

CLUNY

MACPHERSON





THE HOME COMING.

# CLUNY MACPHERSON

*A Tale of Brotherly Love.*

BY  
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*WITH FIVE ILLUSTRATIONS.*

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## CHAPTER I.

### CASTLE TOR AND ITS INMATES.

“The land of the flood and the ben and the glen,  
And the strong rocky home of the brave Highland men.”

CLUNY MACPHERSON of Tor and Laggan stood upon one of those mighty hills which shoulder each other back from the west coast of Ross-shire. Everything around him was two thousand feet high, and MacPherson was only six; but the contrast did not enter his mind. He was “The MacPherson,” the head of clan Chattan, and the mountains, and the cattle and sheep upon them were his own.

He stood thoughtfully a few minutes, and looked far away over the innumerable peaks of the Highland hills—some of them sublime walls of granite gleamed over with purple and green, and some of them pale with inconceivable distance. Then he turned to the great calm ocean

in the west, dim with heat and vapor, and full of small islands rising mysteriously out of it. A gleam of crimson light from the setting sun threw his figure into bold relief. It was a noble figure, clothed in the many-colored tartans of clan Chattan, and in its solitary beauty and thoughtfulness it seemed to add some kind of sentient life to the silent, steadfast hills around it.

Two fine deer hounds lay at his feet, yet watching him with such attention that the moment he made a movement homeward they bounded before him. He walked with the long springing step which showed him at home upon the heather; but he was very soon arrested by the plaintive cry of a lost lamb. Without a moment's hesitation he looked for the forlorn little creature, lifted it in his arms, and turning aside from his path soon reached a rough stone cottage so completely in a covert of the hills that they formed two sides of it.

An old man sat in the door reading. A ray of light from the dropping sun fell right across the page. It was the book of Joshua, and he lifted a face all aglow to gaze at MacPherson and his burden.

"Ye mind me o' the Gude Shepherd, laird; ye are aye findin' some bit stray lammie."

"And I'll tell you what it is, Adam, if you

did your duty, you would aye be findin' them yoursel'."

"Laird, laird, I'm wrang again. I'll own to that. But what shall I say then? I'm just like an auld war-horse, and when I set out wi' Joshua, and heard the trumpets blowing, and the shouts o' the men o' Israel, I forgot a' ither things but the downfa' o' Jericho. It is hard to hear a bit lammie crying, wi' the noise o' battle in your vera ears."

MacPherson smiled. "It's my ain fault, Adam, not yours. You hae cried '*Claymore!*' in too many battlefields to tak up wi' sheep in your auld age. But the lads will be hame the morn, and then you can teach them the broadsword exercise."

"Ye ken how it is yoursel', MacPherson."

"'Deed do I, Adam;" and the laird drew himself proudly up, and said in a voice full of emotion, "I was at Quatre Bras too! I carried the colors, and I kept them flying."

"That did ye, MacPherson, and through the fiercest pairt o' the fight; for when the tide o' battle was at the full, and the danger was the sorest, it was then we heard the order, '*The MacPhersons are wanted now!*' They kent weel that we were at hame when the cry was *Claymore!* and the broadswords flashing through the smoke."



The old man had risen in his enthusiasm, and the laird put out his hand. For a moment the two men were not only MacPhersons, they were comrades. Then again the laird took the homeward way, and his heart was very tender and much inclined to reflection. He had had a stormy wandering youth, but it had been followed by a life of happy love and calm retirement. Generally he had been content with it, but sometimes, if an old companion dropped a pebble into the pool of memory, it troubled him for an hour, and he grew sorrowful over the successes and honors that might have been.

The thought had less power to move him now than in bygone years. All that he had missed his sons Donald and Cluny might attain, for there is nothing more beautiful and pathetic in life than the unselfishness with which parents endow their children with their own hopes. "I hae maybe missed much," he whispered to his heart, "but if the twa lads win at it, that will please me best of all. They hae been well schooled, and will guide gude fortune better than I could hae done."

Thus thinking, he approached Castle Tor. Its most ancient part was a thousand years old and was all lichened over; the modern part had been built within a century. It stood upon the

broad plateau or spur of a great mountain, and to look over the western wall of the courtyard was to look down a sheer precipice of four hundred feet, whose base was washed by every tide which flowed. Northward and eastward the wall divided this court from a belt of pine wood and from the wild mountains, which rose and rose until they were lost in mist and clouds; but to the southward the mountain sloped gently down until it touched the grassy strath and the little fishing village of Tor.

This court was of ample proportions, and indeed, before the rebellion of the "45" had been the gathering-place of the clan in peace and in war. What wild scenes it had witnessed during the stormy days of the Scotch monarchy! Here the young chevalier had reviewed the men whom the martial influence of MacPherson had drawn from every mountain glen and misty island. Here with shouts of enthusiastic devotion they had pinned on the white cockade for Prince Charlie; and here in solemn silence they had kissed their bare dirks in sworn loyalty to the Kirk of Scotland and the house of Hanover.

But these things were only memories now. Where the wild thanes of the bygone centuries had clashed sword and buckler, the goldfinches were hopping about, twittering upon the pink

and purple thistles, and the magpies garrulously chattering under their roof of pine. The sod that had been beaten hard by the tramp of armed men was now little green lawns, bordered by musk carnations, and gold-dusted snapdragons, and stocks in fragrant blow. Roses were everywhere, and the warm spikes of lavender, and the sweet-william's homely smell; while under the low lattices the delicate and peculiar incense of the white odorous everlastings seemed to breathe a perpetual prayer.

At one of these lattices, open to the evening breeze, sat a beautiful woman reading. Beautiful, though her hair was gray and her form had lost the slender grace of youth; for on her face there was the light of that peace which passeth understanding, and her heart had been for long years at rest. She looked up as MacPherson entered with a smile, and putting a ribbon into her book to keep the place, laid it gently, almost lovingly aside.

“Margaret, I have good news for you. The lads will be hame to-morrow. Eh! but we'll hae some happy days. There are plenty o' deer and birds on the hills, and I hae spoken to Adam to gie them the broadsword exercise. Sae they can take a bit leisure, and consider weel what they will do wi' a' the fine schooling they hae got.”

All the mother-love in her heart leaped into

her face, but she was not the woman to say many words about her happiness. MacPherson had drawn his chair towards the few logs burning on the hearth, and she stood opposite him with a letter in her hand. When the conversation about the boys' return was over, she said, "Rory brought me a letter an hour ago from my brother; his daughter Katherine isna just weel, and he wishes her to come to us for a few weeks."

"I'm not weel pleased at that, Margaret."

"And what for are you not pleased, laird?"

"Touts! Women see nae farther than to-day. There's talk o' the French and the pope, but it's my ain folk that gie me the maist trouble."

"It isna like you, laird, to speak sae ill-willy."

"There is naething ill said, Margaret, if it isna ill taen. I was thinking o' us having such a happy time, and then comes a young lassie; and there's naething on earth harder to guide, and the lads will be quarrelling about her, and you'll see how it will a' end."

"But how do you know they will quarrel?"

"I dinna think we hae any right to expect a special providence to prevent it; and the probabilities hae run that way for about six thousand years."

"Speak the even-down truth, laird. If Kath-

erine was likely to hae a big fortune, you would-na mind the risk o' the quarrel?"

"For a big fortune some risks may be lawfully taen. But how can Katherine Maxwell hae any fortune? Your brother David lives up to his last shilling, and you'll allow that is a vera imprudent thing to do—no to call it by a harder name."

"My brother David has always enough, though he may not hae a superfluity."

"And, Margaret, let me tell you that it is the superfluity in money matters that is sae comfortable and convenient. I'm no for either o' my lads marrying a tocherless lass."

"That is just the thing you did yoursel', dear laird."

"Ah, but, wife, there isna likely to be twa Margaret Maxwells in the same century. If Donald or Cluny will bring me as good an excuse for a tocherless wife as their mother, I'll gie them my blessing."

And in the pleasant speech and in mutual smiles the little hearth-cloud passed away. Lady MacPherson went with a happy face into the kitchen to tell Janet—Cluny's foster-mother—that "the boys were coming," and the laird followed her retreating form with a thoughtful admiration, saying softly to himself, "After a' is said and done, the Maxwells are a gude Border

family; and if David Maxwell isna a rich man, he's a very gude man and a deacon in the auld High Kirk o' Edinburgh, and that is an honor that few men can win at."

Janet was baking a batch of oatmeal cakes, and it was evident from the energy with which she rolled and beat them that she was trying in the hard, hot work to relieve herself of some annoyance. She was a tall, handsome Highland woman of about forty years of age, with bright black eyes and very black hair. She wore a snowy linen cap that was elaborately fluted and ruffled, and a kilted skirt of striped linsey with a white bodice, over this bodice being carefully pinned a kerchief of the clan tartan. Her arms were bare above the elbows—strong brown arms, mighty for labor, and loving, caressing arms that had carried the dying and cradled heroes. She had a temper and a sharp tongue, but her heart was rich as gold and true as steel, and there was not a village lass that served under her to whom Mistress Janet was not for the rest of life the best of friends and the wisest of earthly counsellors.

When Lady MacPherson entered, she stopped with the cake in her hand and dropped her a courtesy; then turning to the lasses sitting knitting silently at the end of the kitchen farthest from herself, she said, "Go awa to your sleep

now, and dinna let me find ye in bed when ye should be in the byre to-morrow morn."

When they had folded their knitting and departed quietly like chidden bairns, my lady said, "Janet, I have some good news for you."

Janet shook her head doubtfully. "I'm no expecting anything good to-day, my lady. The butter wouldna come this morning, and nae ither thing has come right a' day long. As for thae idle lassies, I think they were a' born on a Sunday, and like their wark ready done for them."

"Perhaps you expect too much, Janet; they are always busy when I see them."

"Dootless; there are nane sae busy as them that hae little to do. When I was a lass—"

"There was good and bad then, just as there is now; but what think you? The young laird and Laird Cluny are coming home to-morrow!"

Janet turned round with an eager face. "The young laird is vera welcome; but oh, my lady, are ye sure Laird Cluny is coming wi' him?"

"Indeed he says so, Janet."

"Then the butter can tak its ain way, and the house can gae tapsalterie if it wants to. I'm that glad I dinna ken what to say. Oh, my lady, why did ye not tell me ere this?"

"I have just heard myself, Janet; and there is more company coming next week."

“The mair the merrier. There is naething mair cheerfu’ than a house fu’ o’ young men, whistlin’ here and laughin’ there, and off to the hills in the morning and hame to their dinner at night, and the whole village to come and go after them. And there is nane happier than Janet when she can wark night and day to mak them happy.”

“I know that, Janet ; but it is not company of that kind we are expecting. It is just my ain niece, Miss Katherine Maxwell ; she is fresh hame from the boarding-school, and no feeling very well. We must make her bright and happy.”

“Yes, my lady.”

“She will be a great comfort to me, I expect.”

“The Lord grant it, my lady !” but somehow Janet’s request was not made in a cheerful tone. It was obvious that she had little hope that it would be attended to. “But,” she added, more cheerfully, “Laird Cluny is coming, and I’ll no bespeak sorrow by thinking o’ it. Oh, but I’m the happy woman this night !” and as Lady MacPherson left her she began to lilt at her work,

“An’ I shall see his face again,  
And I shall hear him speak ;  
I’m downright dizzy at the thought,  
Indeed, I’m like to greet.”



The house was early astir in the morning. While yet the lark was singing at heaven's gates the clear, loud tones of MacPherson's voice were heard in the "morning portion," and the music of the morning Psalm followed it. Then the mother and Janet went together about their pleasant household cares. How happy they were in opening up the lads' rooms and spreading the snowy sheets, and filling the posy-pots with the sweetest flowers! What consultations they had about game and fish, and Laird Cluny's favorite puddings and cakes!

MacPherson also had his own cares of welcome to attend to. It had struck him in the night that all the clan had a right to share in the joy of the home-coming, and at dawn he had sent messengers to Laggan to gather the men before they went to the hills, and to Tor to prevent the fishermen leaving the harbor. At six o'clock in the evening eight hundred MacPhersons were following their chief to the little village of Tor to meet the young men. The pipers played cheerfully, and the eight hundred in their showy tartans quite crowded the little place; while the women and children, with their laughter and bright looks, gave a holiday air to a gathering which otherwise might have suggested a different feeling.

MacPherson was what is called in Scotland "a close man;" but it was evident that he had loosened his purse-strings on this occasion. And when the two young men leaped from their carriage to their native heath, they seemed to well justify the glad preparations made for their reception. Two nobler-looking youths never made a father's heart beat with happy love. Young Donald was tall and dark and stately, and had the free, proud carriage of a mountain deer. As soon as his feet touched the ground he took the laird's hands in his own, and bending low, kissed them. Then eight hundred bonnets were lifted to him, and he raised his own and stood a moment facing his kinsmen, with some light on his brow which in an instant kindled a response to it.

Laird Cluny just flung his arms around his father's neck, and every father and son present felt the thrill of that embrace, and answered it with a ringing shout that Lady MacPherson heard clearly as she stood trembling, almost weeping for joy, in the flowery courtyard of the castle.

After passing through the village they came to a little stone cottage standing at the very base of the mountain close upon the highway. The door opened slowly, and MacPherson instantly stopped. A tall, thin man, dressed in black

broadcloth, and wearing a black silk skull-cap, and a spotless band of white linen round his neck, came tottering forward. He had a singularly out-of-the-world air about him, and his long hair, falling upon his shoulders, was white as wool, though scarcely whiter than the thin, trembling hands whose momentary uplifting had so instantly stayed the happy marching men.

The interruption had not been expected, but it was evidently a source of great satisfaction; for every head was bared as he touched MacPherson's hand and then blessed the two young men. It was a strange and solemn ceremonial, but it gave the whole company a momentary taste of a bliss deeper than the joy of laughter. There was not a man who did not feel better and nobler for the light of that serene face and the blessing of those frail uplifted hands. And when all the feasting and rejoicing were over, and father and mother and sons sat together in that repose of joy which best satisfies the heart, this little incident was the one on which all dwelt with the greatest pleasure.

Life is not so hard on our expectations as we are apt to imagine. After this meeting MacPherson had many days of the very kind he had anticipated; and in them he first really learned to know something of his sons. They had not been

much together for many years, for he had thought it most necessary of all to give them a fine education; and Edinburgh had been selected as affording the finest teachers as well as opportunities for the best social intercourse.

Laird Donald MacPherson was twenty-four years old, and Laird Cluny twenty-two; and MacPherson was rather amazed at the richness and variety of the manhood which modern culture and modern travel produce. Not that he felt his own individuality in any respect inferior; he was only aware of the difference, and curious, and half doubtful as to its superiority. But he was in no special hurry to abridge the pleasant holiday they were having together. When the autumn shooting and fishing were over, and the long, dark winter days came, they could talk about the future and its prospects.

Indeed, to MacPherson there seemed little to discuss. He was satisfied with the way in which the land was being gradually improved, and the clansmen were also satisfied. The MacPhersons, with very few exceptions, had always taken to the army as naturally as ducks do to the water; Donald and Cluny, he thought, were not likely to diverge far from the family traditions. It had pleased him greatly to observe how readily both had followed old Adam in his broadsword exerci-

ses. The handling of a claymore seemed to come as naturally to both young men as the building of a nest comes to a bird.

For both of them had very strongly marked the martial instinct which was their birthright; though in other respects they were very dissimilar. Donald was girt about with pride and caution. His sense of honor was abnormally acute. He valued as dear as his life the privileges of his birth and ancestry. He was quite aware of the value of money and rather inclined to be careful in its use. He loved his father both as his chief and his father; he loved his mother with all the fervor of a deep and undemonstrative nature. Towards his brother Cluny he had an attachment which was the peculiarity of his disposition. Something of both a father's care and a mother's indulgence was in it. Cluny had a power over him that was a marvel to all who knew the proud, self-contained young chief. In both college halls and ladies' parlors men and women soon discovered that Donald MacPherson's heart could be best and easiest reached through his brother Cluny.

Cluny MacPherson was one of those exceptions that are found in most families. He had none of the MacPherson physical peculiarities. He was bright and fair, with curling nut-brown hair, and

blue eyes which flashed and scintillated when he was excited, but were dark and tender when he was swayed by a softer mood. He was a brilliant scholar, but not a profound one; a ready debater, an eloquent speaker, an apt versifier of classical odes. To these accomplishments were added a frank, cheerful, confiding air and a manner of great natural fascination. Women hardly admired him more than men did; but nobody loved the gay, handsome fellow as his brother Donald did.

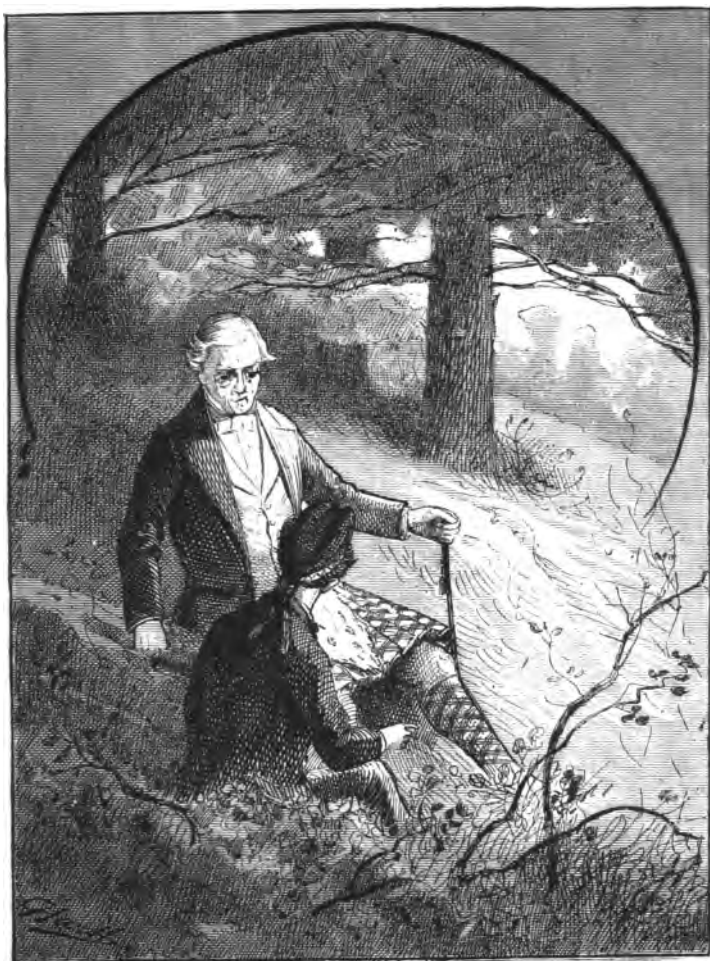
## CHAPTER II.

## CHOICE OF A PROFESSION.

"WE know what we are, but know not what we may be."

IT is better for a man to be brought up at a good mother's knee than at the feet of a Gamaliel. Brilliant scholarship was not the best ballast for a mind so many-sided and impressionable as Cluny MacPherson's; and the society of the "young Edinburgh Reviewers" had not been favorable for the highest growth of his character. Still the lad was morally healthy, and the simple honesty and sweet purity of his father's and mother's lives was to him like a breath of clear, calmer mountain air after the glare and heat of a crowded room.

In those bright autumn days he became very dear to every heart in Castle Tor, for the lad's very presence in the home was a holiday, and his smile had all the effect of sunshine. One day the laird and Cluny went to the hills alone. Donald had some letters to write and remained at home. It was a hot day at the end of August, and while resting together under the pines at the



“WHILE RESTING TOGETHER THE LAIRD BEGAN A CONVERSATION WITH  
CLUNY ABOUT HIS FUTURE.” [Page 22.]





noon hour the laird began a conversation with Cluny about his future.

“The MacPhersons are a’ soldiers, Cluny. I carried the colors of the clan in Spain, in India, and at Waterloo. Then the death of my dear father, the Laird Angus, made it necessary for me to take his place. Donald will dootless do as I did; and as for you, my ain lad, what can be better for you than to buckle on your broadsword and stand for the honor and glory of auld Scotland?”

“Her honor runs with my heart’s blood, father. If a man said a word against her, or did her the smallest wrong, I would lift her quarrel with both hands. But I dinna care to play at soldiering. A life in barracks is just a weariness. I know more than one o’ the officers in Edinburgh Castle, and I would rather sail to the Arctic seas and harpoon whales than go to a drill every day, and perhaps fight in an unjust cause!”

MacPherson looked in the glowing, positive face, and somehow felt it wise to drop the subject. Cluny was the Joseph of his heart; he could not bear to mar the happiness of the day by any unprofitable dispute. “Besides,” he said to himself, “wherever Donald goes there Cluny will go too; and the sons of the MacPherson have aye been soldiers.” The possibility of any other ca-

reer for them was a suggestion that was full of irritation to him.

That very day Katherine Maxwell unexpectedly arrived. Her coming had been put off from time to time, and there had been such difficulty in finding an escort for her that her visit had ceased to be regarded as very probable. But an old friend of her father's, on his way for a month's shooting at a point fifty miles north, had taken charge of the young lady; and about the middle of the afternoon Donald, coming in from a ramble in the pine wood, found her drinking a cup of tea with his mother. Although Katherine's home was in Edinburgh, the cousins had never met. Katherine had been motherless from her birth, and during the years devoted to her education she had mainly resided with an aunt living near Glasgow. In fact, there had always been a kind of cross fate in any attempt of the cousins to meet each other; and the hope deferred from time to time had lost all its warmth and charm.

But Donald had been accustomed to the society of ladies and was not at all embarrassed by the unexpected meeting. Many a beautiful woman had looked kindly on the young chief, and it is but just to say that his stainless honor and high character had won their favor quite as much as his handsome person or his high lineage. For

good women do love good men best, whatever modern novelists may say. Donald, however, had never been in love, and he was far too honest to affect the passion. Cluny was of a different temper. Already he had sought his brother's sympathy in two or three such "affairs," which he really felt at the time to be heart-breaking. And Donald had guided and borne him safely through these dangerous impulses, telling him always that they were but the preluding notes—often very discordant ones—which would eventually introduce the grand symphony of a true and perfect affection.

How it came to pass that Donald felt himself in the first moment of his meeting with Katherine Maxwell irresistibly attracted to her, is one of those mysteries whose solution may have dependencies beyond our mortal ken, for no man yet has ever been able to give the why and the wherefore of love. Katherine was indeed a rarely beautiful girl, but Donald had seen many beautiful women before. It was not her hair, though it was yellow as dawn; nor her eyes of deep blue, though they were clear and full of a sweet serenity; nor her face, though it was like a fresh rose; nor her figure, though it was slight and tall and full of grace. Far less was it her dress, which was peculiarly simple and quiet.

But her influence was soon felt to be a power that few could resist. The laird had forgotten in a day that she would have no fortune, Cluny was visibly in love with her, and Lady MacPherson frequently found herself trying to determine which of her boys Katherine would suit best. Only Adam and Janet resolutely resolved not to be pleased with her. Adam had now been promoted to the charge of Lady MacPherson's flower-beds, a position which gave him great delight and which he filled with a wonderful skill, for he seemed to have a kind of instinctive knowledge of the needs and peculiarities of flowers. But he also gave the young lairds daily lessons, and he had come to look upon them as under his charge, and to be jealous of any undue influence which he considered antagonistic to his own.

