

“You may be sure that neither o’ them lingered by the way that morning. They kent there was mony an e’e on them, an’ that their names would be spoken o’ in the kintra-side lang after themsels were dead an’ gane; but it sae happened that Fairburn’s earline, wha had been his nurse, was ane o’ the slampest women in a’ the north of Scotland, young or auld; an’, though the ither did weel, she did sae meikle better that she had got owre twenty lang Highland miles or the ither had got owre fifteen. They say it was a droll sicht to see them at the meeting, — they were baith tired almost to fainting; but no sooner did they come in sight o’ ane anither, at the distance o’ a mile or sae, than they began to run. An’ they ran, an’ better ran, till they met at a little burnie; an’ there wad they hae focht, though they had ne’er seen ane anither atween the een afore, had they had strength eneugh left them; but they had neither pith for fechtin’ nor breath for scoldin’, an’ sae they just sat down an’ girmed at ane anither across the stripe. The Tower o’ Fairburn is naething noo but a dismal ruin o’ five broken stories, the ane aboon the ither, an’ the lands hae gane oot o’ the auld family; but the story o’ the twa auld wives is a weel-kent story still.

“The laird o’ Fairburn, in my faither’s time, was as fine an open-hearted gentleman as was in the haill country. He was just particular gude to the puir; but the family had ever been that; ay, in their roughest days, even whan the Tower had neither door nor window in the lower story, an’ only a wheen shot-holes in the story aboon. There wasna a puir thing in the kintra but had reason to bless the laird; an’ at a’e time he had nae fewer than twelve puir orphans living about his house at ance. Nor was he in the least a proud, haughty man. He wad chat for hours thegither wi’ ane o’ his puirest tenants; an’ ilka time he