brace the mind. Local passengers come in with deliberation, whose austere faces condemn the luxurious disorder of night travel, and challenge the defence of Arminian doctrine. A voice shouts "Carstairs Junction," with a command of the letter *r*, which is the bequest of an unconquerable past, and inspires one with the hope of some day hearing a freeborn Scot say "Auchterarder." The train runs over bleak moorlands with black peat holes, through alluvial straths yielding their last pickle of corn, between iron furnaces blazing strangely in the morning light, at the foot of historical castles built on rocks that rise out of the fertile plains, and then, after a space of sudden darkness, any man with a soul counts the ten hours' dust and heat but a slight price for the sight of the Scottish Rhine flowing deep, clear, and swift by the foot of its wooded hills, and the "Fair City" in the heart of her meadows.

"Do you see the last wreath of mist floating off the summit of the hill, and the silver sheen of the river against the green of the woods? Quick, dad," and the General, accustomed to obey, stood up beside Kate for the brief glimpse between the tunnel and a prison. Yet they had seen the snows of the Himalayas, and the great river that runs through the plains of India. But

it is so with Scottish folk that they may have lived opposite the Jungfrau at Mürren, and walked among the big trees of the Yosemite Valley, and watched the blood-red afterglow on the Pyramids, and yet will value a sunset behind the Cuchullin hills, and the Pass of the Trossachs, and the mist shot through with light on the sides of Ben Nevis, and the Tay at Dunkeld — just above the bridge — better guerdon for their eyes.

“Ay, lassie” — the other people had left at Stirling, and the General fell back upon the past — “there’s just one bonnier river, and that’s the Tochty at a bend below the Lodge, as we shall see it, please God, this evening.”

“Tickets!” broke in a voice with authority. “This is no the station, an’ ye’ll hae to wait till the first diveesion o’ yir train is emptied. Kildrummie? Ye change, of coorse, but yir branch’ll hae a lang wait the day. It’ll be an awfu’ fecht wi’ the Hielant train. Muir-town platform’ll be worth seein’; it’ll juist be mighty,” and the collector departed, smacking his lips in prospect of the fray.

“Upon my word,” said the General, taken aback for a moment by the easy manners of his countryman, but rejoicing in every new assurance of home, “our people are no blate.”

“Is n’t it delicious to be where character has not been worn smooth by centuries of oppression, but where each man is himself? Conversation has salt here, and tastes in the mouth. We’ve just heard two men speak this morning, and each face is bitten into my memory. Now our turn has come,” and the train wound itself in at last.

Porters, averaging six feet and with stentorian voices, were driving back the mixed multitude in order to afford foothold for the new arrivals on that marvellous landing-

place, which in those days served for all the trains which came in and all that went out, both north and south. One man tears open the door of a first with commanding gesture. "A' change and hurry up. Na, na," rejecting the offer of a private engagement; "we hev nae time for that trade the day. Ye maun cairry yir bags yersels; the dogs and boxes 'll tak us a' oor time." He unlocks an under compartment and drags out a pair of pointers, who fawn upon him obsequiously in gratitude for their release. "Doon wi' ye," as one to whom duty denies the ordinary courtesies of life, and he fastens them to the base of an iron pillar. Deserted immediately by their deliverer, the pointers made overtures to two elderly ladies, standing bewildered in the crush, to be repulsed with umbrellas, and then sit down upon their tails in despair. Their forlorn condition, left friendless amid this babel, gets upon their nerves, and after a slight rehearsal, just to make certain of the tune, they lift up their voices in melodious concert, to the scandal of the two females, who cannot escape the neighbourhood, and regard the pointers with horror. Distant friends, also in bonds and distress of mind, feel comforted and join cheerfully, while a large black retriever, who had foolishly attempted to obstruct a luggage barrow with his tail, breaks in with a high solo. Two collies — their tempers irritated by obstacles as they follow their masters, who had been taking their morning in the second-class refreshment room — fall out by the way, and obtain as by magic a clear space in which to settle details; while a fox-terrier, escaping from his anxious mistress, has mounted a pile of boxes and gives a general challenge.