Janet intimated her opinions about Miss Maxwell in a dour, dissenting silence; Adam was no way averse to express his, even to Lady MacPherson.

"It is sorrow and trouble enough ane honest man o' the gardening trade got wi' fashing himsel' wi' a woman; and I'se never looked in her fair, fause face, for they are a' fair and fause the warld over."

"You are a prudent man, Adam," said my lady, smiling.

“I come o’ prudent folk, my lady.”

“And were you never married?”

“I’m no the man to go seeking sorrow.”

“But suppose, Adam, you could have had just such a wife as you desire, what would she have been like?”

“I never asked o’ Providence a charge I couldna keep; but an I was asking for some ither body—say for Laird Cluny’s sel’—I would want her first to be truthful in a’ her ways, having the fear o’ God and her husband always before her e’en. I would hae her willing to put her hand to ony wark a woman might do, and no just without the bit siller, and maybe a handfu’ o’ gude looks.”

“An excellent woman, Adam. I trust Laird Cluny may win a wife like that.”

“Then, my lady, he’ll hae to kneel down an’ pray for her. I’m feared he’ll get her nae ither way.”

Lady MacPherson laughed pleasantly, and turning round saw Katherine coming towards them.

“Is she not lovely, Adam? You may look at her safely at this distance, I think.”

Adam raised his head and drew his lips tightly together. There was a charm about the poise of Katherine’s noble figure and the way in which

her small feet stole in and out from under her flowing gray dress that few men could have quite resisted; and though Adam remembered at once the "mincing steps and tinkling feet" of the ancient Hebrew belles, he forbore to quote the passage, and only turned his head away and began tying up the heavily-laden carnations.

"Good morning, Corporal MacPherson. How very lovely your flowers are!"

That "Corporal MacPherson" was one of Katherine's natural happy hits. The old soldier so addressed could not resist the compliment; he turned with a half-reluctant "Gude morning, young lady;" and then he asked if there was anything he could do for her.

"Yes; I wish you would tell me all you know about this exquisite butterfly."

Now butterflies were one of Adam's delights, and it was charming to see how readily he took the bait. Before he had finished his little natural history lesson he had looked at Katherine many times, and had liked to do it so well that he watched her all the way back to the castle entrance, and told himself, as she disappeared, "That is a vera sensible young woman. She ca'ed me 'Corporal MacPherson,' too. I dinna hear that name as often as I should do. A vera sensible bonnie young woman; and as Laird

Cluny is sure to fa' into some o' their hands, why not hers? I'm thinking he might gae farther and fare waur."

Lady MacPherson soon came to the same conclusion. Into no one's mind came the supposition that Katherine might have predilections quite apart from either of the brothers. Certainly no one could detect the least sign of preference in her treatment of them. She was too good a girl to coquet, and her cheerful frankness included all alike. Adam, though he pretended to consider women as inscrutable beings, was the first to perceive this. "It is neither ane nor the ither o' the young lairds she's wanting," he said to Janet one night as he sat by her fire.

"Hae ye ever seen a cat playing wi' twa mice? Miss Maxwell is playing with the twa laddies just sae."

"One woman aye cuts anither woman's cloak by her ain. I mind weel, Janet, when ye were a young lassie, and Rory and Ewan MacPherson were at dirks drawn about you. Miss Katherine is nane o' that sort. I hope Laird Cluny will hae the gude fortune to get her."

"You needna be speiring ill to the lad that has been sae kind to you. There isna a woman south o' the Spey that's fit to wed wi' him; and there's nae many in the North Country either."



“There will be nae special creation for Laird Cluny, Mistress Janet; and I dinna think sae vera much o’ him in comparison wi’ Laird Donald. Laird Donald has far mair o’ wisdom and discretion.”

“Ye’ll no sit in my kitchen and smoke to any such opinions as they, Adam MacPherson; and it’s neither a bite o’ venison nor a raspberry tartlet ye’ll get at my fireside the night. Mind that now!”

“Ay, weel! I’m no the man to sell my opinions for a mess o’ pottage or a bite o’ venison or a raspberry tartlet. Mind that now!” but yet he watched Janet whipping up the tablecloth and the knife and fork and plate with a sigh, for Adam quite appreciated the bright, cheerful kitchen and the lost dainties.

Nevertheless he knocked the ashes out of his pipe with a resolute face, and setting his bonnet on his brow walked leisurely out. He still occupied his little cottage in the hills, and to it he bent his steps. In a very few minutes the silence and repose of the mountains had entered into his soul, and all trivial fretting was forgotten. “A man should blush for himsel’ if he found aught to worry about up here,” he said, as he stood in his open door and looked out, half smiling at the memory of his petulance. Then

he lit his candle and turned over the leaves of the only Book he ever read. He seemed to be searching for some particular portion, which, when found, he rather mused upon than read.

It was the story of Sisera and Jael. He knew every word of it by heart, and every word to the old soldier called up a magnificent picture. He saw the inspired Deborah standing under the palm-tree, and the thousands of Israel going down from Mount Tabor, and the chariots and the horses of the Canaanites, and the flight of Sisera alone and on foot to the tent of Jael. All the fourth and fifth chapters of Judges he slowly recited in low, thoughtful monotone, often pausing to realize the scene as it passed before his mental vision, until he came to the last verse, which he uttered with a force and a decision that had in it an almost personal sense of exultation: "So let all thy enemies perish, O Lord; but let them that love thee be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might."

He walked to the door saying this triumphant verse, and looked out. He could see the twinkling lights in the castle, and his eyes dwelt particularly on the one in Janet's kitchen. How wonderfully that far-away Hebrew life blends itself with every century, for as he looked he said,

"I've aye had a great sympathy for Sisera.

A nail and a woman's hand! And he asleep! It was an unco humiliating death for a great warrior, and just the ane that the proud enemy o' the Lord deserved. To hae fallen in battle by the hand o' Joshua or Barak, that wouldna hae been sae hard; but a woman! Ay, it took a woman's hand to drive that nail. I dinna think I could hae done it to a sleeping enemy; but Janet could! Ay could she, and sang wi' Deborah and Barak anent it afterwards.'

The month of Katherine Maxwell's visit came, as all things do come, to a finish. Both young men were thinking of the parting with dismay. Donald had a compact and conscious nature; he was not the man to flounder in unknown seas without a notion of which way he was going. Honestly examining himself, he had arrived at a positive decision. He loved Katherine as it is only possible for a man to love once. But he was equally sure that the time had not come for him to speak of his love. Cluny had already confided to him his attachment to Katherine. Cluny had been mistaken a dozen times before; this time he might be really in love. If he should be? Donald trembled and turned sick at the alternative, but he never shirked it a moment. As for Katherine, he could hardly conceive that she should not prefer Cluny; for he was conscious that in all

the attributes generally supposed attractive to women Cluny was his superior.

They were taking the last walk they would take together at this time—going indeed with her to the village to make some arrangements necessary for her homeward journey. Her escort had arrived in the afternoon; in a few hours she would be on the southward road. When and how should they meet again? It was a misty, dreamy evening, rather chill, with a melancholy “sough” in the air, and the question fell with a strange sadness from Donald’s lips.

“I know not,” answered Katherine, “but you will not forget me.”

“Highlanders have long memories, Katherine.” It was all he could trust himself to say. Cluny was quite silent. In fact Cluny was watching the approach of a man who had suddenly rounded a little clump of fir-trees. His face flushed angrily as he said, “Yonder man is James Monteith; I forbade him to put his foot on our land.”

“He is on the public highway, Cluny; be reasonable;” but when the man saluted him he touched his bonnet with a singular reluctance and hauteur.

The young man answered Donald’s coldness and Cluny’s scornful anger with a studied polite-

ness, expressing his delight and surprise at meeting Miss Maxwell in the Highlands.

Katherine's conversation with him was of the shortest, and consisted only of the ordinary courtesies of life; but both Donald and Cluny were impatient of it and evidently annoyed at the meeting; and ere Monteith was fairly out of hearing Cluny expressed his dislike of the man very plainly, and his regret at Katherine's acquaintanceship with him.

"I am hardly to blame, Cluny," she answered. "He is studying law with my father, and father feels himself in a measure bound to be hospitable to him. I rather believe there is some old tie of friendship between his family and the Maxwells."

No more was said on the subject; but a sudden chill and shadow had fallen upon them; it was as if it had become darker and colder. And yet the man was by no means one whom a superficial observer would have disliked. He had a singular face, especially if regarded as a part of its surroundings. It was sallow and thin, with black restless eyes and quivering scarlet lips. His figure was small and exceedingly lithe and supple, his glance covert, his manner observant and deferential—"sneaking and obsequious," Cluny said; altogether a man that one would

have expected to meet in an Indian jungle or a tamarind grove, rather than on the chill mountains of Ross.

In fact, James Monteith had had a Hindoo mother, and had himself lived in Calcutta for the first fifteen years of his life. Then his father remembered his native hills, and having plenty of gold, and no ties left to bind him to his exile, he returned to Scotland. But neither father nor son had become popular; the father had contracted habits of tyrannical and intolerant authority among the wretched ryots who cultivated his indigo plantation. The son had learned to imitate him in a still haughtier and more unreasonable fashion among the domestics of his home. They had found it difficult to get service of any kind among the poor, self-respecting peasants around them, and equally difficult to form any social connection with the wealthy proprietors who were their neighbors.

“A man who has made £100,000 in twenty years,” said the Laird of Dornoch, “hasna had time to keep his hands clean. Ye ken what the Bible says o’ they wha mak haste to be rich.”

“He would hae his temptations, dootless, laird,” replied the cautious lawyer Ballantyne.

“And he married a Hindoo pagan woman forbye. That wasna the kind o’ mither to pro-

vide for his bairn. I say, a man shouldna bring children into the warld unless he has done his best to gie them a gude Christian mither. There is neither gold nor gear can take her place."

"Weel, weel, laird, the lad is young, and the kirk is open now to him, and he's going to Dominic MacBean for his lessons, and ye ken weel that he'll mak him learn his catechism and read his Bible and be under a' kind o' proper authority. Sae we'll just defer judgment on him for a wee while."

But in spite of the best religious instruction James Monteith did not improve. A few severe lessons from his schoolfellows taught him that bullying and insolence were dangerous; but this knowledge only called into more active use other qualities still more objectionable, because more deceptive. He had been cruel and tyrannical; he now assumed the stealthy suavity of the Asiatic. It had happened that Cluny and the young Anglo-Indian, in an Edinburgh school, had frequently come to bitter words; and once Cluny, in espousing the cause of a lame boy whom Monteith was mocking in the play-ground, had given the bully a punishment he still remembered, with a burning sense of hatred and a longing for revenge.

Men generally forgive, and can even smile at

their boyish quarrels, but Monteith cherished and nourished his, and whenever he recalled the smarting blows and the jeering laughs of those who witnessed them, he felt that revenge, revenge of any kind, upon Cluny MacPherson, would be the keenest joy life could give him.

The relationship of Katherine to the brothers was a discovery which seemed to promise him what he longed for. His black eyes shone wickedly through the misty gloaming as he recalled Donald's proud reticence and Cluny's hardly-concealed scorn; and the low, malicious laugh with which he pursued his meditations was the joy of an evil spirit over its own wickedness.

In the meantime the three objects of his ill-will seemed to have some presentiment of it. They were in the chill of a long-shadowed sorrow, and their souls in some dim, uncertain way apprehended it. Conversation was impossible; and when they reached home, wet with the first shower of the approaching storm, the influences were all of a kind to mark and deepen the feeling. Lady MacPherson sat before the fire lost in solemn thought; and as the laird was waiting with the open Bible before him for the evening exercise, she made no effort to dispel it. MacPherson himself was unusually quiet, and as soon as Katherine had removed her wet clothing,



called the household together. Perhaps his mood was induced by the chapter he had been reading, for it was the pathetic fifty-third of Isaiah.

There are scenes and sounds that photograph themselves on the memory for ever. The scene may have been witnessed numberless times, and the sound be one familiar to the ear as household words; but on some unlooked-for occasion both become invested with a meaning and power hitherto unknown. Katherine had often seen the long, low room, with its oriel windows and its picturesque yet solemn gathering of the household in worship; she was quite familiar with the picture Lady MacPherson made, sitting with folded hands and closed eyes listening to the Holy Word as it fell in clear, sonorous tones from the lips of the laird; and she had often noticed the grand simplicity of MacPherson and the dignity with which he assumed for a few minutes each day the office of father and priest of his household.

But this night all seemed very different. The usually open lattices were closed, and the stormy rain was beating against them, yet through all the clamor of the storm the pregnant significance of that phrase, "acquainted with grief," fell distinctly on her ear, and pressed in a most peculiar manner upon her consciousness. "Acquaint-

ed with grief!" What strange meanings of sorrow were hidden in that familiarity!

The next morning was stormy and wild, with driving clouds and mists; and every one must have noticed how black rain does look in the early morning. It was a doleful ending to such a bright holiday, and neither Donald nor Cluny had acquired the art of hiding their grief beneath a mask of laughter. They were silent and sombre as Highlandmen are under any trial. It was the old laird who wrapped Katherine in her plaid and carried her across the muddy court, and put her in the carriage with a cheery "God bless you, Katherine. When we meet again it will be in the sunshine, dear."

Then MacPherson turned to his sons. "Come with me now, my lads, I want to talk with you anent your future, and we'll hae nae better time than the present." Both Donald and Cluny felt the proposal a relief; they were glad that the hour had come, and eager to enter the struggle of life. Already the pleasant summer holiday seemed a thing far behind; the stress of an active life was before them, they were ready to do their part in it.

"Ye are baith men now," the laird said with a proud fondness, "and there's work for ye to do. I hae thought and I hae better thought,

anent the kind o' work, and it doesna seem to me that ye can do anything mair MacPherson-like than to tak your places in the gallant Forty-second. It's in a way our ain regiment, and the colonel and I are friends close as brithers."

"You have been ever a good and wise father to me, sir," answered Donald, "and I never did wrong when I followed your advice."

"I'm no an oracle o' sagacity, Donald, but life is a country old men have seen and dwelt in; forbye I love you, lads, and love is a wise teacher. Donald, your head will hae to fill my bonnet some day, and it will be well for you to serve your country before you serve yoursel'. Cluny, my dear son, I hae little to leave you but a stainless name and a stainless sword."

Cluny for answer stepped across the hearth and took his father's hands and kissed them. Then he said with a glowing face, "You have given me much beside. You have given me your love, the best of mothers, the happiest home, and," looking into Donald's face, "the dearest and noblest of brothers. I had rather to-day be Cluny MacPherson than the Duke of Argyle."

"Ye are two good lads, and I'm a proud father and thank God for ye baith. And it isna a light thing, let me tell ye, to put your names

among the braw fellows o' 'The Black Watch.' For, wherever the point o' danger is, they be to be there. They hae borne the brunt ever since Fontenoy, where they led the attack and then covered the retreat. Oh, my lads!" and the old soldier rose excitedly and began to pace the room, "I hae heard your grandfather tell how at Ticonderoga they left seven hundred men dead on the felled timber ramparts—seven hundred braw, brave fellows dead wi' their claymores i' their hands! They got the name o' 'Royal' from the king for that desperate charge. They were wi' Abercrombie in the Netherlands; and they swept the French before them on the banks o' the Nile. When they came hame that time their colors were unfurled to hae 'Egypt' emblazoned on them. When Sir John Moore and the Duke o' Wellington were in the Peninsula, they were the finger next the thumb to baith generals. At Quatre Bras the command o' the Forty-second fell in ten minutes on four different officers. Ay, and to this day, wherever there is a fort to be taken, you'll see the red line o' the English soldiers fronted wi' the dark tartan o' the Forty-second and its tip o' sharp gleaming steel!"

"Oh, father, father!" cried Cluny in an enthusiasm, "I wish you were going with us. You should see what I would do!"

“There are plenty o’ MacPhersons there, and they’ll aye look up to Donald and you; and, Cluny, if there wasna a MacPherson present, ye’ll aye remember ye can do naething but in the presence o’ twa great witnesses, God and your ain conscience. They twa are enough, Cluny.”

“I remember, father, when I was a little lad, you once told me a wonderful story of an old Highlander at the capture of Quebec. Was he not with the Forty-second there?”

“Ay, ay; in the thick o’ the fight there was seen a gigantic gray-headed Highlander wielding a tremendous claymore. Many a shot was aimed at him, but he seemed to bear a charmed life; and he did such execution that he was soon standing behind a rampart o’ dead bodies. Then he rested a moment, threw off his plaid and coat, and grasping the hilt o’ his claymore wi’ baith his hands, he went forward again in the thick o’ the fight. His valor attracted the attention o’ General Townshend, wha ye ken took the command after the death o’ General Wolfe, and he had him brought into his presence after the battle was o’er.

“How auld are ye?” he asked him.

“Seventy years auld, general.”

“How is it you are a soldier at such an age?”

“I enlisted as a volunteer. I hae a gude

cause to fight the French, for they hae killed a' my sons and a' my brithers; and I hope I hae neither disgraced my country, nor my king, nor the Forty-second, nor mysel'.'

“ ‘Where did you get that sword?’

“ ‘My sword, general, is my ain sword. Strong and true is it, and it has come down from father to son through mair generations than I can count to ye.’ ”

“ ‘And what did they do for him, father?’ ”  
asked Cluny.

“ ‘They took him back to England with them; and the king honored his gray hairs, and gave him a commission in the Forty-second.’ ”

“ ‘Well, father?’ ”

“ ‘And his name was Malcolm MacPherson! Oh, lads! ye’ll be good men and true men; ye’ll fear God, and do your duty, and ye’ll no sit in the seat o’ the scorne; no, not if the king himsel’ should gie you an invite up there!’ ”

“ ‘How soon can we join the regiment, father?’ ”

“ ‘Ye canna get over the stile ere ye come to it, Cluny. There will be this and that to speir after, and this and that to do, and a’ things will hae to be done wi’ discretion and order.’ ”

It was a little after the New Year before all the arrangements were completed, but the time

passed very pleasantly. Fine linen and delicate hosiery were prepared by Lady MacPherson for her sons; and no selfish tears fell on the white seams, and no doubts or fears were knitted into the fleecy hose. But many a hope brightened her work, and many a faithful little prayer went up to God for her boys; and thus, as it were, she took him into her confidence about them. Their father had filled them with his own enthusiasm and his own frank, joyful spirit; it was not in her duty to dampen their ardor or darken their hopes. So she spoke cheerfully and wisely with them, and even showed no sign of jealousy when Cluny said, "I shall be near to Katherine now, mother."

"I hope that will make you very happy, Cluny. Give her my dear love. I have a little trinket to send her by you—a pretty Indian locket—you will like to take it to her, eh?"

"Oh, mother, how good you are!" He was so happy that he never divined that it had cost his mother a little pang to say the words and to send the gift. The self-renunciation of parents is a beautiful flower, but every soul must grow it in its own garden. And how little do we know, even of the hearts nearest and dearest to us. Therefore, for this very cause, we need to go to Him whose knowledge of us is so intimate and immediate, and whose tenderness is as great as his knowledge.

Still Lady MacPherson was not without her special care in regard to her younger son. To his mother Cluny had spoken at intervals on subjects which he never named either to Donald or his father—certain new ideas in religious and political matters quite at variance with the creed in which they had been brought up. To these opinions she had thought it hitherto unwise to give importance by a presumption that they could possibly influence either his intellect or his conduct. She was indeed much inclined to attribute his repetition of such thoughts to her as rather a mark of youthful vanity than of any solid conviction. Vanity was a very weak spot in Cluny's character; and the most subtle form vanity can take is that which assumes for ourselves a broader thought and a more eager quest after truth than others feel.

One evening, just before Cluny was to leave home, the subject pressed upon her heart; and she said, "Cluny, my dear son, your father picked up one of those Reviews or pamphlets which you get from London and Edinburgh. Some of the opinions they advocate made him very angry; I would not read them."

"But, mother, the horizon of the world is growing wider; men are looking for light, and beginning to find it."



“Cluny, you must not tell me that men have been in darkness hitherto. The Light of the world dawned two thousand years ago in Bethlehem of Judæa.”

“Dearest mother, I would not say a word to touch your lovely faith for the world. It is the sweetest and purest of faiths for woman; but thoughtful men are beginning to have broader views of life.”

“Narrow is the way, Cluny; and God did not make the way narrow for woman and broad for man. If you hold any opinions you would not like your mother or Katherine Maxwell to hold, you may be certain that they are wrong. It is only when men want to carry their own pride of intellect and their own ‘opinions’ with them that they find God’s way too narrow for them.”

“Mother, do you think that no higher revelation is to come? May there not be prophets now, as of old?”

“What prophet of to-day, at the very height of his vision, can see with a nearness and plainness like that which Moses felt as he lay in the night on the starlit Arabian waste watching his flock? Or are there any men now that would rise and obey the beck of the Spirit as he did? Have we had since a prophet of fire like Elijah? or a prophet of water like John the Baptist?

Cluny, Cluny, the faith of your father and mother and brother is the true faith. You would scorn to be disloyal to your king or country; will you be a traitor to God and your soul and your kirk?"

"Mother dear, you take this thing far too seriously. The question in my mind relates more to others than to myself. These new thinkers really seem to be honestly working for the general uplifting and social liberation of humanity."

"Do not fret yourself about the social liberation of humanity. If you had any call to work in that field it would be no uncertain one. In the meantime you are quite sure that, like the stars, you have your own orbit and your own task to do. They do not challenge the Almighty. Self-poised and joyful, they perform their daily task, asking neither sympathy nor amusement from without. The Master will not praise you if you neglect the work he has set you to do, and perform in its place the work that you have set yourself. Obedience is the first and the greatest lesson. If God had bid you spin, he would have found the flax for your spinning—I mean that these questions take you away from your own life and your manifest duty. These new teachers are for doing so much, they do nothing."

"No one can put back the world's clock, my dear mother."

“And no one but its Maker can put it forward, Cluny. I believe that he keeps the times and seasons of humanity. The broader light that is to come will come through that Sun of Righteousness who brings healing for all sorrows and for all wrongs in his wings.”

This conversation but preluded many more of the same kind. The mother's fears had become thoroughly roused, and in prayerful, loving faith she scattered words of warning and encouragement upon the young man's soul. Some of them would surely sink into its most solemn depths, and their harvest, however long delayed, would come.

## CHAPTER III.

## LIFE IN EDINBURGH.

“Man is blind because of sin ;  
Revelation makes him sure.  
Without that, who looks within  
Looks in vain, for all 's obscure.”

DONALD and Cluny were to leave home about the end of January. The Forty-second were garrisoned in Edinburgh Castle; and as they had just returned from a term of foreign service, they were not very likely to be sent abroad again for a little time. It was a proud day to the family when the youths' uniforms arrived. The laird took out his own Forty-second tartans, and father and sons wore them to the kirk the following Sabbath. Probably Janet had whispered this intention in the village, for there was not a man who had ever served in the famous regiment that did not also take out his faded kilt and plaid and his plumed bonnet.

So when MacPherson and his sons entered the kirk, these old soldiers quietly massed themselves around him, and they made quite a remarkable group among the blue-coated fishermen and the bright-plaided shepherds from the hills; so re-

markable, that the old dominie saw them at a glance, and his face flushed and his eyes filled, and the laird said afterwards that he had not seen him so much moved since the burial of the last MacPherson.

The Dominie Malcolm was now a very aged man, so old that he was led to the pulpit leaning upon the arms of two young shepherds; and Donald noticed particularly this Sabbath the tall spare figure, in its black silk gown and Geneva bands, as something so far apart from the bronzed, ruddy youths in their plaided dresses who supported him. There is a certain awfulness about very old men and women. They are among us, but not of us; they are lonely, and willing to be gone. Dominie Malcolm was a very near neighbor to eternity.

He had long been too feeble to ascend the pulpit, and he sat on a low large chair placed beneath it, the Bible open upon a little stand before him. It was a congregation simple and sincere that stood up solemnly in God's presence to pray, and sat thankfully at their pastor's feet while he broke to them the bread of life. This morning he was under very strong emotion. He blessed the people when he entered, and then recited a portion of the Scriptures; and while the Psalm was being sung his eyes sought frequently the

group of which the laird and his sons were the centre.

In his sermon he spoke particularly to them. He was glad to see that they could bring forth the garments of their earthly fight and wear them before God and man as good soldiers who had done their duty in the day of that warfare; and he bid them so fight the good fight of faith that the Captain of their salvation would make them partakers of the glory and victory with him.

Cluny was much impressed with the discourse. "It was a sermon fit for soldiers, father," he said, as they walked up the hill after it; "I cannot conceive how he could preach it. Did you see his face? How it glowed! And towards the close he seemed to forget his age, and he spoke like a captain ordering his men on the battlefield."

"He kens a' about it, Cluny," answered MacPherson. "He was a captain in the Forty-second once, and no man ever forgets that, I'm thinking."

"But how then—"

"It is a sad story, my lad, and it happened just before I was born—sixty years since."

"Father!"

"Even sae; I am sixty, and the dominie is all o' ninety. He had a sorrow then that just broke

his life in twa. There was naething for him but the cross o' Christ, and he sheathed his sword for ever and lifted the cross. He said it was in helping others that he found rest and help for his ain broken heart; and I dinna doubt it. I was reading only yesterday morn that 'the Lord turned the captivity o' Job when he prayed for his friends;' yes, indeed, it was after the prayer for Eliphaz and Bildad and Zophar that the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before."

"It must have been a great sorrow," said Cluny. None of Cluny's sorrows were for secrecy; he freely sought comfort from his friends, and he did not scruple therefore to ask after the sorrows of others. Donald could understand better the sacredness of a grief, and he kept his dark, solemn face bent towards the ground.

"I'm no free to tell you the whole story, Cluny, but his bonnie wife and bairn were murdered."

"Was the murderer found?"

"Yes, many a year after. It was his cousin! When he was dying he sent for the dominie and mysel'—"

"Why for you, father?"

"Because the murdered lady was my father's only sister. Well, the man was dying, and he asked the dominie to forgie and pray for him."

“How could he do that?”

“It was a hard thing for any man, especially a Highlandman, to do; but Malcolm was aye a grand fellow. He buried his face in his hands a few moments and sobbed like a bairn. My blood was boiling like fire, and there was nae forgiveness in my heart; but the dominie gied the man his hand, and then knelt down and prayed wi’ him, and the man died wi’ his words o’ hope in Jesus Christ’s mercy in his ears. Then he buried him, and as we stood above the grave he asked me to bury in it all memory o’ the wrong and sin, for I was weel minded to hae it out wi’ his family; but I promised, and never since until this hour hae I spoken o’ it.”

“It was a grand thing to do,” said Donald.

The laird made no further comment on the tragedy, and having told it, relapsed into a silence which commanded respect. It was evident to his sons that he did not wish to pursue the subject. But the circumstance fastened itself upon Cluny’s mind with a persistent force that seemed almost a presentiment. Dominie Malcolm had become a different person in his eyes. Cluny’s imagination was very vivid, and before he had reached home he had re clothed the aged minister with youth and beauty, and divined how he must have looked before he changed the tartans of his



regiment for the gown and band of the clergyman. The man had become a hero to Cluny; he felt that he must see him close once more, must touch his hand and hear him speak.

While he was pondering this question the next morning, there came a messenger from Dominie Malcolm asking Laird Cluny to come and speak with him.

“How did you know I wanted to see you dominie?”

“Because, Cluny, my son, I wanted to see you. Your mother also has spoken to me. She is very anxious about you. She thinks you are among the fogs and clouds of spiritual doubt. Many get there, Cluny, and go no farther, but you must pass through them into the light beyond. What troubles you, my dear lad?”

“All about the future is so dark. Do you really believe, sir, that the Bible gives us the necessary light?”

“There is light enough in the Bible for those who wish to see, and there is darkness enough to confound those of opposite desires.”

“But I have heard men reason—”

“What is reason?”

“I know not.”

“I will tell you. It is human perplexity. The soul that falls in love with the divine Good-

ness rises far above the regions of intellectual strife."

"But, sir, some of the most learned men of our age do not accept our forms of religion."

"If learning without religion were estimable, then, Cluny, nothing is more estimable than the devil. He has more knowledge of good and evil than the wisest of mortals ever had, but he has no religion. What is his wisdom worth? Ah, Cluny, there is a great and a sad difference between the knowledge of God and the love of God."

"Have you read any of these men's books, sir?"

"Years know more than books. I have been young, and now am old, and I know him whom I have believed. I would no more read a book that covertly slandered the Holy Word of my Father than I would suffer some enemy of MacPherson's to sit in my presence and insinuate to me doubts of his truth and honesty. What new comfort have your new teachers given you?"

"I cannot say they have given me comfort; they have only set me thinking."

"What good is it for men to break up all the old safe roads to heaven? They have made us no ladders to take their place yet, Cluny."

"What they want is religious liberty."

"Nay, what they want is irreligious liberty."

"Oh, dear sir, if things were only a little more plain and rational!"

"You mean, 'if the Bible was.' Don't be a coward, Cluny. Say like a man the word you think. What right have you to ask God to explain his ways to you? When you were a child, did you expect your father to explain to you why he managed his estate in a certain manner? why he sent you to certain teachers? why he made certain rules for your conduct? If he had explained his methods and purposes to you, would you have understood them? Cluny, let us humbly, as little children, acknowledge that there are religious mysteries. What then? Think of them only on your knees, for there you will feel your weakness and blindness only as a capacity for Christ's fulness, and for a diviner light. What is your hardest thought? Just speak it plainly to me, Cluny."

"If there should be no resurrection—"

"Ay, there are Sadducees now, as there were in Jewry."

"If this is the only life we have, what then?"

"I would, even in that case, say: *Pitch this life high!*"

"If Christ was not God; if he was only a man like me."

“Even if I believed that, I would say, *Try and be a man like Christ!* Cluny, there is ever present in your breast that which will never become a party to your sinful doubts, and which will never consent to any unrighteous deed you may commit. It is the voice of God within you. Can you have a better counsellor? You are going into the world, into a very dangerous world, Cluny, I know it. Oh, my dear son, watch and pray that you enter not into temptation. Remember that this was one of the last sentences uttered by Christ on that dreadful night. It was his dying advice to his followers. Take notice of one word in it—*enter* not into a temptation; for when a man is fully in it, and *under* its influence, there is an end of watching, and an end of wanting to pray.”

“That is terrible, sir. You make me fear and tremble!”

“My son, my dear son, there are strange trials and sorrows before you. Oh, do not put from you those pierced hands which alone can help you, and that bleeding heart which alone can enter into your heart’s bitterness.”

They were interrupted at this point by the entrance of Donald, and the conversation was not renewed; but Cluny went away sorrowful, and half ashamed of the attitude he had taken. Cer-

tainly if he had affected a weak infidelity with any idea of investing himself with importance, he felt that he had signally failed. None had given him credit for any deeper or wider thought; they had only pitied his delusion.

He ventured that evening to speak to Donald on the subject. Donald received the confidence with extreme coldness. He listened, but he would not see anything like true progress in the destruction of beliefs that had comforted two thousand years of human sorrows.

“I decline to believe, Cluny, that we shall make progress by going over precipices; and it seems to me that is all ‘free thought’ is doing.”

Very soon after this conversation the young men went to Edinburgh. Donald took command of his company, and Cluny was ensign to the regiment. Donald had wished to keep Cluny under the same roof with him, but to this proposal Cluny was decidedly opposed. He had a feeling of being under suspicion, and was inclined to resent anything which looked like surveillance. But they met constantly, and Cluny still retained his boyish habit of going to his elder brother in all his pleasures, annoyances, or vexations.

It was the afternoon of St. Valentine’s day, and Donald was sitting in his handsome parlor on Prince’s street. The afternoon was clear and

pleasant, and he had drawn his chair to the window and seemed to be watching the changing crowd passing it. Yet there was on his face that careless stillness of a thinking mind, to whom all outward things are an idle dream. Cluny entered gayly, and immediately a vivid smile lighted up his face. Never had his brother's great beauty struck him so forcibly as in that moment while he stood in the open door. The grand regularity of the face, with its beaming smile, and the proud poise of the head, with its short, curling hair and handsome bonnet, first attracted him. Then, almost with a mother's pride, he let his eyes take in the tall, lithe grace of the body, wonderfully set off by the picturesque dress in which he was attired.

"Cluny, you are a splendid-looking fellow! I may well be proud of you."

Cluny blushed with pleasure, for Donald's words of praise were rare enough to make them of value. "The dress is so becoming, Donald," and Cluny looked down like a gratified girl at his expensive kilt and philibeg, and other adornments.

"Yes; it is the dress of kings and kaisers, the dress of health and manhood and grace. If it does not make a man stand erect, and feel all the obligations of a heroic past, and all the possibil-

ities of a heroic future, then he must be wanting in self-respect."

"I am glad that I am looking well. I am going to Uncle David's. Katherine came back from her visit to Stirling last night. We really ought to call oftener than we have done."

"We have called twice since we came, and as Katherine was not at home—"

"But she is at home now, and I have a little gift for her from my mother. I thought I would make a valentine of it."

"I cannot go this afternoon, Cluny. Give Katherine my kind remembrance. She will not miss me much if you are there;" and Donald's face was so pleasant, and his manner so apparently careless, that Cluny never suspected that the refusal was a real act of self-denial.

"Well, then, good-by;" and the young soldier went striding down Prince's street with the air of an emperor, quite oblivious, this afternoon, of the looks of admiration that followed him.

He soon reached his uncle's dwelling, a large, old-fashioned mansion of some pretension; for David Maxwell was a lawyer of great eminence; a clever, shrewd pleader, who knew well how to manage a case, both for his client and himself. An old servant in a handsome livery admitted him with a smile, partly for himself, partly for



“AN OLD SERVANT . . . AT ONCE TOOK HIM TO MISS MAXWELL'S PARLOUR.”





the tartan that he wore, and at once took him to Miss Maxwell's parlor.

Katherine sat at the window, her head bent over a piece of fine cambric which she was sewing. At that day there were many beautiful women in Edinburgh, but none more exquisitely womanly and lovable than Katherine Maxwell. An atmosphere of purity and of cheerful serenity surrounded her, and her smile went like sunshine to the very heart of all on whom it fell.

"O Cluny!" and her sewing dropped at her feet, and she stood blushing and smiling till it seemed to Cluny as if it was midsummer, and the glory of all fair things on earth was in some inscrutable way around him. It was a momentary revelation to both of a love pure as flame and strong as death. Then Katherine, trembling at the knowledge, became shy and cool, and Cluny felt the sudden reaction, and wondered how the chill had come, and why the room had become darker and smaller.

Katherine was apparently engrossed with her sewing, but she was quite conscious, though her eyes were bent upon it, that Cluny was watching her face with all his heart in the gaze. He sat opposite to her, leaning forward and talking of his father and mother. He was just about to offer his golden valentine, when the door opened,

and James Monteith entered the room. He came in unannounced, and with the air of one familiar in the house.

Cluny had not so much seen him as become conscious of his presence; just as in some mysterious way a person often knows there is a snake in his vicinity, though he has not seen it. Katherine's face hardened at once into a mask. It was as if she had locked up her soul in some secret chamber; not a flicker of any emotion was to be detected. She said, "Good, afternoon, Mr. Monteith," as an automaton might have said it, then turning to Cluny, "I believe you and Mr. Monteith are already acquainted," she resumed her work.

"It is a very fine day," said Monteith. He threw out the remark for any one who might choose to answer it. Cluny paid no attention whatever to it, and after a moment's hesitation Katherine replied, "Very."

"I told Mr. Maxwell that I should dine here," pursued Monteith, "but it is, I find, impossible. If I call for you at half-past seven to-night, will that suit, Miss Maxwell?"

"Quite."

Cluny felt his position intolerable. In Katherine's presence he could not pointedly insult Monteith, and yet he felt and saw that Monteith

was taking the keenest delight in parading his familiarity with Katherine's home and Katherine's arrangements. There was nothing to do but retreat; but he fancied that while he held Katherine's hand a moment and bade her 'good-by,' a flash of intelligence passed between them, and that in it she had sought his pity and his help.

He went away in a confusion of anger and of love. His first thought was Donald; his second was to watch at half-past seven o'clock and see if Monteith really went out with the Maxwells. Even if there had been an engagement to do so, he hoped that Katherine would now refuse to fulfil it. But why should he hope so? He could not define the reason, but he felt that one existed. There had been that one wonderful moment between them. In it Cluny had received a conviction, penetrating as light, that Katherine belonged to him, and he believed with all his heart that she had been in the same way enlightened.

It was useless for him to go home. He was too restless to sit still. A hard gallop might have done him good, but Highlandmen seldom ride, and so Cluny went off in long swinging strides to Arthur's Seat. There he walked, and nursed himself into a fever of jealousy and hatred. Had

he not been in this condition, it would have been impossible for Cluny MacPherson to play the spy even upon his rival in love. Indeed, he did feel so ashamed of the rôle that he would on no account have told Donald about it; but still he fully resolved to fill it.

Half-past seven! Life seemed to be concentrated on that point of time. A few minutes before it, Mr. Maxwell's carriage drove to the door and stood waiting. Ten minutes more elapsed, and then the door opened, and a blaze of light from the hall flooded the long flight of granite steps; and Mr. Maxwell, leaning on the arm of Monteith passed down them and entered the carriage. "He will go back for Katherine;" thought Cluny, and waited in a tremor of anxiety. No, he did not; he entered the carriage with Mr. Monteith, and the two were driven rapidly away.

A sense of triumph thrilled all Cluny's being. He leaped at conclusions with the ardor and the vanity of a young man. Katherine had stopped at home for his sake. Why should he not call on her? He knocked at the door without hesitation. His sanguine temperament had only misled him. Miss Maxwell was unwell, and had given orders not to be disturbed.

He went away angry and unreasonable. Katherine might have known he would watch.

She might have been sure he would call. In short, Katherine might have been clairvoyant, and divined what it was impossible for her to have known. All the time he was quite forgetting that if Katherine Maxwell had been capable of planning such an opportunity, and had then granted him the clandestine meeting, she would have fallen in his estimation, and soiled the pure loveliness of her most sweet womanhood.

The next day he told Donald of the meeting, and of the footing which Monteith seemed to have gained in their uncle's house. Donald was exceedingly troubled, though he treated the position from an outside point of view. "We are not David Maxwell's keepers, Cluny; he would thank us little to meddle in his affairs, and we know really nothing wrong of Monteith."

"There is nothing right in the man, Donald. He is a coward and a bully, and he is not fit to associate with our cousin Katherine. I think you ought to tell Uncle David that we think so."

Donald smiled at the impulsive young man and shook his head. "Cluny, you will find it hard to get through the world with your elbows stuck out on each side of you. Be prudent, my dear brother. It will not do to accuse any man upon presumptions and presentiments. And

don't get excited, no matter what the provocation is. I will go with you as frequently as possible to see Katherine; all we can do is to watch the course of events. We have not the shadow of a right to interfere at the present."

This decision Donald adhered to; but he kept Cluny as much as possible in his own company, and went with him constantly to the Maxwells' dwelling. The little gold trinket was given and accepted, and Cluny felt that as long as Katherine's slender throat was encircled by that thin golden chain he had not lost his hold upon her affection. For week after week passed, and never during them did love again step in between them as a revealer. Yet he was almost sure that Katherine loved him, though some impalpable wall separated them, the least approach to which in any tender mood made her sorrowful and cold.

They met Monteith constantly during these visits, but out of respect for Katherine they avoided every approach to anything likely to produce a quarrel. Donald's haughty courtesy left Monteith no tangible cause of complaint, and a man hardly likes to attack another man because he refuses to see that he is present—which was Cluny's way of meeting the difficulty. Still the situation kept Donald in constant anxiety, and at last the danger he sought to avoid met Cluny in

an unexpected and unguarded place and moment.

One night Cluny went to a comrade's room to spend the evening, and found there a party playing whist, Monteith being one of them. Now if Monteith had any pet social ambition, it was to be on familiar terms with the officers in garrison; and Cluny's contemptuous way of ignoring his presence and personal identity among them made him irritable and nervous. Then he began to drink, and his half-Asiatic temperament grew very rapidly uncontrollable under the stimulus. He could see through the mist surrounding everything nothing but Cluny's mocking eyes and smile; and at length, thoroughly maddened by passion and wine, he leaped like a tiger at his enemy's throat.

But the panther-like agility of the man lacked the panther's grip and strength, and with a contemptuous laugh Cluny flung his assailant to the floor as he would have done a child, and then, as if scorning to use his hands, kicked him out of his way.

There was a tumult immediately, and cries of "Shame!" "Served him right!" "Put him out!" and Monteith, picking himself slowly up, saw at a glance that he was alone. Every one in the room had sided with MacPherson, who stood



on the hearthrug towering above his companions, his eyes blazing with passion and scorn.

"You must apologize to Ensign MacPherson," said Captain MacAllister, "or leave the room, sir."

"I will accept no apology," shouted Cluny. "I will do myself the pleasure of kicking Mr. Monteith whenever and wherever I meet him."

"Gentlemen," answered Monteith, "I beg you to understand that I shall make Ensign MacPherson pay dearly for the pleasure, just as often as he takes it;" then, opening the door, he looked deliberately at every one present, and with more dignity than might have been thought possible under the circumstances, walked out.

"Fling those devil's tools away into the fire!" said Captain MacAllister, pointing to the cards. "The very spirit of quarrelling is in them. MacPherson, I hope you are not in that man's power."

"I! In his power!" And Cluny drew himself proudly up, and flung his head defiantly back.

"Oh, not in that way, of course. I mean, I hope that he has no bills, no I. O. U.'s and things of that sort—no paper of yours."

"I borrow money of him! Oh no, captain! There is no fear of such a thing as that."

"Lucky fellow! I wish we could all say so. I owe him £300, I am very sorry to say."

"And I £150."

"And I indorsed young Lucket's bill for £90."

"I owe him £65. I wish it was £600. He'll be just as ugly about it."

"Then the fellow is a money-lender."

"That's about the definition. He calls himself a lawyer; but six and half a dozen, you know."

"Not quite, comrades. My uncle is a lawyer, David Maxwell, at your service, and a more honorable man does not live."

"He is a grand fellow," said the captain. "I took dinner with him once. Do you know that Monteith boasts that he is the real manager of Mr. Maxwell's business?"

"All boast," answered Cluny hotly, but his heart ached with a sudden nameless fear; and after an apology to all present for a passion which might cause them some annoyance, he went away—not, it must be confessed, with any sense of being a hero or with any feeling of victory.

"A most disagreeable affair," said MacAllister, after a minute's silence; "I wish it had not happened."

“Young MacPherson has such a gun-powdery temper it is dangerous to approach him.”

“Bruce and Wallace! Would you have an officer of the Forty-second let a little money-lender take him by the throat, and say, ‘Thank you’ for it?”

“I would have enjoyed kicking him myself, in return for his compound interest,” drawled MacBane, a young Sutherland giant, and he looked down at his big feet complacently, as if he thought them admirably adapted for the work.

“I cannot understand what made Monteith lose himself in such a way; he is usually so suave and conciliating.”

“If you had seen MacPherson’s eyes, captain, the reason would be clear to you.”

“I must speak to MacPherson to-morrow. A gentleman ought not to bring his private feelings to a friend’s table. And if you remember, we had been discussing the subject of quarrels and duels; talk of the devil, and he will either come or send.”

This quarrel happened in the spring. It made but a passing shadow on Cluny’s heart. After he had talked it over with Donald, he went to bed and slept soundly, quite unconscious of the fact that Monteith was walking his room all night with slow, thoughtful steps, occasionally stand-

ing at the window to mutter to himself passionate imprecations and promises of hatred and revenge.

The next morning was a balmy, sunshiny one; and Cluny, half-forgetful of the annoyance of the previous night, was coming gayly down Prince's street from Donald's rooms, where he had been breakfasting. "Why, there is Uncle David," he said to himself, and he hastened to meet him.

To his amazement Mr. Maxwell took no notice of his outstretched hand, and answered his cheery greeting with a cold, constrained nod.

"Why, what is the matter, uncle?"

"Matter enough, when ye tak to kicking my friend as if he were an ill-willy dog."

"Did your friend tell you that he flew at my throat as if he were an Asiatic Thug?"

"Now, Cluny, ye needna look at me as if your e'en were pistols. I dinna approve o' young men raging here and kicking there, and I'll ne'er speak to ye in this warld again—no, nor in the next, I doot, unless ye mend your ways."

"This is so unfair, so unjust, uncle."

But David Maxwell passed on. Cluny, angry and amazed, saw, on turning round, that he had taken the way to his own house. Cluny at once thought of Katherine, and followed. But Da-

vid, as if conscious that his nephew was within hearing, shut the door with a force which said as plain as words that it was for ever closed against him.

The meeting with Cluny had, however, been quite unlooked for, and it had been unfortunate in that it had precipitated matters. Maxwell had scarcely made up his mind how to act between the young men when he met his nephew. Strange as it may appear, there was something in the young man's excessive vitality and remarkable beauty that irritated the worried, anxious lawyer. Besides, "Since I wronged you, I never liked you;" and Maxwell had made up his mind to wrong Cluny, not perhaps to the extent of shutting his door against him, or of refusing to hold conversation with him, still sufficiently so to make the sight of the youth unpleasant.

But things having come to this crisis, David Maxwell was not the man to shirk the consequences. His first thought was his daughter, for he had neither been oblivious of Cluny's love for her, nor of Katherine's shy interest in her handsome cousin. "I ken how that wind blows as weel as they do themsel's, and maybe a bit better," he thought. He was still under some excitement, and when he opened the parlor-door, Katherine looked up with a start at his abrupt

and unexpected entrance. She was writing, and her father thought of Cluny at once.

"Whom is that letter for?" he asked, laying his large brown palm on the white paper.

"I am writing to Aunt MacPherson, father."

"Then ye needna finish it. I hae just forbid Cluny to enter my house; now ye ken if your aunt will care to hae a letter from ye."

She turned white as the paper on which her eyes were fixed, but spoke not a word. Her silence angered him. "Do ye hear what I say?"

"Yes, father."

"Take care ye heed it then."

"Have I ever disobeyed you, father?"

"I'm no saying ye have; but ye might, if that ne'er-do-weel Cluny MacPherson set you up to it."