Porters fling open packed luggage vans with a swing, setting free a cataract of portmanteaus, boxes, hampers,

baskets, which pours across the platform for yards, led by a frolicsome black leather valise, whose anxious owner has fought her adventurous way to the van for the purpose of explaining to a phlegmatic Scot that he would know it by a broken strap, and must lift it out gently, for it contained breakables.

"It can gang itsel, that ane," as the afflicted woman followed its reckless progress with a wail. "Sall, if they were a' as clever on their feet as yon box there wud be less tribble," and with two assistants he falls upon the congested mass within. They perform prodigies of strength, handling huge trunks that ought to have filled some woman with repentance as if they were Gladstone bags, and light weights as if they were paper parcels. With unerring scent they detect the latest label among the remains of past history, and the air resounds with "Hielant train," "Aiberdeen fast," "Aiberdeen slow," "Muirtown" — this with indifference — and at a time "Dunleith," and once "Kildrummie," with much contempt. By this time stacks of baggage of varying size have been erected, the largest of which is a pyramid in shape, with a very uncertain apex.

Male passengers — heads of families and new to Muirtown — hover anxiously round the outskirts, and goaded on by female commands, rush into the heart of the fray for the purpose of claiming a piece of luggage, which turns out to be some other person's, and retire hastily after a fair-sized portmanteau descends on their toes, and the sharp edge of a trunk takes them in the small of the back. Footmen with gloves and superior airs make gentlemanly efforts to collect the family luggage, and are rewarded by having some hopelessly vulgar tin boxes, heavily roped, deposited among its initialled glory. One

elderly female who had been wise to choose some other day to revisit her native town, discovers her basket flung up against a pillar, like wreckage from a storm, and settles herself down upon it with a sigh of relief. She remains unmoved amid the turmoil, save when a passing gun-case tips her bonnet to one side, giving her a very rakish air, and a good-natured retriever on a neighbouring box is so much taken with her appearance that he offers her a friendly caress. Restless people — who remember that their train ought to have left half an hour ago, and cannot realise that all bonds are loosed on the eleventh — fasten on any man in a uniform, and suffer many rebuffs.

“There’s nae use asking me,” answers a guard, coming off duty and pushing his way through the crowd as one accustomed to such spectacles; “a’m juist in frae Carlisle; get haud o’ a porter.”

“Cupar Angus?” — this from the porter — “that’s the Aiberdeen slow; it’s no made up yet, and little chance o’t till the express an’ the Hielant be aff. Whar’ll it start frae?” breaking away; “forrit, a’ tell ye, forrit.”

Fathers of families, left on guard and misled by a sudden movement “forrit,” rush to the waiting-room and bring out, for the third time, the whole expedition, to escort them back again with shame. Barrows with towering piles of luggage are pushed through the human mass by two porters, who allow their engine to make its own way with much confidence, condescending only at a time to shout, “A’ say, hey, oot o’ there,” and treating any testy complaint with the silent contempt of a drayman for a costermonger. Old hands, who have fed at their leisure in callous indifference to all alarms, lounge about in great content, and a group of sheep farmers,



having endeavoured in vain, after one tasting, to settle the merits of a new dip, take a glance in the "Hielant" quarter, and adjourn the conference once more to the refreshment-room. Groups of sportsmen discuss the prospects of to-morrow in detail, and tell stories of ancient twelfths, while chieftains from London, in full Highland dress, are painfully conscious of the whiteness of their legs. A handful of preposterous people who persist in going south when the world has its face northwards, threaten to complain to headquarters if they are not sent away, and an official with a loud voice and a subtle gift of humour intimates that a train is about to leave for Dundee.

During this time wonderful manœuvres have been executed on the lines of rail opposite the platform. Trains have left with all the air of a departure and disappeared round the curve outside the station, only to return in fragments. Half a dozen carriages pass without an engine, as if they had started on their own account, break vans that one saw presiding over expresses stand forsaken, a long procession of horse boxes rattle through, and a saloon carriage, with people, is so much in evidence that the name of an English duke is freely mentioned, and every new passage relieves the tedium of the waiting.

Out of all this confusion trains begin to grow and take shape, and one, with green carriages, looks so complete that a rumour spreads that the Highland train has been made up and may appear any minute in its place. The sunshine beating through the glass roof, the heat of travel, the dust of the station, the moving carriages with their various colours, the shouts of railway officials, the recurring panics of fussy passengers, begin to affect the