"What has Cluny done to grieve you, father?"

"I'll e'en tell ye the whole affair, Katherine, for ye *are* a good girl; there's nae question o' that, and it is best for you to ken the why and the wherefore o' things. I'm no an unreasonable father, and I dinna expect an unreasonable service."

Then he told her the story of the quarrel between Cluny and Monteith, as Monteith had told it to him, watching, with a painful anxiety as he

did so, the paling and flushing of Katherine's face. Her eyes she kept steadily dropped upon the interrupted letter before her until he had finished; then she lifted them, heavy and dim with tears, and said,

"You have only heard one side, father. Hear Cluny also."

"I'll no do it."

"Hear Captain MacAllister."

"I'll no do it."

"Is that quite fair, father? Cluny is of your own blood and kin. Monteith is a stranger, and—"

"Katherine, this is not a matter of choice, but of expediency. I have no choice in it. I am in Monteith's power, and must stand by his side.

"In Monteith's power! Dear father, may no such sorrow come your way!"

"The prayer is o'er late, Katherine. Would you rather ken this much, or ken it all?"

"If you are in any trouble, father, and it will help you even to talk of it to me, or if I can give you any comfort or help, I think you ought to tell me. Who on earth loves you as I do?"

His heart throbbed painfully at the words. So far, he had carried his burden alone; there

suddenly came to him a longing for sympathy. The sensitive, loving face before him, with its troubled eyes, and the small hand quite unconsciously outstretched, were an irresistible temptation. He walked to the door and locked it, and then drew a chair to the table at which Katharine was sitting.



## CHAPTER IV.

## EVIL DESIGNS THWARTED.

Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein." Prov. 26:27.

"KATHERINE, God doesna bless the kindness that is done to a wicked man, for all the sorrow that has come to me has come that road. And the children do suffer for the father's wrong-doing, for it was my father that spread this net for my feet. Thirty years ago, Katherine, your grandfather Maxwell took a liking to a man whom he was requested to defend. The fellow was a leader among a band o' robbers and desperadoes that hung about the wynds o' the High street—a witty, jovial rascal, he said, as ever lived. In some way or other, my father so managed his case that the thief was saved from his deserts and set free again. He afterwards went to Calcutta, to make a fortune, he said, and he made it.

"Ten years ago he came into my office with £70,000 in his possession, and asked me to invest it for him. There was then a fine estate in the market which had belonged to the Monteith earldom; and as his name was also Monteith, I ad-

vised him to buy it, and just slip awa in among the North-Country gentry as if he was a far-off kinsman. That was wrang o' me, I acknowledge, and was the first step in the sorrowfu' road."

"That man is James Monteith's father?"

"Just sae. He never told me how he won the gold, and I never speired anything anent that matter. He married a Hindoo woman wi' money, he said, and I hae nae reason to contradict that. There the money was, and there the lad was, and I made £1,000 on the conveyancing and other matters anent the business ere it was a' settled.

"I was in sair difficulties six years syne in money matters, and I wrote to auld Monteith and he gied me £1,000 to tak his son James into my office and mak a lawyer o' him. About gold and siller the lad was cleverer when he came to my office than ever I will be. He said his mother's father had been a banker in Benares, and he soon had a' the law anent usury and interests at his finger-ends. Three years ago auld Monteith gied him £5,000, and I hae nae doot he has made it £20,000. I ken only too weel that a' I have is under his thumb, and that he could turn me out o' this house to-morrow if it liked him to do it."

"Father, he cannot take your legal knowl-

edge from you; let him take all else, we can begin again."

"That is how a woman aye looks at things. If I was your age, Katherine, I might hae the heart to do it. Now it would kill me to lose my gude name, my standing in the kirk, and my position in society."

"Are not liberty and ease of mind better than society? And the kirk does not make riches one of the qualifications of a deacon."

"Ay, but it maks a gude name and clean hands a necessity, and I'm no vera sure that I would like a kirk session to inquire into a' my relationships wi' the Monteiths, father and son. We are, you see, Katherine, too poor to ken poor folks, and these MacPhersons, wi' a' their pride and a' their pedigree, are poor; and what is waur, they arena like to be any richer."

"Why, father?"

"They dinna ken how to mak money. I told the MacPherson how other Highland proprietors had done, and how he could be a rich man in ten years, and he just flew in a blazing passion at me, and bid me mind my ain business. Donald hasna a thimbleful mair o' common sense. When I just hinted to him that I kent o' twa English noblemen wha would be glad to rent some o' the MacPherson forest lands for shooting

o'er—and pay well, mind ye—he drew himsel' up as if he were Lord John o' the Highlands, and said MacPherson lands belonged to the MacPhersons. English steel hadna been able to win them, and he was vera certain English gold wouldna. Heard ye ever such daft-like nonsense? I'm no carin' for such men around ye; they might be askin' you for a wife."

"Neither Donald nor Cluny have said anything of that kind to me, father."

"I'm glad to hear it;" then with a cautious, anxious look at his daughter, "has Monteith?"

"He knows well it would be of no use."

"But if he does ask you, Katherine?"

"I should positively refuse to listen to him."

"I'm dooting that wouldna do. Ye be to marry him if he asks ye."

"Father, why should we call for the evil day by talking about it. If it comes, then God will give me the wisdom and strength to do the right thing."

"But it is aye well to look ahead."

"Not for evil. We are promised grace for to-day, not for to-morrow. Why should we go on a warfare to which we have not been sent? Let us wait until the order comes."

He had no heart to say any more, and he felt comforted by the confidence given. It had not

indeed been a full confidence—perhaps no man ever does tell all; but Katherine knew the dangerous strait they were in, and he told himself that women had all much of the nature of that son who refused to do his father's bidding but afterwards repented and went. Katherine would refuse to marry Monteith at first, but she would yield at last to his desires.

“Drop by drop the stone is worn away.” That was the thought in his heart as he went to his office. This marriage would untangle many a hard knot. “It will hae to be;” and then as he caught sight of the dark, crafty, cruel face studying the ledger before it, his own face clouded and the stern lines of his lips softened, and he whispered to himself two words: “Poor Katherine!”

Poor Katherine; but not as poor as the man who pitied her. Katherine knew where to carry her load of fear and sorrow. Into her own white chamber she entered, and having locked herself in with God, she spread her Bible open and knelt down before it. Her duty; that was what she must first find out. She was seeking light for her feet before comfort for her heart; and she had gone to that oracle whose voice is never uncertain or wavering.

She read the Fifth Commandment first; read

it slowly, word by word, and then clasped her hands above it. There was the command, without exceptions and without provisions. It was not, Honor a good father, a prudent father, or a loving one, but, "Honor thy father." God must have known there would be unreasonable fathers, cruel fathers, fathers improvident and unjust; but he had made no exception in such cases. Jesus Christ, who must have been conscious of his own superior wisdom and purity, had been subject unto Joseph and Mary.

So far, then, her duty was plain, and that was enough for to-day's guidance. If Monteith made any future claim upon her, she would then seek advice upon that matter; the promises, she again told herself, were for to-day's needs, not to-morrow's. No wonder that the face of Moses shone after forty days' communion with God, for when Katherine went out from her hour's tarrying in His audience-chamber of prayer her face had the light of an infinite repose and security on it. She did not feel it necessary to plan nor possible to worry; and it is thus the Lord keeps those in perfect peace whose hearts are stayed upon him.

In the afternoon, as she sat quietly over her sewing, there came to her a letter from Cluny MacPherson. It only mentioned his quarrel with Monteith as the occasion of his uncle's anger; the

real letter was a manly confession of his great love for her, and an entreaty to be allowed to hope that she would eventually become his wife. His whole heart was in the letter, and every word went to Katherine's heart. It made the house full of sunshine, and went singing through her memory like a song. Her hands trembled with joy, and she shyly kissed the letter ere she locked it away in her desk.

Sooner than she anticipated had come a crisis in her life. What was she to do in it? A clandestine meeting or correspondence with her lover would never have entered into Katherine's mind; and Cluny honored her far too truly to suggest it. The answer to his letter he knew would depend on whether his uncle had yet told Katherine of the quarrel. If his letter reached her before she received her father's orders on the subject, he was sure her kind heart would impel her to answer it at once; but if Mr. Maxwell had talked with her on the subject, he thought it likely she would have been forbidden to either see or write to him; in which case he would have to bear the suspense.

Katherine answered the letter at once. She was too honest to coquet, and she knew her own heart perfectly. A modest, truthful little answer it was; not one, perhaps, that would satisfy a lover

of to-day, but girls were shyer then, and young men were, perhaps, happier in their timid advances than in the far more pronounced love-making of this day.

She had quite determined to send Cluny her answer; but she would not do the thing in a secret way. Her father had been frank and candid with her, she would not deceive him. He came in unusually sombre and weary-looking, and made no allusion of any kind to their confidential conversation in the morning. Indeed, he ate and drank in such silence that Katherine was compelled to plunge at once into the subject.

“Father, I had a letter from Cluny to-day.”

“Humff! I expected that.”

“He says that he loves me, and he has asked me to be his wife.”

“He did that to spite Monteith. I do n't believe he ever thought of such a thing before. I have met him time and again with Rose MacAlister.”

“I am sure you are mistaken, father. A woman knows when she is loved. Cluny loved me when I was in the Highlands, last summer; he has loved me ever since.”

“Perfect nonsense! I hae promised you to James Monteith this vera afternoon, and there will be nae release from that agreement.”



“I have promised myself to Cluny, father. I have written and told him I can never marry him without your consent, but that I will never marry any one else.”

“How daur ye disobey me, Katherine !”

“I would not dare, unless your commands put me in a position of active disobedience to God’s commands; then I would dare, dear father, to do right first of all.”

“What is the matter wi’ ye, lassie? Are ye going daft? But there’s nae occasion for hurry; and in the end ye’ll do just as I bid ye do.”

“In the end I shall marry Cluny, father. Please do not misunderstand me. I do not think you will force me to marry a man I hate and fear.”

“Why should ye hate and fear Monteith? He is handsome, rich, and aye kind to ye. Katherine, ye must think o’ me. Ye, and ye only, can save my good name and my credit. O my dear bairn, dinna bring down my gray hairs wi’ shame and sorrow to the grave!” and Maxwell gazed into the deepening shadows of the night with a face so pitiful and dark that Katherine could not resist its distress. She went softly to his side and kissed away the gathering tears, and whispered words of love and hope, and made him lie down on the sofa and sleep and forget for an

hour the weariness and worry of so hard a day. "And, oh," she thought, as she watched the stupor of his exhausted brain and heart, "what a hard task-master is this world! God never lays upon any such sorrowful burdens as they lay upon themselves."

Everything has two or three causes. Monteith, in his pursuit of Katherine Maxwell, had more motives than one. There was, first of all, the delight of forcing himself into the MacPherson family in spite of Donald and Cluny. He thought often of the exquisite annoyance he could cause the young men by speaking of them as his "cousins." Then he was quite aware of all the advantages to be derived in business by his connection with so old and reputable a firm as that of David Maxwell. Thirdly, he was not insensible to Katherine's beauty and the *éclat* of carrying off the loveliest woman of her circle; besides, he more than suspected Cluny's love for Katherine; and this thought, more than all the others, gave him the keenest delight in all his meditations on the subject. His love, however, was not yet a dominant passion; it might become so, if opposed; but he was at this time cool and calm enough not to risk misadventure by hurry.

So the days went and came and the spring grew to summer, and outwardly all things seemed

to be much the same in Katherine's life. And because she trusted in God, and walked lovingly and honestly with her father, she was not unhappy. In her relations with Cluny she had taken a certain stand, and David Maxwell had been forced by its very reasonableness into a kind of tacit concurrence. If Cluny wrote to her, she made no secret of the letter, nor of the fact that she had answered it. If she accidentally met him while shopping or visiting, she always mentioned the circumstance at home. And so complex are the hopes and fears that rule us, especially when our affairs appear to be in extremity, that David rather ignored than opposed the lovers. Indeed, all appeared alike hopeless to him, and he felt so bitterly his own incompetence to order his way that there was in his heart a constant unuttered prayer for some wiser Power to shape the ends he had so rough-hewn.

It was in a mood of this kind that he next met his nephew Cluny. He was coming thoughtfully down George's street, and lifting his eyes he saw the young man regarding him. Both stood still a moment, and in that moment Cluny silently extended his hand. The action was so frank and conciliating, and the young face so anxious and eager, that David could not resist it.

"Ah, Cluny, ye arena to be denied," he said.

“Dear uncle, let us be friends—for Katherine’s sake.”

“There’s nae Katherine in the matter, Cluny. Your mother is my ain dear sister, and you yoursel’ arena the lad to need any one to back ye. I like ye weel, Cluny, for yoursel’, even though I canna gie ye my daughter or ask ye to my house. And I’m no blaming Katherine for liking ye either; but life is mair than loving and liking and gentle shepherding, and girls must marry where wisdom sends them; and I may as weel be honest wi’ ye, and tell ye that I hae promised my daughter to James Monteith.”

“Why do you prefer him to me, uncle?”

“I didna say I preferred him; but I say this: he is rich now, and like to be richer, and folks canna live without money.”

“Monteith rich! No, indeed, uncle! It is an empty purse that is full of other people’s money.”

“Presarve us a’, Cluny! That’s actionable! Tak care he doesna hear ye say it. James Monteith is hand and glove wi’ Good Fortune; dinna ye spit against the wind, or ye’ll get the fill o’ it.”

“Dear uncle, gold is not everything. Who knows about the man’s forebears? I have heard queer stories about his father.”

“I dinna doot it. But if gold isna every-thing, neither is a long pedigree. Tak your noble blood to market, Cluny, and see what ye can buy wi' it.”

Cluny's face flushed angrily, but he thought of Katherine, and restrained himself.

“Let me gie ye, my dear nephew, a bit o' advice. Just ye be done wi' Katherine Maxwell and a' thoughts o' her, and dinna mak your quarrel wi' Monteith a bit worse than it is. Katherine, in the end, will marry Monteith, and in the end he will be able to ca' ye 'cousin.' ”

“He may call me 'cousin' if he likes, but let him do it if he dares ;” and Cluny, lifting his bonnet to his uncle, walked haughtily onward.

David Maxwell had seen the hot tears gathering in Cluny's eyes, and that quivering of the nostrils so peculiar to a Highlander when he is growing uncontrollably angry, and his heart smote him as the young man turned away. He sought the quiet of Charlotte square, and slowly pacing up and down tried to see some way of escape. The effort was no more successful than it had been a hundred times before; and he went back to his office with a heart beating in a painfully irregular manner and a stupefying headache.

Monteith was not present; he felt his absence a blessed relief, and shutting himself in his pri-

vate room, fell into a deep sleep. It was with difficulty he was awakened when the time for closing the office arrived. Then he asked for Monteith, and was told that he had been to the office, but finding Mr. Maxwell asleep, had left immediately. In fact, Monteith was quite aware of the conversation between Cluny and his uncle. Maxwell had been followed, and Donald and Cluny persistently watched for some time by his spy. The young men never took a walk, or went out to dinner, or shopped, or visited, that Monteith was not very soon aware of it. The extraordinary business acuteness that Maxwell credited him with was the result of his system of espionage, rather than of any practical shrewdness. So within half an hour after the conversation on George's street it had been reported to him; not indeed the very words—though some of them had been overheard—but the meeting, the handshake, and the apparently angry parting.

Monteith had a habit when receiving such reports of closing his eyes and drawing the corners of his lips up. The action was a perfect mask; it allowed no show of feeling; and as he never made any remark, the informer, however shrewd, could neither define his motive nor his satisfaction. This report did not please him. He foresaw that Cluny's personal influence and relationship would

eventually prevail, unless he could establish a counter claim on David; and he believed now that his own interests called for an active advocacy.

He went to his room to study the reports given him of Cluny's movements, and on his return, finding David Maxwell asleep, he resolved to take the opportunity offered. Nothing so forcibly shows the influence defending a good woman as the timidity which bad men feel in invading that influence. Not "the divinity that doth hedge a king" would have made Monteith so nervous and anxious as did the thought of having to approach alone Katherine Maxwell. He dressed himself in his richest clothing, and with the true Asiatic love of display, adorned his long yellow fingers with brilliant diamonds. He looked long at his reflection in the mirror, and was not dissatisfied with it. Then he took a small golden box from his pocket. It was full of a black pasty substance, and he broke off a piece and deliberately chewed it. He waited a few minutes, and then calling at David's house, sent word to Katherine that he wished to see her alone.

Katherine knew at once that her hour of trial had come. She never attempted to shift or put it away with excuses. She would see Mr. Mon-

teith in five minutes. Then she went to her room and cast herself at the feet of The Merciful and The Wise. Monteith, judging her by his own heart, believed she had gone to add some ornament to her dress, and felt flattered and hopeful. He waited without impatience her approach, delighting himself with examining her dainty work, her books, and flowers. The atmosphere of the room pleased him. However bad a man is, he longs for something pure and sweet on his hearthstone; and Monteith even felt during those few moments a desire to do just as well by Maxwell as he possibly could do, considering his own interests and likes and dislikes.

When Katherine entered, there entered with her an indefinable something which seemed to put him thousands of leagues away from her. If he could have seen the guardian angels which attend and counsel sweet souls in hours of danger and strait, he could hardly have felt more awed and uncomfortable. Katherine's very dress disconcerted him. It was of white muslin, and lacked all ornament but a small gold brooch clasping the lace collar at her throat.

But, oh, the stately serenity of her manner! the clear, fearless look in her blue eyes, and the light and confidence that set her so far above and apart from him! She sat down, letting her hands



fall loosely on her lap. If she had only lifted her sewing and dropped her eyes upon it, he felt that it would be easier to speak. But Katherine had unconsciously assumed an attitude which showed that her whole mind was bent upon the interview.

“Miss Maxwell—I thought perhaps— Am I right in supposing that your father has told you why I am here this evening?”

“I should prefer you to say what you wish to say, Mr. Monteith, without reference to my father.”

“Very well. I—I—that is—I have been in love with you some time, Miss Maxwell, in fact a long time, and I wish to make you my wife.”

The words came out almost angrily. He had rehearsed this part so often and so differently; and yet with Katherine opposite him, not one of the beautiful things he had intended to say was at his command.

“I do not love you, Mr. Monteith. It would be a great wrong to marry you—to you, as well as to myself.”

“But I love you.”

“I think you are mistaken. I hope so.”

She stood up, as if to terminate the interview, and there was something in her majestic loveliness that for one moment almost touched his bet-

ter self. But it had needed only this word of opposition, this one moment or two of a personal discussion of his claim, to develop his love into a dominant passion. Rapid as a flash of light he mentally reviewed all his advantages, and then he stood up facing her, grasping the table between them with the tenacious grip of a tiger who has seized its prey.

“I must try and teach you to love me, Katherine. I cannot relinquish my claim upon you. It is too dear and precious.”

“You have no claim; you cannot have any claim on me, sir.”

He bowed slightly. “I think you will find I have.” The drug he had taken was beginning to exert its influence. His eyes fixed themselves upon her with a terrible power, and a kind of exaltation took possession of him. But it was a power that reacted upon himself. Katherine felt it, but felt it as some evil and diabolical thing, and she roused every faculty of her soul to resist it.

He drew close to her and attempted to take her hands. She clasped them tightly behind her, and stood regarding him with a kind of horror. The attitude and expression roused a legion of evil passions in his heart.

“I tell you,” he said, in a fierce, trembling

whisper, "I tell you, you must and shall marry me—next week."

"I cannot. Would you have me go into the very presence of God and lie, sir? To marry you would be a living lie. I have no love to give you."

"I know whom you do love."

"Then, sir, you know a man who is worthy of my love."

"A hectoring bravo, a gambler, a man who is in every one's debt, a man without a shilling."

"I decline to discuss Ensign MacPherson with you, Mr. Monteith. Go and tell him what you have said to me."

"I can give you proofs. I have had a man watching him."

"Is there any oath that can make good the word of a spy?"

"And you intend to marry him?"

"If you mean my cousin Cluny MacPherson, I say, Yes, I intend to marry him. I have promised to be his wife. I hope this will satisfy you, sir."

"You shall not marry him; or, if you do, I will ruin your father. I will send him to prison, Katherine! Katherine Maxwell, you shall hear me!"

"Do not touch me, sir! How dare you to

“speak of my father in such language? If he was all you would have me believe, would my marrying you make him good and honest again? No, sir, not if I should lie my soul away.”

“He promised you to me.”

“But he could not do that. No one could give me, my love, my honor, my duty to God away. I will not do evil that good may come; but if I should marry you, I should do evil, for evil only.”

“Do you wish to see your father turned into the street?”

“If this is your house, I wish to leave it at once. There are other homes besides this one.”

Never had Katherine Maxwell looked so noble and so beautiful. She seemed to have gained in physical stature as she stood upright watching the serpent-like darkness and glitter of her companion, with his gleaming eyes and restless movements. Every effort of his to approach her she avoided, and his nervous hands, alternately extended and withdrawn, seemed to her like some evil things to be ceaselessly watched.

There was full three minutes' silence, Katherine never removing her gaze from the man of whom she was really becoming terrified. The silence was broken by a quick, shuddering cry, as Monteith by a rapid movement seized her hand,

and now quite at the mercy of the opium he had swallowed, poured out anew his protestations and his threats.

How could she listen to them? how remove her hands from the tight clasp that held them? She turned her thoughts fervently upward, and that moment her father entered the room.

“Father! father! help me! Oh, save me, father!”

It needed but that cry and the sight of his child's horror-stricken face to rouse all the manhood in David Maxwell's heart. In a moment he was between the two, his face flaming with a righteous anger; and the next moment Katherine had fled to her own room. At first she could not pray. She could only fling herself on her knees, and bury her head in her hands, and sob out all her horror and fear before God. After a while she was able to say, “Pity me, dear Christ! Comfort me! teach me! protect me!” and in such broken ejaculations her soul at length found the strength it needed.

“As a father pitieth his children.” Katherine had never known a mother's love, but she had felt all her life long the great tenderness of her father's heart; and she had seen how at the first moment of her cry to him he had forgotten everything but her wrong and her fear. “As a

father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." God would not be less ready to arise for her help; nay, he would be far more ready. Why should she fear Monteith? Gradually a great peace and confidence filled her whole soul. She bathed her face, and went down stairs to find her father. She knew there must have been a stormy interview between him and Monteith, and that he would be glad of a cup of tea and a talk with her.

The table was laid in the dining-room, the scent of the fresh strawberries filled the room, and a servant was slowly arranging the service for three. Was it possible Monteith was to eat with them? Her heart turned sick and faint.

"Where is my father, Jeannie?"

"I dinna ken, Miss Katherine."

"Have you seen Mr. Monteith?"

"Deed, he went awa, raging like a roaring lion, a half hour syne. It's like the master and he had a word or twa."

Katherine grew uneasy; her father was neither in the drawing-room nor library. She went softly to his bedroom door and called him. There was no answer. Then she ventured to his study, an apartment no one ever molested him in. The door was unlocked, and she entered. David Maxwell was lying on a couch, breathing heavily, but

apparently sleeping. Still her fears were roused, and she sent for the family physician. There was an anxious half-hour, and then she knew the worst: her father was in the first stage of brain-fever. The case looked very bad, and the doctor shook his head very ominously.

Katherine realized in a moment her helpless condition. To be turned out of their home by Monteith, or to remain in it on his sufferance, seemed the alternative. Suddenly she remembered her cousin Donald. She could trust both his love and his wisdom, and she felt in this extremity unable to decide for herself. Rapidly she put on her bonnet and mantilla, and, calling a cab, drove to his lodgings. He saw her leave it, and came down to meet her. Her face told him that she was in great trouble, and his first thought was of Cluny. As soon as he had seated her, he asked,

“Is it Cluny, Katherine?”

“No, no, Donald. Sit down, and hold my hand while I tell you; for I have no one else to go to, and perhaps you wont help me when you know all.”

Then, in clear, rapid sentences, she told Donald the whole story, hiding nothing, not even the admissions her father had voluntarily made. Donald never once interrupted her, but before she

had finished he had taken in the whole case and resolved on a course of action.

“Dear Katherine,” he answered, “am I not your brother? You did right to come to me. First, my poor uncle must come at once to these rooms while it is possible to remove him. I will send four strong men of my company and a sedan chair at ten o'clock to-night. They will carry him as easily as a baby, and lay him in my bed. I will go to Cluny in the meantime, and you can bring with you such help as you require. Have you any money?”

“I have £400 in the bank.”

“That is good. I will attend to the claims of Monteith. You may fully trust me. He shall not touch a paper until he proves his right to do so. Go quietly home, dear, and make such personal preparations as are necessary. You may have to remain here for two or even three months. I will come with my men at ten o'clock precisely.”

Fortunately there was no opposition to encounter in the carrying out of this plan. Monteith was locked in his room, sunk fathoms below humanity in an opium debauch, and David Maxwell was in the stupor incidental to his condition. The transfer was effected silently and without trouble; and Donald bade Katherine dismiss from



her mind every care but such as pertained to her father's welfare.

Monteith came to himself in the afternoon of the following day, and rang for his cup of black coffee. When it was brought, his servant told him that three gentlemen were waiting to see him.

“Who are they?”

“Captain MacPherson, and two others, sir. I do not know their names.”

This news troubled Monteith very much. He was an arrant coward, and he associated the visit instantly with his treatment of Katherine the previous day. He scarcely knew what punishment they could inflict. Cluny had flogged him when he was sixteen years old, but a man of twenty-six was different. Then he remembered that young Jockerby had been made to sign a paper acknowledging the lies he had told and confessing himself unfit to associate with honorable men, and that this paper had been posted in the club and exchange; and his heart failed him with the simple terror of the thought.

It was difficult also for him to assume his usual indifferent manner. His hands were trembling yet, his head heavy, his speech not thoroughly under his control. He drank cup after cup of strong coffee, and felt every moment more and

more wretched. At length he put on as brave a face as in his position was possible, and, entering the room, explained to the strangers that he was suffering from headache. Donald he took no notice of whatever.

“May I ask what I can do for you, gentlemen?” he added.

“I am acting for my uncle, and my cousin, Miss Maxwell, Mr. Monteith,” said Donald. “This gentleman, Mr. Scott, is a person sent by the proper authorities to seal up everything in the house and office of David Maxwell, until such time as an investigation into his affairs can be made. This gentleman is Mr. Laird, the Public Accountant; you will deliver to him at once the books relating to the Maxwell business and estate.”

“I will do nothing of the kind.”

“You are acquainted with the law, sir. You know that you have no alternative.”

“I say that everything in the house, and the house also, belong to me.”

“You will have ample opportunity to prove that statement before the court.”

“Where is David Maxwell?”

“He is at my rooms, very ill. Little can be done until he recovers. But we can preserve everything as he left it, until he is able

to give assistance in the unravelling of his affairs."

"But, gentlemen, that arrangement is extremely inconvenient to me. It will derange my business. It is quite an outrage."

"Very sorry, of course, Mr. Monteith," said Mr. Laird, with a bland smile; "but, as you know, law is law, and the man that would leap o'er it will need a high horse."

Monteith was thunderstruck. Hardly anything could have happened that would have been so fatal to his plans. In the first place, he was not quite sure that his transactions with Mr. Maxwell would stand the judgment of a clever accountant. He thought he had kept on the safe side of the law, but public opinion was a power that he dreaded terribly. In driving David Maxwell to despair, he had destroyed his own business also, a thing he had never contemplated doing. All his threats had been simply threats; to have them put into execution for him, meant his own ruin every way.

"This is your doing," he said fiercely, turning to Donald.

"It is, sir."

"I owe you MacPhersons a big bill. I'll pay it yet."

"Pay what you owe to David Maxwell."

“You know what I mean.”

Donald took no further notice of the man, and Monteith, in his trembling physical condition, could only watch the calm, authoritative young soldier with equal hatred and fear. There was scant leave-taking, and Monteith, left to himself, was tormented by the evil spirits he had raised to their full satisfaction. One whispered a thousand different fears about his money and property, his name, his social position; another tormented him with thoughts of Katherine now wholly relying on her cousins' help and love, instead of on his—how he had planned and plotted to get her and all she had in his power, and he had simply thrown her on the care of those whom he hated so bitterly. Another reminded him of his physical weakness, and suggested that the cause of it had been discovered, and that very soon every one would shrink from him as from one who deliberately debases a soul and wickedly enters the House of Life. What a wretched afternoon he spent! And then came again the little gold box and the black witchcraft it contained. He was not yet so brutalized that he did not hate his slavery; and he ate the sinful morsel with a sick, despairing loathing.

Katherine did exactly as Donald told her to do. She trusted everything to him, and never

asked him a single question. Her heart and hands were with her dear father. She was one of those lovely children who know not that their parents have faults. They have not dared to think of such a thing. She would not even let her heart wander to Cluny; all her love and duty were around the bed whereon lay that pale, senseless, suffering father. To Katherine, in those days, no duty was too hard, no watch too wearisome, no sacrifice too great. And, oh, what tears of purest joy she shed when once more the dear eyes opened consciously, and once more the dear voice whispered feebly her name. These are the children that make the poorest home a full cup.

As soon as David Maxwell was convalescent, Donald and Cluny began to talk of going to the Highlands for a short furlough. They wished much to take David and Katherine with them, but David shook his head. He had not yet been told of the steps taken with regard to his affairs; but when he found himself in Donald's rooms he understood that the blow, so wearily staved off, had fallen upon him, and that his life, in more respects than one, was to begin over again. But he could hardly go into the battle yet; he knew that for a few weeks he must lie still and recover strength; and this short truce with care was a

time of great peace and spiritual gain to him. He was so happy in Katherine's love and ministrations! The fretful stir outside troubled him not, and yet Donald's and Cluny's short visits added just the little touch of change and stir which made the peace still more restful.

## CHAPTER V.

## THE NEW LAIRD: PROMOTION.

“In the midst of life we are in death.”

“Those who inflict must suffer, for they see  
The work of their own hearts, and that must be  
Our chastisement or recompense.”

AT Castle Tor it was glorious summer and a happy excitement. Adam rejoiced in the marvel of his flowers; Janet was making store of oat-cakes for the hungry men there would soon be upon the hillsides. The windows were all open, the rooms all clean and beautiful and sweet. The laird was busy examining the guns and getting the fishing-tackle ready, and Lady MacPherson busily finishing the last of new sets of fine linen for her boys. “When the young lairds come hame” was the period set for every one’s hopes and rejoicing.

They were expected at the beginning of August. The last day of July was a terribly hot one. MacPherson coming in from Glen Chattan at noon was quite exhausted with the sultry atmosphere of the windless depth. After a few hours’ rest he said, “Let us take a boat and put

away into the Sound. If there is a breath of fresh air, it will come down the Minch."

Lady MacPherson cheerfully laid aside her work, and about five o'clock they were drifting lazily out with the tide. In a very short time the herring fleet came dropping out, their brown sails barred with the gold of the westering sun. The laird, in his boat, hovered near and around them, watching the men pay out their nets breadth by breadth, until the great perforated wall was standing perpendicularly in the water waiting for the fish.

Before the labor was quite over, Lady MacPherson, who was acutely sensitive to electrical changes, became anxious and restless. "My dear laird," she urged, "there will be a storm anon. Oh, if the men would but lift the nets and run home as quick as may be!"

The laird stood up in the boat and looked around. "Nay, nay, Margaret," he answered, "there's nae sign o' storm, unless it be in yonder bank o' clouds;" but he hailed an old fisherman, and asked him what he thought "o' my lady's opinion."

"I think sae much o' it, MacPherson, that I'm weel minded to tak her advice. I dinna like yonder brassy band in the far north."

In another five minutes it was evident that a



feeling of anxiety pervaded the boats. There were calls from one to another. Men looked northward, and then gazed hesitatingly at their nets in the water.

“Turn about quickly, laird,” urged Lady MacPherson; “if you never minded me before, mind me now!”

But before MacPherson could speak to the man at the helm the wind had risen ominously, with the souging sound of very calamity in it. In the same moment the fishers were lifting or cutting loose their nets; for so rapidly and so furiously came the storm that most of them had to be abandoned. It was evident there would be work enough to save life. Black and blacker grew sky and sea, and soon the rushing wind and the gusts of swashing, blinding rain were upon them.

Driven before a mad tempest, with a rocky coast a few miles on their lee, their situation was one of the gravest peril, and from the first moment Lady MacPherson sat down in the bottom of the boat with the hopeless expression of a woman who had heard Death call, and had answered him. There was little or nothing to be done. Sails and helm were useless. It was growing darker and darker every moment, and it was quite impossible for the boats to keep to-

gether. The laird and the three men with him did all that strong men and good sailors could do, but all knew that nothing was left for them but to commend themselves to the mercy of God.

As the boat was tossed towards the rocky shore they could dimly distinguish moving figures and fires along its belt; in fact, the whole village was out to render at once what help was possible to those cast upon it. The laird's boat struck the long sharp reef running along the base of the hill upon which Castle Tor stood. The next moment he was in the surf, holding Lady MacPherson with one arm and swimming bravely with the other.

But it was only for a moment he withstood the power of the waves; the next he was dashed against the rocks and rendered senseless and helpless. He had, however, been recognized, and with a shout of encouragement to each other a party of men rushed into the surf, waiting with outstretched arms the moment when the unconscious bodies should be flung towards them. Lady MacPherson was recovered first, and carried by the women into the nearest cottage. Weak and fragile as a flower, she escaped with her life; but the laird was not only unconscious, but dangerously injured, and they made a litter of their plaids and carried him tenderly to his home.

When he came to himself, he came with the knowledge that he was dying, and his first order was to send swift messengers for his sons. Before the messengers left, Donald and Cluny arrived. They had been in Gairloch the previous night, and had both felt a stong desire to pursue their journey. "We should have travelled all night, but for the storm," said Cluny to his mother, "and we did leave at the earliest peep of day."

"Your father in his delirium was calling you all night, and I was praying that you might arrive in time."

For a few days MacPherson lingered between this world and *that*; but at last, after great suffering, there came that brief respite which heralds in so frequently the end of earth. MacPherson knew it, and met his latest enemy as a conqueror.

His parting with his wife no eye witnessed, but when it was over the bitterness of death was past for him. Then he asked for Donald and Cluny.

"Donald, you are now to take my place. Don't think lightly of that duty; it gives you a great power for good or for wrong. Walk in the steps o' your ancestors, and remove not any ancient landmark. You'll be a father as well as a chief to your poor kinsmen. Never let a Mac-

Pherson seek help from a stranger; then your ain loaf will always be sufficient and your ain purse never empty. Cherish your mother, and see that you honor her as long as she lives; and oh, my dear Donald, be father and brother baith to Cluny."

He looked from one son to the other tenderly, and Donald stretched out his hand to meet Cluny's, so that they clasped them above their dying father. Then Donald answered, "Everything that you desire, my father, shall be a sacred law to me;" and he stooped and kissed his father's lips.

"Cluny, Cluny! Oh, my dear, dear lad, try and be a good lad. You'll get Donald's commission now, and you'll be a captain sooner than you thought for. Dinna let the authority be a temptation to you. Keep out o' debt, and you'll shut the door on many a sin and sorrow; and remember, the last words I say to you are, 'For-sake not the faith o' your father.'" And Cluny, weeping bitterly, kissed over and over the lips that would never more counsel and bless him.

It was the first gray dawn of the morning, and there was no noise outside but the far-off sound of running water and the twittering of half-wakened birds. Suddenly was heard upon the gravel the sound of footsteps, and in a few min-

utes two stout fishermen carried into the room Dominie Malcolm.

Through the mystical gray that shadows the face of the dying MacPherson's face brightened, while the dominie's had on it the light of a wonderful joy.

"MacPherson," he said, "I have come to bid you a short farewell. Oh, my brother, how is it with you? Can you follow the Captain of your salvation even through the swellings of Jordan?"

"I fear not, Malcolm. Christ is with me, and eternity belongs to me!"

"Cast not away, therefore, your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward.

"For ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God ye might receive the promise.

"For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry.

"When this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

"O Death! where is thy sting? O Grave! where is thy victory?"

Thus the dominie continued repeating slowly and distinctly the grand promises that God has

given his children for their last hour. Just as he had finished the assuring words, "It is I; be not afraid," the sunshine flooded the room.

"Open the windows now, Donald. Your father is passing over Jordan in the morning light. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost the Comforter, who brings the tender mercies of our God within our reach;" and with the thanksgiving in his ears MacPherson passed to where "beyond earth's voices there is peace."

A Scotch funeral lacks the religious sentiment which Episcopacy in England throws around the ceremony; but in its own way the laird's burial was a touching scene. His two sons and his two foster-brothers carried him to the grave; but the little kirkyard and the whole hillside were crowded with the poor kinsmen of the dead chief. Every man present threw a little earth into the grave, and the bearers filled it up.

Then there was a minute's solemn pause, and each lifted his bonnet in a mute farewell. As Donald turned to them they lifted them again, and then one by one came silently forward and touched his hand. It was their acknowledgment of his authority. In that simple act, at the grave of their dead chief, they passed over to him the loyal love of centuries, the confidence of children in a father.

One change brings many others. Donald was now to remain at Castle Tor, but the transfer of his captaincy to Cluny was effected with but little difficulty. Donald, however, was very anxious about his brother, and had a great fear in his returning to Edinburgh with added responsibilities and position. There was an indefinable change in the young man. No one could put his finger upon the canker-spot, and say, "Here it is;" but his mother detected at once a deterioration in his moral character.

"If he could only remain at home," said Lady MacPherson. "Edinburgh is full of temptations to a man like Cluny."

"But," answered Donald, "we are to fight the battle of life, and not shirk it, mother. At home he could only lounge about the house and hills. The devil may tempt us in the stress of active life; but in idleness we tempt the devil. The latter state is the worst. There are plenty of promises of help to the struggling; there are none for the lazy."

So Cluny went back alone to Edinburgh. If good home influences could alone protect him, surely the young man was surrounded by them. Indeed, he thought himself that no temptation could ever come to him in which the remembrance of his mother, as she blessed and sent him

away, would not be a sufficient guard. Donald's love, too, had been marked by singular thoughtfulness. He had won from Cluny an acknowledgment that he was in debt, and had generously given him the sum necessary to clear off all his obligations.

"Start clear, Cluny," he said cheerfully, "and if you are compelled to owe any one, owe me. Never go to a stranger's purse. And, Cluny, be very kind to Uncle David; give him even an excess of respect and honor. We will not tell mother yet of his trouble; she has had sorrow enough. I wish you would promise me to spend every Sabbath at the Maxwells'."

"Then I should have to go to the high kirk."

"That is just what you should do. Katherine will be with you. Promise me, Cluny."

"No, I can't promise, Donald; for if I promise, I should feel bound to keep my word; and I do not wish to go to the high kirk."

"Where will you go then? I should like to know in what kirk my prayers might meet yours, Cluny."

"Donald, I cannot say."

"But, oh, Cluny, do have some settled spiritual home. And go to the old home. Its discipline may be a trifle stern and strict, but it is just



the creed a man of your easy, speculative temper needs.”

“I should just like to have you read that article on Calvinism in the ‘Review’ I got yesterday.”

“I know what Calvinism is, Cluny. I need no article in a ‘Review’ to inform me. Calvinism is a faith that neither shelters the sinner under the cloak of ‘peculiar opinions,’ nor leaves him loose on the waves of unbelief and schism. You’ll find no surer clasp to moral purity and spiritual confidence. Go to the high kirk, Cluny.”

“I’ll think about it, Donald;” and with this half-promise Donald had to be content, to trust, and to hope.

When Cluny returned to Edinburgh there were many signs of approaching winter. October was far advanced, and the chill winds had killed the flowers and stripped the trees. He was aware that the Maxwells had removed from Donald’s rooms, but his heart received a severe shock when he stood before their new home. It was so small, in so unfashionable a quarter, he passed it twice ere he could prevail upon himself to use the modest knocker. But Cluny was naturally vain, and he had not yet worn off the pride of his new position. Captain MacPherson was a very great per-

son in Captain MacPherson's opinion, and he had a feeling of shame and incongruity in standing in all the glory of his new uniform at that humble door.

A young servant-girl opened it, and looked at him with so much genuine awe and admiration that it partly restored his self-esteem. And then Katherine was so exquisitely fair that the simply-furnished room was made beautiful by her presence. The long, plain black garment in which she was dressed, with its tiny edge of white linen, so set off the glory of her pale brown hair and the lily-like purity of her face that Cluny could do nothing but sit and admire her loveliness.

He hardly found time to notice the thoughtfulness and sadness of her manner, until her own remarks compelled him to fall into the same mood. They spoke first of his father's death, and then seeing that Cluny hesitated to enter upon the change so apparent in her own circumstances, she opened the subject.

"Have you seen my father, Cluny?"

"No, dear, not yet. What has been done in his affairs?"

"They are settled as far as they are likely to be. As soon as it was proper to speak to him about them, Mr. Laird and he had a conversation."

“Well?”

“Father admitted that Monteith's claim was one which could not legally be set aside, and declined to enter into any controversy about it.”

“Did you save nothing?”

“The office furniture and father's law library; that was all.”

“Your piano, books, needlework?”

“None of these things had been specially excluded; they went with all else—my silver, china, clothing, and jewels.”

“But that is outrageous!”

“It was lawful; father said there was no use in contesting it. We have only been able to furnish this little house very plainly.”

“Where is Monteith?”

“He is living in our old home. The servants are still serving him, as their terms were not out; and he said he would not pay them anything unless they filled their engagements.”

“I shall kick the fellow wherever I meet him.”

“That is worse than nonsense, Cluny. I have told you these things because I want you to promise me on no account to interfere with Monteith. It will only annoy father; for his sake and mine, accept peacefully what we cannot help.”

"It is a scandalous affair. Do you know how Uncle David got into his power?"

"Yes; in railway speculations."

Then Cluny was very angry. Railways in Scotland were at that time almost on their trial. For himself he could not endure to think of Scotland parcelled out by iron tracks, and of steam-engines snorting among the glens and mountains, "frightening away both birds and deer." He regarded his uncle's conduct as unpatriotic, as well as unfatherly, and had very little sympathy with his losses.

"Is there no bright side to the picture?" he asked.

"Yes," Katherine said, "the point on which father felt most keenly of all brought him a glint of comfort. He went before his brother deacons and opened to them all his heart; and though they did not scruple to tell him he had acted very imprudently, they absolved him of all wrong or dishonest intentions, and gave him the right hand of sympathy and friendship."

"What does that amount to?" asked Cluny scornfully.

"It comforted and strengthened father as nothing else could have done; and Deacon Armstrong has employed him on a case of great importance now before the court."

“And how do you bear it all, Katherine?”

“Fairly, Cluny. I cannot say that I do not miss all the pleasant things of my lost position, but, after all, the change has been easier than I expected. Some of my friends have forgotten me; the best of them have been kinder. I have lost nothing of real value. God is as near to me as ever, my father is as kind, my health is as good, my lover is as true. I have duties to fill my days, and pleasures to brighten them. What if I had lost all these things, and had nothing left but my house and money?”

“And Monteith with them.”

“Ah, Cluny, who would have saved social position at such a price!”

Cluny went away from Katherine with a feeling that he could hardly define. Certainly an angry annoyance was a predominating quality. His pride was terribly humbled in his beautiful love. She had seemed so queenly and appropriate among her handsome surroundings. He could not bear to think of her in that small room, with its cheap furniture and lack of all ornament.

That thought was painful enough; but when he contemplated James Monteith in the Maxwells' home, having the power to enter Katherine's old room, to read her books, and lay his head upon the cushions her fingers had so deli-

cately embroidered, he felt a passionate hatred which almost frightened him.

“Let him keep out of my way! Let him keep out of my way!” he kept saying to himself, as he went down Prince’s street; and then, with that perversity which seeks the trouble it pretends to deprecate, he passed twice before the house where his enemy was at that very moment sitting thinking of him.

For though Monteith seemed to the outside world to have been a most successful scoundrel, he knew himself to have been miserably deprived of the best part of what he had plotted for. What did he care for the big house in which he found himself master? He had only wanted the house as a means of securing things of infinitely more value to him—David Maxwell’s business reputation as a basis for his own speculations, and David Maxwell’s daughter as a means of allying himself with a family which could not only give him the social position which, above all things, he coveted, but also blend with it a taste of that revenge against the MacPhersons which would be the most galling to them. The devil had paid him the wages he pays all who do his work: he had the husk of his desire; the reality had escaped him.

Nay, worse; for the big mansion, with its

necessary staff of servants, was an expense which his sordid nature sorely grudged. It was bringing him no interest, no return of any kind, and yet he fancied that it would look cowardly not to occupy it, and dreaded the remarks that would be made if it went into the market either for lease or sale. For even Monteith had his sycophants, men who either by similarity of vices or force of circumstances were compelled to associate with him, and receive with his money his ill-nature, but who revenged themselves by tales and speeches that hurt Monteith worse than a blow.

The worst part of his punishment was of slower growth. He had told himself, over and over, that when the first outcry against him was over, men would consider themselves to have done all that was necessary in behalf of a poor man, even though that man was an old citizen like David Maxwell; that very soon they would recognize the fact that he was rich, and able and willing to spend his money freely for such social considerations as appeared to him enviable. But they did not. Officers whom he knew to be in desperate need of ready money, and who were quite aware that for that time at least he would let them have it on really favorable terms, preferred poverty to the contamination of any business with him. He had been pointedly "cut"

on Prince's street by men at whose tables he had sat, and whom he had entertained sumptuously. He had never been a gallant, but yet it did hurt him when young ladies did not see his raised hat or hear his suave "Good morning." After such meetings he went home with a raging fire of hatred and disappointment in his heart.

Business, too, fell rapidly away from him. Men not usually apt to be too cautious, if they entertained for a day any proposition he made, generally withdrew and made some half-jocular remark, which indirectly pointed to his acquaintance with David Maxwell and his acquisition of his property. An intangible enemy met him at every point; and unwilling to blame himself, he laid the whole weight of his various insults and failures upon Cluny MacPherson, and poisoned himself night and day with the hatred and revenge he nourished.

Ah, let finer natures than Monteith's pause with me here a few minutes and examine themselves. We who have been made to suffer, do we not fear and hate? A certain person compromises our future and exerts an inimical influence around us. We cannot think well of that person; and the next step is that we think ill, that we nourish ourselves with gall, commend our own irritation, and say with Jonah we do well



to be angry. After a little time we have so nursed our antipathy that we do not want to love that person. We might possibly consent to pray for him, but not to detest him less.

This is a lamentable confession to make, but many a conscience will acknowledge its truth. And it is well for us to acknowledge it; there is no virtue in concealing a spiritual sore, for the more we conceal it, the more it will spread. But in candid personal examinations we meet with ourselves, and learn how much we need to meet with Christ.

Monteith scarcely nourished a more malignant spirit than did Cluny MacPherson. He had always disliked Monteith, at first without any personal cause, excepting that strange natural repulsion which will not be reasoned with. But now he really considered himself to have the strongest possible excuse for his hatred. He never saw Katherine in her humble home but he felt that Monteith had robbed his love of its first glorious bloom, and touched its beauty with the frost of poverty and tears.

For in spite of his better self, Cluny felt humbled in Katherine's poverty. It fretted him to call for her in that small house and mean street. He disliked to see her in that plain black costume, for he had that small fibre in his nature

which feels the lack of fashionable clothes. For a long time Katherine did not perceive it. Her own nature was so grand that she could not imagine Cluny influenced by a silk robe or an ermine cloak. The fact struck her with a painful distinctness one afternoon when they were out walking. A beautiful woman passed them, and in acknowledging her greeting, Cluny blushed and was annoyed and embarrassed.

“Who is that?” Katherine asked.

“Lady Mary Drummond;” then glancing down at Katherine’s dress, he added, “What an exquisite costume she wore!”

“I did not notice.”

“Purple silk and ermine. O Katherine, you are to be my wife, why will you not let me give you the clothing suitable for your beauty?”

“Cluny, Cluny! How can you propose such a thing! What a reproach it would be to my father!” Then glancing at his handsome figure and her own plain dress, she asked in a low, pained voice, “Are you ashamed of me?”

And the young man had grace enough to be thoroughly ashamed of himself. By every tender art he strove to put away the bitter thought, but Katherine’s eyes had been opened. Into love’s Eden had come the knowledge of evil as well as good. She began to see the events of the past

three months with a sadly clear eye. Cluny had certainly taken her out less than in the first days of their acquaintance. He had not come so often to see them in their small house. She had noticed a certain haughty manner in her father's treatment of Cluny lately, which argued a feeling of offence in David Maxwell.

Somehow after this there was constraint between them. No outward event came into collision with their love, but their love grew pale. They were often silent in each other's company, each heart flying off in its isolation, as of old the families of men took contrary ways across the desolate plains of Mesopotamia. Katherine began to feel that absence would be nothing compared to this departure of the heart. How she suffered in those days! Nothing she could do availed to dispel the shadow.

And, oh, how many hearts have wandered in these labyrinths of wronged affection, in which, take what path they would, they were sure to go wrong. The terror of this trial is just this, that the very thing which ought not to have failed us did fail. In that one heart we had such confidence. The mountains might have crumbled, but that heart would be true, that love would be certain. And it slips from beneath our feet like sand. Oh, how can we believe it or bear it?

Only at the foot of the cross. Sitting there, we feel the approach of One that is mighty, One who is gentle as the dew on Hermon. Our hearts burn within us. Our eyes have not discerned him, but he is there. No sound has fallen upon our ear, but we hear his voice. We take our broken hearts in our two hands, as it were, and cry out, "All is over; they are dead." But Jesus will not suffer us to despair. He lets us say all that is in our hearts. He does not articulate a single word; he only pours drop by drop the divine oil of his consolations upon our wounds, and our wounds close. He abides with us; he, and not another. And that is sufficient.

## CHAPTER VI.

## ILLUSIONS DISPELLED.

“BUT earthly hope, how bright soe'er,  
Still fluctuates o'er this changing scene,  
As false and fleeting as 'tis fair.”

It was almost a relief when Cluny came one evening to tell Katherine that the regiment was ordered to Stirling. Away from each other they might, perhaps, find out exactly what they were to each other. The parting was an apparently very tender one; and Cluny spoke urgently of his desire for their marriage on the return of the regiment. Katherine shook her head. The subject had often been talked over. She could not leave her father in his poverty and isolation, and Cluny's stay in Edinburgh was a most uncertain event. On the first emergency the Forty-second would very likely be ordered abroad. Once she would have believed that he was really anxious on the subject; now she reflected, half scornfully, that Cluny knew the proposal could not possibly be accepted.

The regiment left at the dawning. She heard the music and the tramp of marching men, and

flung herself in an abandon of sobbing grief upon her knees. She was not able to frame into words her grief, but God knew. She did not need to tell him. No father or mother could understand as he did the agony of that parting. It was a different woman that rose up; her face was turned to the east—she could wait and watch for the sun-rising.

David Maxwell just glanced at her. "Sit down, my dawtie, and gie me my cup o' tea. Dinna cry, dear, he's no worth it."

"O father, do n't say that! That is worse than all. There is some cloud, but it will blow away."

"I'm dooting it, unless the cloud o' poverty gets a golden lining."

"Dear father, Cluny never expected any money with me."

"I'm no saying he did—he isna in love wi' money; but he's the bond-slave o' every kind o' luxury. Syne he got his captaincy, Katherine, he's lived mair like a lord than a captain, and I kenna wha is to pay for it all."

Katherine made no answer. Maxwell had become a rigidly close man. Early and late he was in his office, and every penny was carefully counted. The greatest part of the self-denial in this new phase of his character had, however, fallen

upon Katherine, rather than on himself. He cared little if his clothes were old-fashioned or seedy. When he took his place in court, his learning and eloquence could always command respect. His friends saw nothing derogatory or painful in visiting him in his office, although it was uncarpeted and in an unfashionable locality.

It was far harder for Katherine to wear poor clothing, and her old friends did really feel the humiliation—for her as well as for themselves—of visiting her in her new home. So Maxwell's anger at what he called Cluny's extravagance did not impress Katherine as it would have done had he made it a year earlier.

But in this case David Maxwell knew what he was saying. He was accustomed to observe men, even as a habit of his profession, and his suspicions once aroused about Cluny, he had watched his ways and his conversation with that keen perception and that subtle power of putting things together which belonged partly to his nature and partly to his experience with that class whose crimes made them shifty and untruthful. He suspected Cluny of being what a certain class of people call "fast;" but his own imprudences made him feel averse to checking imprudences in others.

One day, David's watch being out of order, he

stopped at Deacon Finlayson's shop to have it adjusted.

"I'll hae it put correct in ten minutes' time, Maxwell; come awa in and sit down, and hae a crack the while."

David sat down, and the conversation turned on a case of some notoriety which he was at the time defending. While thus engaged, a clerk approached and inquired,

"Are those bracelets to go to Captain MacPherson, sir? He has sent for them."

Finlayson cast a singular look at Maxwell, and said slowly, "I suppose sae."

"Bracelets for Cluny MacPherson, Finlayson! that's queer! Let me see them."

Neither of them spoke until the trinkets were exhibited—beautiful bands of fretted gold, set with gems.

"What will thae things be worth, Finlayson?"

"£40, Maxwell."

David laid them grimly down without remark.

"They'll be for Miss Maxwell, dootless."

"Ye ken better than that, Robert Finlayson; and ye think better o' Katherine Maxwell than to believe for ane moment she would wear any such gew-gaws, and her father scarce out o' the barren pastures o' bankruptcy."



Finlayson put up the jewelry, and then turning to David, said, "I'm thinking I ought to tell ye, maybe, what I misdoot."

"I'm sure ye ought to tell me. You ken that Cluny MacPherson and my daughter Katherine are bespoke for each other; and he shouldna be spending his money in sic fashion as yonder—unless, maybe, they are for his mother."

"They'll be for a woman nearer Edinburgh Castle, and one no to be named in the same hour wi' Lady MacPherson. Hae ye e'er heard tell o' one ca'ed Madam Elise?"

"Wha's she?"

"A vera famous singer."

"What for would I hae e'er heard o' the likes o' her, and me a deacon o' the high kirk? Ye arena goin' to say that yonder gold ornaments are for a singing woman?"

"Indeed, Maxwell, I'm maist sure o' it."

"And whar will he get the siller? Ye ken he has naething but Her Majesty's pay, and whatever his brother Donald likes to allow him; and I'm vera certain gold bracelets for a singing woman arena in Donald MacPherson's intentions."

"He'll hae been lucky o'er the cards lately. There's a hantel sight o' gold and siller changes hands at Major Lamont's rooms. Ye'll forgie my saying sae much."

“Ye ought to hae said it before, Robert.”

“Haste or anger ne'er gave good counsel, Maxwell. I'm no fond o' meddling in other folks' business; ye 'll need mair wisdom than ordinar to do it wisely.”

Here David's watch was brought, and with a silent grip of the hand he left his friend. He felt almost despairing as he rapidly took his way to his office and shut himself up with his new trouble.

“Thus,” he thought, “the messengers of Job arrive, one after the other—the ruin of a' my projects, the uprooting of a' my auld habits, the death and disaster at Castle Tor, the treachery and ingratitude o' that Monteith, the sin o' Cluny, and the heart-break it will be to poor Katherine; ay, ay, these are the kings that the Bible speaks o' as making ready for battle. Each o' them has pierced me wi' his arrow; my life is oozing awa. I hae nae mair strength. Oh, if Thou wouldst! Oh, if Thou wouldst!”

He knew not what would be best; but God did. He cried out imploringly. He felt that only God could arise for his help and deliverance.

It is good for us in our despair and sorrow that daily duty drives us from an unhealthy and morbid contemplation of it into the active struggle of life. Very soon David was interrupted by a cli-

ent whose case kept him interested for some time. This man, just as he was leaving, remarked,

“Sae Miss Maxwell’s lover is going awa; but ye may tell her it willna be for lang. Ye ken, Maxwell, I hae means o’ findin’ that out.”

“Whar is he going?” asked Maxwell in a slow, weary voice. He felt as if he had exhausted wonder about Cluny and his movements.

“The regiment are for Stirling, but they’ll no be kept vera lang there; we’ll be haeing them back at the Castle in a few weeks, sae Miss Katherine needna greet her bonnie e’en out.”

David smiled, and said, “Good-by.” He felt in a measure relieved. If Cluny was going away, there was no special reason for him interfering at present. But when he saw Katherine’s grief at his departure, he could not restrain the impulse to drop a word of warning concerning Cluny.

It did no good. She scarcely noticed it. Her father’s bare economy would be likely to include all the small elegances of life in such a sentence. But David understood now the shadow and chill between the lovers. How could a man be happy in two atmospheres so different as that of Major Lamont’s rooms and his small parlor, or as that surrounding Madame Elise, in contrast with that of Katherine Maxwell? The soul that could find pleasure in one could not enjoy the other.

Katherine's purity and piety were to Cluny an unspoken reproach, and he was too vain a man to bear it patiently.

David thought everything was going wrong with him. How his enemy would triumph over him! And in such times, when we are watching every hour for some break in the clouds, how long the days seem! How drearily the weeks pass away! The stay of the regiment in Stirling was longer than any one had expected; the winter grew to summer, and there was no word of their return. In the meantime Katherine was suffering from that keenest of all mental tortures, an alternation of hope and despair. Cluny had yet long fits of repentance, and during them his letters to his betrothed filled the girl's heart with delight and trust.

Whenever Katherine went smiling and singing about her house duties, David knew that Cluny was making an effort to do what was right. But between these sunshiny days the intervals grew longer and longer, and then his heart ached to see her heavy eyes and weary step and sad smile. Such heart-sorrow soon tells upon the finest physique, and it became evident that Katherine must have a change. It was decided that she should go to her aunt in the Highlands for three or four months; and the poor girl, obedient

yet as a child, made her few preparations for the visit, although she had little desire to go.

For the truest and most self-abnegating piety does not relieve us from the dominion of our feelings; it only guides and controls them. Katherine knew that she was probably increasing the separation between Cluny and herself. He might come back to Edinburgh any day; it was far less likely he would visit Castle Tor. And she felt keenly the want of those many small, innocent adornments which she had possessed during her last visit. To a refined woman there seems a beautiful fitness in white lawns and laces, and delicate ribbons and fine merinos, and Katherine's desire for them was a perfectly modest and innocent one—only her father could not see these things as she did. She submitted to the deprivation cheerfully, satisfied with the assurance that he could not lawfully afford them. And it is the cheerful endurance of small trials like this that is the evidence of a sweet, good woman. The soul that can patiently bear the daily pin-pricks of adversity will meet with unflinching courage its keenest blade. An inferior nature may face a great emergency, but under small deprivations it becomes mean, ungenerous, and fretful—shrinks and shrivels into a long complaint.

After her departure David Maxwell devoted

himself to money-making with an untiring industry. He was singularly successful. Never had his legal shrewdness been so remarkable and his eloquence so persuasive. Men began to think that it was only necessary to employ him on a case to insure them a favorable verdict. His reputation grew with every case he managed, and his income from his profession had never before been as large. But he allowed himself no indulgences or recreations. Had he turned miser in his old age? His minister had the fact so often brought to his notice that he thought it his duty to speak to David about the sin of loving money for money's sake.

David took the advice very humbly. "Thank ye, dominie," he answered; "I'm glad ye minded me o' my danger. But I'm no a gold lover. I hae my motive, and I dinna think it is a wrang one."

He did not say what his motive was, but any one who watched him closely might more than suspect it; for often, when the streets in the locality of his old home were still and dark, David might have been seen walking thoughtfully through them. The house had changed much in appearance since he had been compelled to leave it. Monteith had found it every day a greater burden to carry. Servants would not stay with

him; or if they did, were insolent and extravagant. The large windows, that had been so spotlessly bright, so beautifully shaded with snowy blinds and handsome curtains, had grown gradually dusty and dirty. The blinds were yellow and torn; in some cases they had been removed and the wooden shutters closed.

David could remember how brilliant the whole house used to look with the glow of fires or of gas-lights; now there was never a light but in one corner-room, the room in which Monteith was doubtless sitting. If he could have looked in upon that young man he might have understood that successful villany is a much less successful thing than it is usually believed to be.

Monteith hated the house he had won. It represented absolute failure to him. He had been compelled, by the mere fact of its acquisition, to drop out of his old ways and place, and change his whole life and business. Thrice he had been employed on cases since his rupture with Maxwell, and every time David, either through some unlooked-for coincidence or of purpose and intent, had been his opponent. And he had made such mirth of his case and his legal pretensions that Monteith tingled with shame and anger whenever the scene came into his memory. This kind of revenge was lawfully in David's power, and he

seized it with a professional delight which it would be idle to pretend was not increased by personal feeling.

On the third occasion Monteith determined to give him no more such opportunities. He would rather throw up the practice of his profession than again endure that clear, scathing legal acumen, and that ponderous, flashing attack which followed it. The admiration Maxwell excited was as torturing to him as the scornful indifference which was the meed of his own efforts; and bitterer than all was the reflection that all this éclat he might have shared had he done this or that, or if Cluny MacPherson had not interfered with his plans; for at the last he always came to this conclusion.

No one at this period ever spoke of him as a lawyer; no one offered him a case; people had an impression that to engage Monteith on their case was to engage the greatest pleader and jurist of the city to defeat it. So Monteith had become a money-lender and a speculator. It was a singular thing, also, that his speculations had been lately all in the very direction which had ruined David Maxwell. Among securities given him by Maxwell were some shares in a projected line which at that period were of nominal value. Circumstances had conspired to make them of great



value. The almost worthless paper had turned to gold while lying in his desk.

When the news came to him he was very much under the influence of that black drug whose slave he was, and probably for this very reason the idea fastened itself on his mind with a singular hallucination of hope and of splendid results. Had not Hudson and others made themselves railway kings, and controlled millions, and ruled their own little world with an absolute sceptre? Whatever Maxwell was as a lawyer, he was a foolish and reckless speculator. He, Monteith, would manage affairs very differently. No prospectuses could fool him. He knew, or he would find out, the resources and population of the districts to be invaded by steam; Maxwell believed whatever any one chose to tell him; he would believe only his own eyes.

Then arose visions of the grand things he would do. He would raze the Maxwell mansion to its very foundation, for the mere pleasure it would give him to get rid of an eyesore. He would build a palace. He would scatter gold among the class who could send him to Parliament. He would entertain princes. He would ruin the MacPhersons root and branch in some undecided way—all but Katherine; for he would marry Katherine yet, and repay to her all the loss

and suffering Katherine's father and Katherine's cousins had caused him.

The visions thus called up would not depart. They haunted him day and night. He was soon deep in the fascinating risk. At first everything he did succeeded. He had promised himself that he would never risk all his gains. All speculators make that promise to themselves, and break it. In the passion and fever which marked these early days of railway enterprise men lost all reason and judgment; and Monteith got into a vortex in which retreat or advance was equally likely to be ruinous.

In this interval the Forty-second had been moved from Stirling to Glasgow, and from Glasgow back to Edinburgh. Katherine had been in the Highlands, but before winter fairly began was once more in her home. She knew nothing of her father's business, and did not suppose he could afford her a better one. So she cheerfully set herself to beautify and brighten the place as far as possible. Cluny still wrote to her, and there was no formal sundering of the tie that bound them; still Katherine's heart had divined something of the truth. But she had that nature that hopes and hopes, and still believes that hope will triumph. Once, when in London at school, she had gone with her French teacher to hear the *Mise-*

*vere.* At each verse a light was put out, and as the darkness deepened sadder and sadder grew the wail of lamentation. Then, when every light was quenched, a voice began a gloriously joyful chant. Alone, clear, triumphant, it sang the power of the God of resurrections. She had only half-comprehended it then. Now it was very clear. Her heart had its hours of despair and thick gloom, its woful *Miserere* over past joy; but ever when the darkness was blackest Hope remembered some bright promise, caught up a joyful strain, and went on her way rejoicing.

Upon the whole, however, it was to Katherine an uneventful year. The movements of Cluny's regiment, Cluny's letters, and her visit to her aunt MacPherson, had been its chief varieties; and yet

"Her life had both its hope and aim,  
Duties enough, and little cares,  
And now was quiet, now astir."

Her father, busy and respected, had regained his old cheerfulness; and her aunt's letters, full of a life so different, and so far apart from her own, gave just a pleasant zest of something strange, and romantically different from the narrow duties of her small home.

After an absence of fifteen months the Forty-second returned to its favorite quarters. Edin-

burgh was delighted to welcome it back. All the streets on its line of march to the castle were crowded; and there was not a man, woman, or child that did not give it a hearty cheer. The sense of holiday and pleasure in the crisp frosty air was clear to Katherine as she sat at her sewing listening to the far-off sounds. It happened that Monteith was at one end of the North Bridge as it approached the other. He had been unaware of the regiment's return, and was exceedingly annoyed when he found himself between it and the crowd of shouting children and excited women coming down from the Old Town.

But advance was forbidden, and retreat both difficult and disagreeable. He slunk behind a group of fishwives and waited. On they came with sounding pipes and fifes and drums, with gleaming arms and flying colors, and the first figure that caught his eye was that of Cluny MacPherson at the head of his company. What an air of authority and confidence he carried himself with! How splendid he looked! How proud and happy! And, oh, how he hated him! Murder was in his heart; he wanted nothing but a safe opportunity.

Monteith was feeling wretched before this incident; after it, he only wanted to get home and think. He was suffering tortures, too, for

want of his dose of opium; but he had been on business where a suspicion of its use would have been fatal to his plans, and he had not dared to take it previously. Besides, he knew well that though his animal instincts craved their poisonous delirium, his business interests demanded all his faculties. He was in a most critical situation, and he knew it. He had been gambling most frantically in shares; the reports which he would receive that very day would determine whether he had made a fabulous sum or lost all he had.

And then of all days and times for Cluny MacPherson to cross his path! Like many men who are not religious, he was very superstitious. He believed Cluny brought him ill-luck, he expected disaster after seeing him. He went to his home and sat down. His home! The miserable house, how he hated it; and yet a kind of dour, foolish pride would not permit him to leave it. He had been told that David Maxwell had once in a passion of anger vowed to regain it; he was determined to live in it, if only to keep a certain and positive grip on what he had won.

He was occupying the same parlor in which he had held that last interview with Katherine, and where indeed all his ill-fortune had begun. He had never thought of it before; the fact struck him with such significance that he determined

to change his quarters. He rang his bell, once, twice, thrice. There was no answer. With a fierce oath he went to the door and called a servant. A man came indolently towards him. He was half-intoxicated and insolent.

“Get the next room ready for me. Put a fire on, at once.”

“There’s nae coal in the cellar, Maister Monteith.”

“Then go and order some.”

The circumstance, trivial as it was, annoyed him. He felt himself despised even by the servants who ate his bread and took his money. He looked at his watch; another hour before any news could come. How was he to get over it? Again and again his hand went to his pocket, but the magnitude of the interests he had at stake restrained him. He must bear the agonizing craving, the torturing clamor of his vice, until the post came. Then, if the news was good, *then*. Like a lost spirit he wandered up and down, cursing Cluny, Maxwell, Katherine, every one who had ever wounded his vanity or got the better of him in a business transaction. And each separate event of this kind came to him in his present condition with a terrible distinctness. They stung and smote him like serpents.

A sharp double blow from the knocker aroused

him from this mental torture. He could scarcely believe that he had been suffering only an hour, as he wiped the great beads of sweat from his brow. He took the letters, locked himself in, and sat down at the table with them before him. The first he lifted was from his father; he tossed it carelessly aside and opened the others. Ruin! Ruin! Ruin! Not one of all the three had brought him good news. The shock of his losses was so great that it gave him back for the time his original clearness of intellect. For a space he went through every shame and agony that ruin could bring him, and once he opened the gold box with a half-formed intention to take sufficient to put an end to it all for him. For he had that contemptibly cowardly nature which chooses death because it is afraid of the struggle of life.

Just at this point, however, his eye fell upon his father's letter. He opened it mechanically, and without interest; but as he read his face changed, and he flung it on the table with an expression of triumph. "The game is not up yet," he said in a shameful whisper; "the old man is dying! If he would only die within five days, it would save me!"

He sat down in profound thought and listened to what the devil was telling him:

“It would save you. The old man is dying anyhow—a few hours more or less of life to him, what is the difference? Better go home and hurry on events, if they should be too slow.”

He grasped firmly the situation, though even to himself he would not name the deed he might do. He told himself that he did not wish to do it, but if fate was against him he was not to blame. Then he wrote letters which were calculated to postpone his own business troubles, and set out for the North. He travelled night and day, having only one hope and desire in his wicked heart—that his father might be dead when he arrived.

The last part of his journey was like a nightmare to him. In winter, no scenery was sadder and wilder than that through which he had to pass—nothing but bleak hills, partitioned into fields by miles and miles of stone walls; now and then a dreary village, and at last the grim, square, desolate old mansion standing forlornly on the bare mountain-side.

“The master is not dead,” an old crone, who was gossiping over the kitchen fire, told him; and he found his way to his father’s room. The old man was quite alone. He cried like a child when his son entered. He had been so neglected, he complained; he was in such torture



for a drink of water. No old horse dying on the hillside could have less care.

Monteith looked sharply at him. Was death really near? Yes, that was positive. The cancer had done its work. It was a case of hours, or days, as his vital forces would be able to hold out. Ah! how true it is that the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked! What cruel thoughts were in Monteith's heart as he soothed the old man and gave him water, and talked to him in those last hours of life of his own grand projects and hopes, and his hatred of the MacPhersons. And, oh, how pitiful it was to see the dying old man still greedily clutching at the gold and greed of earth, still taken up with its vanities and shows of power and place!

"I'm glad to hear what you say, Jamie," he answered in a hoarse whisper. "Win at the top o' the tree, laddie. I wish I had had your luck; but I did the best I kent how."

After dark old Monteith became very restless, and in half-delirious fashion began to talk of the Maxwells. "Dinna ye do them a bad turn, Jamie. Come here, let me whisper to ye. The old man saved me from the hulks; 'deed did he. Do ye mind that time that Sandy MacGregor and I worked together? It was the Forfar house we robbed."

“Hush, father! What are you talking about?”

“The God’s truth, Jamie. I did the job, sure as death I did it; it was a clever job, too,” chuckled the dying sinner in an awful glee, “and old Maxwell got me off. MacGregor went to Botany Bay for it. Sae mind and dinna ye hurt the Maxwells. And let thae MacPhersons alone likewise; they are kin to the Maxwells, and I’ll no hae them hurt. Mind that now.”

As the night wore on he wandered among the scenes of his young days, revealing unconsciously many a deed of long-forgotten sin. Monteith listened with a darkening face. A tongue that could speak such imprudent things ought to be silenced. He lifted a bottle, looked long at it, and put it down. Something yet pleaded for the old man, and with his heart and conscience. But when the dying lips began muttering again of the Maxwells, the devil entered fully into his heart. With a resolute face and a determined will he measured out what he was certain would be sufficient; there was no use in half-measures. And when the cold gray dawn entered the cheerless chamber, it fell across the open eyes and dropped jaw of the dead father and the dreamful stupor of the living son.

An old woman came in soon after with a cup

of tea. She evinced neither pity nor respect nor wonder; but putting down the tray began mechanically to straighten out the body and arrange the room. Monteith took his sleep out, and then awoke to the full realization of his miserable condition. "Is it all over?" he asked himself; and then he saw that upon the bed which answered the question. But nothing could have induced him to look upon the face of his dead father; and what three days of torture he endured while his corpse remained unburied!

The day of the funeral was marked by a snow-storm of unusual severity. Many of the neighbors could not come; others, who succeeded, did not arrive until late. Before the procession reached the lonely graveyard it was almost dark. The last rites were hurried over, and the company, cross and dreary, dispersed without ceremony, and with scarce a polite expression of regret. Monteith felt angry and humiliated. Had his father's delirious mutterings been heard, and reported among these haughty mountain lairds? Oh, if he had only money enough he could laugh at and defy them all!

Then he began to wonder how much his father had left. He looked at the house and the lands around it, with regard to their market value; for, "of course he was not going to carry

a wretched place like that simply because his ancestors had owned it." His ancestors! He laughed contemptuously as he thought of what his father had revealed to him on his death-bed. When he got home he looked curiously at the great secretary in his father's room. He could remember, when a youth, how full of gold pieces one drawer had always been; and he expected to find there the will, or papers containing directions about the estate.

In fact, his father had told him there was a letter in the drawer marked "A" which would save him trouble. He dallied with his hopes a little while, and tried to fix upon a sum which might be sufficient to save his credit at present, and yet allow the final result to be a pleasant surprise. "I should say the old man had at least £100,000, but I'll be thankful for half of it."

He thought that was a very moderate estimate, and having made it, he rose slowly, and with a kind of mental ceremony opened the "A" drawer and lifted the letter. He read it every word, and sat down. It was a confession that absolutely stunned him. His father had also been gambling in railway stocks, and the estate was heavily mortgaged and in difficulties. Every shilling of ready money was gone. He begged his son to pay his debts honorably, and to try and

forgive the disappointment he was obliged to occasion him.

“£70,000 gone! It would have saved me! It would have saved me!” He walked up and down the cheerless old room, saying this over and over. And then came another thought that smote him so sharply that he uttered a cry like a hurt animal: the thing that he had done had been worse than useless! He held his hands before him and looked at them. Even in his sight they could never, never, never be clean again.

Gloomy, silent, shudderingly wretched, he walked up and down until he was weary. His mind was abnormally active, and he soon came to a fixed decision. The Maxwell house contained pictures and bronzes, etc., of great value. It was possible to get £1,000 for them before his ruin became known; and with money in his pocket he felt the world yet within his grasp. Early in the morning he was on his way to Edinburgh. When he arrived there, he went at once to Duncan Morton's. The two men had been finger and thumb in many a previous transaction. Monteith had no need to explain matters. He wanted to sell; that was sufficient if he would sell cheap enough to let a fellow-rogue have a decent share.

Every beautiful thing in the Maxwell house

disappeared. The last night he was to spend in it he went through the stripped rooms with a spiteful joy. What a wreck he had made of the fair, bright home into which he had come, a bowing, craving stranger, a few years before! He remembered the evening very well—the rather stately host, the beautiful Katherine, the delicately appointed dinner, the pleasant guests, and the good-fellowship of their genial manner. The memory of all the kindness shown him gave him no feeling of regret; he had taught himself to believe that mean and selfish motives influenced every one.

## CHAPTER VII.

## THE NEW DOMINIE.

“One in whom persuasion and belief  
Had ripened into faith, and faith become  
A passionate intuition.”

WHEN the news of Monteith's failure became known in Edinburgh he was in his Highland home. He knew he would have to wait the settlement of both estates before he could put into execution any of his plans for the future. But the law would allow him at all events a year to arrange his father's affairs, and during that year he could occupy the Monteith Place. There he would be out of the reach of many annoyances, and he had taken care to supply himself with £800 in ready cash. “After all,” he thought, as he stirred the logs in the old house, and looked around at its loneliness and comforts, “it is a very suitable place in which to await the winding up of the past and lay my plans for the future.”

The thing he dreaded most was an accidental meeting with Maxwell or the MacPhersons. He could only imagine them as rejoicing in his downfall. He pictured to himself the satisfaction with

which David would read the news, the scornful laugh with which Cluny would tell it at mess, or talk it over on the street to men with whom he had had acquaintance or business transactions; for Monteith always failed to imagine any other kind of soul than his own, and this very inability to believe in any higher morality had brought him great loss even in money matters.

The news came to David rather later than to others. He happened to have a case on hand involving large public interests, and demanding both careful investigation and profound study. If successfully managed it would open to him legal pastures which he had long desired to enter. So he shut himself up with the facts and papers, giving all his heart and intellect to their consideration. For three days he was apart from the world; on the fourth afternoon, weary, but yet satisfied with his labor, he went down town, partly on business and partly as a relief to his mental exhaustion. He was coming out of the Signet Office when he met Deacon Anderson.

"A gude day to ye, Maxwell. Ye are the vera man I was thinking about."

"If it's a kirk session, deacon, ye must try and excuse me. My head is that fu' o'—"

"That Monteith, I'se warrant."

"Ye are vera wrang. I hope I hae better sub-



ject matter for day or night thought. It's the Caledonian Line case I am fighting o'er and o'er, and every way that the cunning o' man can put it."

"But I hae a word to say to ye anent the Monteith estate, for a' that, and I wish ye would gie me a five minutes. You and I, Maxwell, have kent each other and liked each other lang; now I am thinking o' buying your auld home."

"Is Monteith selling it?"

"His creditors are, and I made an offer this vera hour for it. Man alive, what a desolation he has made o' the pleasant place! I dinna want the house, but I fancied ye would like to ken where ye could put your hand on it when you wanted it."

"Deacon, thank ye. Ye couldna please me better. I tak your thoughtfulness as a great kindness. My great-grandfather built the house, my grandfather, my father, and mysel' were born in it; and if ye'll buy wi' the place the pictures that hang in the south corridor I'll be vera grateful. They are a' o' them there—fathers, mothers, and bairns, even down to my ain Katherine. The rest o' the furniture can go; he has used it."

"It has gone."

"And the pictures?"

"He has utterly destroyed them. They seem

to hae been cut and stabbed into shreds wi' a knife."

"Even Katherine's?"

"Even Katherine's."

"How could a man be sae wicked, 'specially to the dead!"

Maxwell pressed his friend's hand and walked away without waiting for an answer. He was unspeakably shocked. No feeling of triumph over his enemy was in his heart. He could only think of his own deliverance from a life-long alliance with a soul so despicable. He went into his room, and falling upon his knees, with streaming eyes and swelling heart acknowledged the salvation that had come to him. He dared to look himself full in the face and to tread in memory the road by which he had been led up from the very gates of death and hell and set in the paths of piety and honor. And having done this, a great peace and resignation came into his soul; he was happy to have much or to have little, just as God chose. As to any further remorse or anxiety he felt absolved. In that hour it became clear to him that God had no delight in soul-torture, and that all he had to do was to cling to the crucified One, and not attempt to fight alone in the strife set before him.

When at length he entered the small parlor a

strange atmosphere of rest and joyfulness came in with him. The first thing he saw was Cluny and Katherine. They were sitting silently in the fire-light; but, oh, what a sweet, full happiness was on each face! Katherine had been weeping, but they were tears of joy; and Cluny had kissed them away, with solemn words of repentance and of tender love. Neither knew quite how the confession and perfect reconciliation had come about. Cluny, full of Monteith's scandalous failure, had come to talk the matter over with Katherine and his uncle, and while conversing with Katherine some word had been dropped which opened both hearts. They did not care to be inquisitive about causes; they were only too happy in their recovered love and confidence.

"I have gone far, far astray, Uncle David," said Cluny sorrowfully. "If Katherine should give me up I could not blame her. I am so much in debt that I hardly know which way to turn."

"There is just one way out o' that trouble, Cluny—paying every bawbee, though ye should sell your sword to do it. Ye'll never feel yourself a man while ye owe a penny-piece."

"And the money was so foolishly spent—worse than wasted."

"I hae nae doot o' that. It isna a man's law-

fu' expenses, but his irregular ones, that ruin him."

"I have been longing to tell you and Katherine the trouble I was in, but I always hoped and trusted that something good would turn up."

"Ye arena an Elijah, that ye should expect the ravens to come on an errand o' supply. The Lord reaches us good things wi' our ain hands. Ye must do your duty ere ye can expect his help."

"Well, I have many good friends yet."

"Ay, ay; there's nae scarcity o' friends; the scarcity is in the friendship. You can trust your mother—and maybe Donald."

"Major Lamont?"

"One hand wouldna wash his other for naething."

"If I had only £1,000 I should know what to do."

"Yes," answered David, looking at the young man thoughtfully; "money is wise; it kens its ain way. But if ye are needing £1,000 in order to put ye right with the warld, Cluny, ye are in great danger. Suppose ye got orders for foreign service, as ye might at any hour, what would ye do?"

"I would make over nearly all my pay to my creditors. It is this idle garrison life that has

ruined me. Do you think I should have been so foolish if we had had any real work to do?"

"And it may continue?"

"Yes, it may continue."

"Then, wha wants to put money into that bag fu' o' holes which idleness carries? Look at my ain case, Cluny, and let it read ye a lesson. When I found I was in mair difficulty than I could manage, sooner than face my folly I would hae tied mysel' to a scoundrel and sold my ain dear bairn to keep up a fair show to the world. God in his mercy took me, as it were, by the shoulders, and turned me round, and made me face my ain folly and do the duty o' a man to retrieve it as far as possible. I gave up everything. There were debts outside o' Monteith's claim; I made no compromise; I promised to pay the uttermost farthing, and I hae done it."

"That was a hard thing, Uncle David."

"It wasna, after all, as hard as I expected. It was a sair humiliation to come to this house, and a far sairer one to bring Katherine here; but we hae been very happy in it. I feared for my good name and my business and my friends. But when I went among my brother deacons and confessed my fault, the dominie gied me his hand wi' his reproof; and the deacons hae been just sae many helpers on again. All gied me their

sympathy; one o' them gied me a big plea to manage for him, and mair than one or twa offered me the loan o' money. It's a grand thing for a young man to become a member o' his Father's house. If he falls into error or trouble, he has a whole kirkful o' friends and helpers. How many o' the men whom ye hae met at Major Lamont's green table can ye go to in your need, Cluny?"

"I fear, not one."

"Well, Cluny, ye are on the wrong road and ye must just turn back, and the sooner ye do it the better."

Then the tea-things were brought in, and the lamp lighted; and Katherine was so happy and so beautiful, so full of love and hope, that Cluny could not fail to catch her spirit. And the marvel was that Monteith was hardly named. Maxwell, after tea and worship, went off to his study; and Cluny and Katherine were too much occupied with each other to give Monteith a moment's care. At that hour he ceased to be an object of either hatred, fear, or scorn; it was not in Cluny's heart to kick a fallen enemy.

Apart from this half-scornful indifference, his own affairs had come to a crisis which he felt unable to manage. Maxwell had advised him to go to Donald, and he was certain that the advice was good; so having a procured a two weeks'

furlough, he turned his face northward. Donald would forgive him, and find a way out of his trouble. He had an unlimited faith in Donald's abilities, and his affection was beyond doubt.

Yet the journey was a depressing one. There was a spiteful east wind, monotonous rains, and thick fogs like diluted darkness, until he reached the mountains. No one met him, for no one expected him, and in the early night he found himself in the home village. The streets were quite deserted at that hour, and he could see through the cottage windows many a happy group at their evening meal. How far apart seemed this life from that he had just left, with its blare of pipes and trumpets, and its alternate monotony and license.

Coming near the castle he saw an unusual number of lights burning. He did not wish to surprise Donald among strangers, and he glanced into the parlor window. Donald was sitting at the fireside with three neighboring lairds; they were talking earnestly and the table was laid for a tea-dinner. The sight of venison and birds and china cups made him aware that he was hungry, but for all that he had no mind to meet Donald's inquiries just then. So he walked round to his mother's parlor, for he had seen a light there. The latticed windows were uncurtained, and she

lay back in her chair, gazing out into the darkness.

Cluny's heart melted and his eyes filled as he looked at her. How pure, how fair, how solemnly beautiful she was! He had been so accustomed to see her in colored garments, that she seemed a new revelation to him in her black dress and white cap. He felt that if she was not praying, she was thinking thoughts holy as prayer. It seemed a kind of irreverence to go into her presence heated and travel-stained, so he walked round to Janet's door and opened it.

She was busy dishing the dinner, and ordering the lasses concerning its arrangement. She turned the moment his step touched the door-sill, and with a cry of joy sprang to meet him. After that the dinner could order itself. It was Cluny's dinner that interested her. What would he have? What could she do for him? She was crying with joy and unbuttoning his wet gaiters, and kissing his hands, and blessing him now in Gaelic and now in English. Humble as the love was, it was so loyal, so warm, that Cluny's heart was insensibly lightened. He took his foster-mother in his arms and kissed her, as he had done when a child, and Janet was "prouder than if the king had called her cousin."

Then he washed himself and went into his



mother's room. What a joyful surprise he was! And what a dinner was eaten in my lady's parlor that night! How the happy mother watched her son, and how Janet waited on him and brought him the very best of everything she had prepared. Who were the people in the laird's dining-room? Nobody, in comparison with Cluny. Janet would have taken the bread off any of their plates, rather than her darling should have wanted.

To his mother that night Cluny said nothing of his trouble. Lady Macpherson's great fear was that the regiment would be ordered abroad. As soon as she could speak to him she asked this question, and finding there was no present prospect of it, contemplated no other sorrow. Cluny was well, and not to be sent away; she was as happy as a child in his two weeks' holiday.

But when Donald entered and saw him, a certain intelligence of trouble smote him. "O Cluny, my dear Cluny," he cried, and the next moment he had thrown his arms around his brother's neck. The glad little mother stood up beside them, kissing first one and then the other in her joy and pride. How could Cluny bear to darken the meeting? This one evening he would forget everything but that he was at home, in the shelter of his mother's and of Donald's love.

The next day there was a heavy snowstorm.

It was impossible to go out, and Cluny, sitting poker in hand dashing at the coals and counting up his debts, was not a very cheerful spectacle. Towards the middle of the forenoon, Donald, having finished his business with the greve and shepherds, came to look for his brother. He saw, as soon as he opened the door, that Cluny was in trouble. Cluny intended that he should see it. He felt that it would be easier to answer Donald's questions than to deliberately begin a confession.

"What is it Cluny? Are you in trouble?"

"Yes, Donald."

"Is it Katherine?"

"No," answered Cluny a little impatiently.

"Money?"

"Yes; it is money."

Donald took a chair and drew it to the fireside beside his brother's.

"Well, you did right to come to me. I told you always to do that. How much is it?"

But when Cluny mentioned the sum he wanted, Donald looked aghast. Through the rich carnation and healthy brown of his complexion the pallor of amazement and fear was clearly visible.

"It is impossible, Cluny."

"I wish it was."

The tone of the answer was irritable, and

Donald perceived that a word of anger would drive the young man to evasion, and perhaps to some irrevocable deed of folly or sin. He laid his hand kindly on his brother's hand. "Is that all?" he asked; "everything, nothing held back? On your word of honor, answer me truly, Cluny. Then I can tell you what must be done."

Cluny hesitated. "If you put it in that way, Donald, then I must tell you that it is not all. I thought the sum I named, with a settlement of half my pay, would satisfy my creditors."

"Who are your greatest creditors?"

Cluny named them.

"Then they are gambling debts?"

"Debts of honor."

"Of dishonor, you mean."

Cluny answered not, but continued his nervous, petulant action with the poker.

"After these, who is the next creditor?"

"Finlayson."

"The jeweller?"

"Yes."

"Was the jewelry for Katherine?"

"No. She would not wear jewelry, and her father in trouble."

"Then it must have been for yourself, and we must get Finlayson to take it back."

“I have given it away.”

Donald looked sharply at the young man. “I am very sorry, Cluny, to hear that.”

“I am sorry too, Donald; but sorrow wont pay my debts. I do not know which way to turn.”

“There is only one way. You must sell out and retire from the army.”

“Donald! What do you mean? I can do nothing of the kind.”

“There is absolutely no other way. All that the estate made last year has been already invested in building boats for the next herring season. There yet remain £300 of the money I saved from the allowance made me by my father. I always intended you to have that, and you are welcome to every penny. I will give you all I had reserved for my own personal expenses. You must sell out and pay all you owe as far as possible. The balance still due I will assume. When this is done we will consider your future.”

“Could you not mortgage some of the land or stock?”

“No, Cluny. I cannot do that. The land and stock are not mine; I have only a life-interest in them, and must be a faithful steward for the clan and for my successors. I made my father a solemn promise to that effect. I cannot sell the

land to strangers; in the stock every MacPherson has a kind of right."

"Then have not I?"

"Certainly. Do you think I have not recognized it sufficiently?"

"O Donald, forgive me! It was a most ungenerous question. No other brother would have done as you have done. I know well you have sent me more than you have used yourself."

Donald nodded gravely, and his eyes were full of trouble. "I see no other way, Cluny. It is a terrible punishment; but if you could be relieved of debt without any personal deprivation, I am sure that it would be an injury to you."

The conversation was continued throughout the day; but when all had been thoroughly discussed Donald maintained the same position. He wished Cluny to think the subject well over and to make the sacrifice reasonably and completely. Then the discussion of it was dropped, but Donald knew that it was never absent from Cluny's heart, and that he was gradually making up his mind to the inevitable.

When the Sabbath came Cluny knew that he must go with his mother and brother to kirk. He did not want to go, but scarcely felt able to oppose the wonder and questions which a refusal to perform so obvious a duty would call forth.

He was suffering from a mental resentment which included even Providence in its arraignment. He had been busy all the week trying to shift off some of the burden and blame of his follies.

No man likes to acknowledge his sins as exclusively his own; he seeks for partners; and men are so bound up with one another that it is always easy to find them. This is a habit that attends spurious forms of repentance, and is a mere ungrateful sham of contrition. At the bottom of Cluny's heart he knew that few young men had begun life with such advantages, or so surrounded with pure and helpful love. But in his present mood he forgot Donald's generosity and forbearance; he forgot Katherine's love and truthfulness, his mother's prayers, and Janet's devotedness. Every one had helped on his troubles. David Maxwell's folly had brought on the misfortunes which he made himself believe had brought on his extravagances. He was quite sure that if Katherine had not had to remove to that miserable little house, he would have been more with her, and then her influence would have been powerful enough to counteract the temptations that had beset him. And thus his remorseful repinings ended as surely with Monteith, as Monteith's did with him.

Dominie Malcolm died a few weeks after his

father, and he was aware that there was a new minister. He was prejudiced against him. His mother's and Donald's praises of the man had been distasteful to him. He was prepared to dislike and find fault with the sermon. He would not on entering look towards the pulpit; but from the pulpit there rained down upon him an influence he could not resist. He raised his eyes to meet eyes that seemed to draw his very soul towards the man who was so regarding him. In that glance the two young men discovered their spiritual relationship, and they loved one another.

The new dominie was a man of Cluny's own age, fresh from the struggle of the schools, with a face that had the cheerfulness of fine summer mornings when everything sings and rejoices. He led the Psalm himself, his young powerful voice full of the gladness that inspired the holy words. The whole service was performed as if it was a delight; his look and voice were those of a leader of men, an evangelist anointed with joy above his fellows.

"Who is he, Donald?" asked Cluny, as they walked homeward, both of them glowing from their contact with a soul on fire with the love of God.

"One of the Stuarts, of Morven, a young man who might have chosen his own path on any

earthly road to honor, but who counts it a greater thing to be the servant of Christ.”

The sermon had been in no manner applicable to Cluny's case, and yet in some inexplicable way it had strengthened him and given him hope. If it had not been the Sabbath he would at once have signified to Donald his agreement to sell out, and bear as cheerfully as possible the burden and punishment of his folly. But Donald hardly needed the assurance; he had watched the decision grow gradually in Cluny's face; and the next morning the preliminaries were arranged without repining and without delay. Then Cluny resolved to go and call upon Dominie Stuart. Half way down the hill they met.

“I was coming to see you, sir,” said Cluny.

“And I was coming to see you.” They stood a moment with clasped hands, their young faces bright and glowing with exercise in the clear, caller mountain air.

It was as if they had always been friends. No formality, no hesitation kept them a moment apart. When they reached the manse they were talking as eagerly and frankly as if they had been brothers who had just met after a long absence from each other.

Cluny's face saddened a moment when he entered the manse study. “I could almost fancy I



see Dominie Malcolm sitting there. I used to bring all my troubles to him. He was a true friend to me."

"He has left a holy memory everywhere. No one need fear to fancy him close at hand. If prayer and good thoughts can sanctify stone and mortar, the space between these four walls is consecrated. Let me say of him that he was a faithful servant and son of God.

"The people were weary, and they  
Tearful, and they in their march  
Fain to drop down and die.  
Still he turnéd, and still  
Beckoned the trembler, and still  
Gave the weary his hand.  
If in the paths of the world  
Stones had wounded his feet,  
Toil or dejection had tried  
His spirit, of that they saw  
Nothing; to them he was still  
Cheerful and helpful and firm.  
Therefore to him it was given  
Many to save with himself;  
And at the end of his day,  
O faithful shepherd, to go  
Bringing his sheep in his hand."

"It is not an easy thing to fill the place of a man like that. But I want to try and take his place with you—to be your friend; and if you have ever any troubles, to feel that I can make them my troubles also."

Cluny's hand clasped Stuart's firmly in re-

sponse, and his heart clave to the young dominie's as Jonathan's did to David's. He never remembered how recently they had met; already he knew that he could tell his temptations and trials far better to Stuart than to any other soul that he had ever met. Yea, there are friends in such matters that are nearer than brothers.

Before he was consciously aware of it he was pouring out the tale of his temptations and sins, and the sore penalty that seemed to be the only way by which his honor could be redeemed. If there had been in his heart ever so dim a hope that Stuart would advise some intermediate plan, it was soon dispelled. The minister could see no other honest way. "But," said he, "it is the first steps of such a course that are the hardest. There is much that we can do to lighten and brighten the days in which you will be compelled to stand apart from life and wait. I think we shall neither of us regret them. It is a great deal, Cluny, to be conscious of our sins."

"Oh, my conscience is thoroughly awakened. I see my duty. I have the common sense which believes in the chastisement of God, but I have not the faith which can realize his mercy as present, or his help as actual help."

"If there was any better method of reclaiming us than by chastisement, would not the Father

of infinite tenderness have taken it? He has no pleasure in our sorrow."

"My memories are all remorse. Those miserable hours that I wasted rise up and show me what they fain would have given me—what they expected from me. I have only to remember my father, and I can see his long look of disappointment, his pale lips that asked so little. I have deceived all his hopes. Oh, if I could throw myself at his knees and ask his pardon! Then there is the woman who loves me, and whom I neglected in her sorrow and wounded bitterly. And now I shall make my mother weep. In return for her love I spoil her life. I feel utterly shipwrecked."

"And a rope thrown from afar, and floating at random on the waves, will not save you, Cluny. You want a hand. There is one. When Jesus walked upon this earth, a man, poor, blind, helpless, lying in the dust cried to him, 'Have mercy upon me!' You have only to say, 'Have mercy upon me!' That cry will pass the gates of heaven, and touch the heart of God."

Cluny listened with amazement, in which a divine hope mingled. Here was a man, handsome, young, rich, and of noble birth, who believed with all his soul in that one little word "conversion." He could feel the truth vibra-

ting in the earnest voice that pleaded with him ; he was almost abashed by the light of the solemnly radiant face bending towards his own. Then the doubts that he had toyed and trifled with, more in a kind of intellectual dilettanteism than in any honest conflict of opinion, assailed him with a meaning never before realized. He had cried, "Wolf! wolf!" often to his friends. It flattered his vanity to see them anxious about his speculative mind. Now the wolf was really tearing him.

"I have a confession to make," he said humbly. "I have taught myself to argue that the realization of our prayers is irreconcilable with the immutable order of God's decrees. Do you honestly believe in the power of prayer?"

"I believe with all my soul that a true prayer never yet lost its way between earth and heaven. God has told me to ask and I shall receive. I obey him. Divine prescience knew the prayers I should one day make; that which he knew beforehand he could heed and provide for beforehand."

"But how can God grant at one and the same time myriads of conflicting petitions?"

"I have a limited mind; how can I understand the Infinite? What he gives I take; I do not inquire into what he has withheld. The difficulties, the mysteries, the impossibilities—if you

will—God can dispose of without my care or interference. The apostles were well aware that afflictions awaited them, and that sorrow entered into the divine plan; but at the same time, submissive and hopeful, they prayed for deliverance, and God did deliver them.”

“But is it well to go to the Infinite One with all our small troubles? Do not such details tend to lower God?”

“God tells us that he humbleth himself to behold the things that are in the earth. The fall of an empire is as small to God as the anxiety of a mother. The child who has no reticences, no secrets, no fear, who asks one hour for bread and another for pardon, soon learns the heart of his father. But the child that is shy and taciturn, who only goes to his father on great occasions, knows little of his father’s tenderness. He is timid, because he loves little, distrustful, because he so rarely asks. If God confined himself to the infinitely great, he would be a God infinitely limited. He does not abandon our small interests to inferior agents and give an unconcerned signature from afar off. The God we pray to holds a single soul of more value than the world. I go farther than this, Cluny. It is not only in sorrow that we have the privilege of praying to God. I tell him all my joy, all the feelings of my heart. Is

it enough to think of a Being that you love? Do you not also want to speak to him?"

"If prayer could be all this!"

"It is all this, and more. Lay bare your heart to your best earthly friend day after day, and you will soon detect some alarm in his eyes. Go to him at odd hours, when you are tired, cross, despairing, sick—ask him continually for time, help, sympathy—and you would appall him. But you can never weary God."

The two young men had gradually drawn closer to each other. Their hands, extended on the table, had almost clasped. Stuart's handsome face beamed with the light that is not of either earth or sky; his whole appearance was so majestic and engaging that Cluny involuntarily thought of those sons of God who, in the early morning of the world, went up into the very presence of their Father. Profound, earnest piety is always beautiful in young men. Remembering their Creator, they, and they only, consecrate to him the blessed dew of their youth.

And there was little wonder that Stuart's heart was drawn to the man that sat opposite him. In spite of certain inherent weaknesses of character, Cluny was peculiarly a lovable man. We are told that on one occasion Christ, beholding a certain young man, "loved him"—loved him in

spite of his want of love and his weak and wavering spirit. There was in Cluny this indefinable attraction, and people loved him. Between Stuart and him there seemed to be an actual glow and warmth. They understood one another, and trusted one another without explanations and without promises.

“Cluny, do you read your Bible regularly?”

“No, I do not. I will tell you the truth. I have somewhat lost my faith in it. Men of such clear intellects, such vast knowledge, have attacked one portion and doubted another, that my faith in its revelation has been shaken. You know of these attacks, I dare say.”

“Oh, yes; I have heard that great minds have found out for the thousandth time that the Bible is a tissue of errors. For eighteen centuries the wisdom of this world has been overthrowing the Scriptures. But for all that, the Scripture has not lost jot nor tittle. The dying yet find in the Holy Bible a lamp to light the valley of death. It still comforts the sorrowful. It still saves the sinner. Generations that have in turn buffeted and derided it are dust. The Bible still lives. It has the gentleness and patience of all eternal things. It has seen our fathers pass away; it will see us. The Word of the Lord endureth for ever!”

“If one could only know surely that it was the Word of the Lord!”

“Have you not often envied Abraham, when he walked beneath the terebinth-trees and God talked with him? I assure you that if you will listen, God still talks with man. Go to the Psalms. Who but God could have so revealed you to yourself? Those doubts of the truth, that dread of the grave, that ignorance of God’s ways, that insane condemnation of his acts, that horror of your own sins—have you not experienced them all?”

“Yes.”

“In the Bible there is an eternal communication provided for between the heart of man and the heart of God. In it you will find words for your utmost thoughts, songs for your joy, utterances for your hidden griefs, pleadings for your shame and weakness, and more than in all other books put together.”

“If it was only more precise, only more capable of scientific proof!”

“There is nothing more perfect and precise in all literature than that “Sermon on the Mount,” which was caught up by a few fishermen to form the creed of Christendom. Careless readers, appreciating its beauty and poetry, fail to perceive that it is strictly scientific. The keynote of it is,



'Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.' Here an absolute impossibility is prescribed, as is also throughout the sermon. Therein is the unique scientific beauty of this memorable discourse. Open Euclid. 'A point is that which hath no parts and no magnitude.' 'A line is a length without breadth.' Has any man ever seen Euclid's point, or Euclid's line? Yet they are imaginable; and even so imaginable, though unattained, is the perfection of which Christ spoke. Cluny, the Bible is addressed to the heart, more than to the intellect; but it can be proved by both. Do not doubt that."

"I shall go to the kirk regularly again now."

"Have you neglected that duty also?"

"Yes, I took a dislike to 'creeds.' Is not this Bible sufficient? Why is a creed necessary?"

"Because morality without a creed is only maxims and sentences; with a creed it is precept, obligation, necessity."

"Stuart, I shall never forget this hour. I shall love you, I believe, for ever."

"I believe you will. God does not introduce two souls to each other for nothing. I loved you as soon as I looked upon you. However, Cluny, it is not enough to think and pray and trust in Christ. We must find some work to do, some

daily duty. The inert contemplation of trouble is apt to exercise an unwholesome fascination over us. Work will take you out of yourself, free you from selfishness and vanity. Mental sufferings belong to empty minds. The heavy days are the idle days."

"You have made me strong; I feel as if I could do anything that was needful and right."

"Through Christ strengthening you—even St. Paul had to add that condition, Cluny."

And Cluny, nodding brightly, went thoughtfully up the snowy hill, occasionally lifting his young and hopeful face to the great peaks above him, or turning round a moment to watch Stuart, who had gone out to a group of fishermen, and was standing in their midst talking to them.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## SELF-BANISHED.

“Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.”  
Gal. 6:7.

PERHAPS the hardest part of Cluny's trouble was his mother's disappointment. She refused to believe that he must leave the army. Her grief was bitter, and almost unreasonable. For a time Donald was sensible that she regarded him with a cold disapproval. She knew nothing of business or of money matters, but she had an abiding conviction that the estate had an elastic tendency and could meet all conditions and exigencies.

“If your dear father had been alive!” she kept saying to Cluny, with an air which expressed her conviction that if he had, some other way of escape would have been found for her darling. For some days Donald felt himself in disgrace with both his mother and Janet, and even old Adam. None of them could believe in a situation which the MacPherson could not manage. That Cluny warmly defended his brother, and blamed himself, only made their sympathy the more active. He was so generous, so good-hearted, so sorry for his fault, surely he might be

forgiven and money found for his debts this once. They quite failed to take in the amount of Cluny's debts. Two thousand or twenty thousand, what was it in comparison with Cluny's future?

My lady's tears dropped upon her work in a manner very distressing to both her sons, and Janet with a woman's unreasonableness was quite sure that in some way or other Katherine Maxwell was to blame for the whole trouble. "She never had thought much o' Miss Maxwell; if Laird Cluny had set his fancy on Miss Flora MacDonald, a bonnie Highland lady wi' £40,000 o' her ain, there would hae been nane o' this to do. Naething gude ever came out o' the Lowlands but cattle, and cattle the law wouldna let them go after thae days."

Sorrows that come from God's hand directly are far easier to bear than those which are called unto us either by our own folly or the folly of those we love. Had Cluny been killed in battle, Lady MacPherson would have learned a speedier and more complete resignation. She had had so many brilliant hopes for Cluny. Donald's life was marked out, but Cluny's had been, in her imagination, full of grand possibilities. Old Adam accepted the situation first. "There is aye a gude and a bad side to everything, Janet,"

he said, "and the difficulty is to find the gude side."

"They'll be wise that find the gude in this thing. Laird Cluny wi' naething to do but to wander about the house and hills. Naebody but a man-body could see gude in a dispensation like that. I'm no the woman to say the laird has done wrang, but I'm vera sure he hasna done right."

The young men were a month in Edinburgh settling up Cluny's affairs. Lady MacPherson felt it to be a very dreary time. She would not give up hope. She was so ignorant of the world that she could still imagine all sorts of romantic escapes for Cluny. A glimpse at Cluny's creditors would have convinced her how vain all her hopes were. They entered into a settlement without much feeling of any kind. Donald's character and position commanded their respect; they were willing to accept any proposal he might make them. They were not inclined to be the least hard upon Cluny, but they were not men likely to be influenced by any considerations more romantic than the multiplication table.

David Maxwell took charge of the business, and though it revealed to him things in Cluny's past life with which he could have but little sympathy, he refrained himself from all reproaches,

and was peculiarly kind to the young man. Thus, though the business of the day was unpleasant enough, the evenings had always some hours of serenest happiness. A woman never loves so purely as when she has just forgiven, and Katherine never had been so certain of her lover's final success as in the hour of his failure. So beautiful and loving was she that it seemed to Donald as if anything must be possible to a man who had such a woman to bless and encourage him.

Nothing, of course, could be at this time decided about Cluny's future. Even after the sale of the commission there remained £600 to pay, and for this sum Donald became personally responsible, payable at various times during the ensuing year; and Cluny must wait until these liabilities were discharged ere anything further could be done for his future. It was a poor prospect for Katherine, and many fathers would have insisted on a sunderance of the engagement; but Cluny was now a favorite with David Maxwell. He passed over faults in Cluny which he would have regarded as unpardonable in another; and, again, he had a certain selfishness in his love for Katherine. He could not bear to think of his own life without her. "She is only twenty-two. She can wait a few years, and do a good turn to me wi' the waiting."

The real pinch of Cluny's trial came when everything had been settled as far as possible, and he was at home again without any definite work or purpose, ever conscious of his mother's unspoken regret and his brother's economy and industry. What he would have done at this time without Stuart it is hard to say. One morning, a week after his return, he went down to the manse; but the dominie was in the village, and Cluny set forth to seek him. He found him on the little pier, clad in the blue flannel of the fishermen, with a big nor'wester-hat on and knee-boots. He had fathoms of line flung over his shoulders, and was just stepping into a boat.

When he saw Cluny he was delighted. "Rory MacPherson is down with rheumatism, Cluny, and I have promised to do his work for him to-day. Come with me. There is no finer exercise than a fight with wind and tide in the deep-sea fishing."

Cluny went, and learned in an hour that he need never more lounge idly and despondently about his mother's room. The day's fishing was a grand one, and the excitement of managing the sails, the rich prey, the glow of healthy exercise, and happy companionship made him forget all his annoyances.

They came home just at dark, very proud of

their success. "It was the dominie's luck," said Rory gratefully, and the dominie gave Jeannie a shilling for the paper of tea she always looked to him for, and went home as happy as a man may be who loves both God and his fellow-creatures.

"A day's fishing is pleasant enough," he said to Cluny, as they sat over their tea-dinner at the study fire, "but it is a different thing when it comes day after day, and week after week, and year after year. So, when any of the men are sick now, they know I am glad to take their place."

"And will you not lose your influence over them, Stuart, by mingling in their daily labor?"

"If I did, I should ask myself very seriously if I was fit to be their minister. Do you know, Cluny, to go a-fishing seems to bring me very near to those wonderful days when the first great fishers of men cast their nets in the Sea of Galilee?"

"I am so glad to have found this exit from idleness and regret. I remember once telling my father that I would rather sail to the North Sea and harpoon whales than to live in garrison; and to-day's experience shows me that I had an intuitive knowledge of my own best needs. Will you go to-morrow?"

"No; you may take my place and my suit-



Your dress is grand for the hills, but very unsuitable for the sea. You must get flannel and oil-skin. To-morrow I must study, and you may fish. I have another suggestion, also, Cluny."

"I will do anything you think well."

"You know that MacPherson counts greatly on the receipts from his wool, and he is particularly careful about the sheep. I have seen him in the hardest weather going through the hills, in order to satisfy himself that the shepherds had done their duty. Suppose you share this duty with him."

"I will."

"And I shall enjoy going with you. Many of the shepherds very seldom get to kirk. If in the discharge of their obvious duty they cannot come for the bread of life, don't you think I ought to take it to them?"

"Stuart, you know no duty is hard to me if I may do it in your company."

"Then speak to MacPherson to-night. Tell him what I say."

Donald was much pleased with the proposal, and so, between the boats and the sheep, Katherine's letters, and Stuart's company, the time went far more swiftly and happily than Cluny had dared to hope. By the end of the summer all the notes given in liquidation of Cluny's debts

had been paid excepting one, and he began to look forward to the hour when he would owe no stranger anything. His debt to Donald he knew to be beyond computation, and no reproach could have so touched him as Donald's absolute silence about it. If Cluny had not remembered the dates of the bills, he could never have known from any look or word of Donald's that one had fallen due.

At the beginning of September it was necessary for one of the brothers to go to the Gairmore wool market, and Cluny at his own request was selected. It was a great gathering for proprietors from a large section of country, and was associated with national games and plowing-matches. At the close there was a public dinner, and Cluny, leaning on the arm of Grant of Glenmorris, came into the great hall just as the company were gathering.

The moment he entered he saw Monteith standing at a window talking to a youth of about twenty years of age. No one else appeared to notice him, and Cluny resolved to forget his presence, and on no account to allow himself to be drawn into a quarrel with a man so universally held in contempt. Unfortunately Monteith was not of the same mind. He had been made to feel that his company was not agreeable; all his attempts at friendliness had been received with a

haughty ceremony, which, while it left him no reasonable occasion of quarrel, was almost in itself a breach of the peace.

And yet he deserved the measure that had been meted to him. He had deliberately and for the very purpose of rousing either a feeling of envy or anger assumed a dress he knew to be offensive from its peculiarity and associations. Highlanders rarely ride; if they do, it is not for show or pleasure, but of some simple necessity. Then the hardy native horses serve their purpose, and their costume is that which happens to be at the time most convenient. To these men of fine physique and mighty stride a walk of twenty miles over the hills was but an easy affair. Followed by their servants and shepherds, they had gathered thus from every quarter to the little strath where the meeting was to be held; and the sight of Monteith in his jockey-dress, riding a fine English roadster, gloved, booted, and spurred, with an English hunting-whip in his hand, was a social offence.

He had his exhibition for his reward; no one took the slightest notice of his appearance, except young Frazer, a lad by no means remarkable for his good sense. Monteith was talking to him when he first saw Cluny and Grant. Grant was a man of great influence and wealth, and much

older than Cluny, but he seemed to find in young MacPherson's company that hearty delight which cheerful, good old men do find in the company of cheerful, good young men. The sight was gall and fire to Monteith; he ransacked his heart for some bitter word to say, and then walked up the room to meet the two men.

He had his whip in his hand, and as he nodded insolently to Cluny, was playing with it, bending the limber part backward and forward in a half-circle. Cluny returned the bow with a stare of scornful amazement. Then Monteith said,

"So Captain MacPherson has given up arms for sheep. The sight is edifying!"

Cluny burned with anger from head to foot. A fierce delight took possession of him. He made his face and manner as provocative as he possibly could, and turning with a scornful hauteur and pointing to the door, he bid Monteith "Leave the room!"

"I have paid for my dinner, and I propose to eat in your company."

"Gentlemen," said Cluny, turning to the group which had already gathered, "that is the fellow who obtained my uncle's house by fraud, and when compelled to resign it took a knife and deliberately cut to pieces the portraits of four

generations. Miss Maxwell's, my intended wife, was among them."

"Ha! ha! ha!" screamed Monteith, going off into a paroxysm of laughter, and swinging his whip.

In a moment Cluny had him in the grip of his left hand; and seizing Monteith's riding whip with his right, dealt him swift, tingling blows across the face and shoulder. There was a second of intense excitement, and then Monteith had his hand on Cluny's throat.

Before any one could interfere, Cluny had him in a heap almost to the other side of the room. Quivering and glowing with rage, he stood among his friends waiting Monteith's next movement, for it would have been impossible for him to strike a prostrate enemy, even though that enemy were Monteith.

No one offered to assist Monteith, not even his quondam admirer young Frazer; and after a minute or two he picked himself up. The foam of passion flecked his mouth, great bars of tingling flesh, swollen and red, obscured his vision; he was like an animal at bay, and stood looking at Cluny with an expression of malignant hate.

Grant then interfered. "Mr. Monteith," he said, "you brought this punishment on yourself. At a public dinner when men cannot behave

themselves like human beings, they must be made to leave the society of gentlemen. The door is open for you."

"And there's your whip," said old Leslie, flinging the broken instrument of torture after him. "Huhgh! A man wha would cut dead gentlemen's faces up! MacPherson was o'er gude to ye. He should hae set his gamekeeper to flog ye."

Monteith lifted the whip and shook it at Cluny. "I'll pay you with my dirk, Cluny MacPherson, some day," he said passionately.

"A rope, or a cup of poison, will be more in your way. Go, I do not fear you."

Cluny's passion had begun to evaporate as soon as Grant interfered. He was calm, almost sad, as soon as reflection came. What would Stuart say to him? Almost at the first word of temptation, he had not only given way to it, but rejoiced in the opportunity for such a public revenge as Monteith offered him. It did not satisfy his conscience that every one present had excused and even praised him. In his own breast there was a witness which would not excuse the deed he had done. He had risen in the estimation of men who were his neighbors and companions, but he had fallen in his own.

Cluny's nature however did not long resist

pressing outside influences. He found himself the hero of the hour, and he comforted his conscience with a promise to talk the whole affair over with Stuart on the morrow. In the meantime he found himself among a room-full of admirers and sympathizers. Succulent viands were before him, song and story and good fellowship gayly drove the hours away. It was easy under such circumstances to believe that he had done a very fine thing, and was deserving praise rather than blame.

Monteith had taken his horse and left. In a few minutes he had cleared the small town and reached the solitude and calm of the mountains. But there was no calm in earth or heaven for his raging soul. He tied his horse to a pine-tree and sat down to think. Life in that locality was not any longer possible. He must leave the country, and he would go to his mother's people in Benares. All of them ate opium; it would be no social disgrace there, and he could indulge his favorite vice freely.

He took out his pocket-book and counted the Bank of England notes he had in it—£650. That would be sufficient. But his creditors and his father's creditors might object to his departure. That thought decided him. It would be a great pleasure to annoy them. As he sat thinking a sudden joy—such joy as devils feel—came into his

heart. He saw how he could make his plans not only suit his own convenience, but also be a source of annoyance, perhaps of danger, to Cluny.

He would depart in such a way that all trace of him should be lost; and then without doubt suspicion of his murder would rest upon his enemy. He leaped to his feet in the joy of this plot, and walking about considered it calmly. He would take his horse to within a mile of the coast, and then turn the animal loose. It would be sure to go home, and its return riderless would arouse suspicion and search; and he had determined on obliterating all trace of his flight.

There was a small fishing village five miles to the north where there had been for some weeks a fleet of Manx herring smacks. One of them had been detained in order to collect a small debt due the company. He would assume that debt, advance the money, and get the skipper to run out of harbor at once with him. It would scarcely take him out of his own way to lay off in the track of the East Indian steamers leaving Liverpool.

The whole scheme was as clear to him as A. B. C. And then he pictured to himself the rise of suspicion, and its gradual culmination around Cluny MacPherson. He determined not to return to his own house, he might be seen by one of the ser-



vants; and he remembered with satisfaction that the very order of things there would tend to deepen suspicion of foul play, and preclude that of flight. There was £19 in a desk drawer; all the better; he was willing to lose that for such a revenge as he had in view.

Then he reflected that it would be wise to remain as near Cluny's road home as possible, until Cluny had passed the place where he would hide. There might be some one with Cluny; in that case Cluny would have a witness to clear himself, and his present plan would fall through. Then he would lay another; for though flight had become a fixed idea in his mind, he could not forbear the joy of making that flight a shame and a sorrow to the MacPhersons.

He took his horse into a still more retired place and tied him. Then he stealthily secreted himself behind a clump of juniper bushes which skirted the road Cluny must take. It was only seven o'clock; the west was still bright, and the evening calm and lovely. He calculated that it might be eleven, perhaps twelve, when Cluny would pass him. "They will be feasting, and singing their ridiculous songs about 'Auld Lang Syne' and 'Royal Charlie' till ten at least," he muttered. "Then the leave-takings and last words and jokes. I'll give him until eleven."

He found a comfortable spot among the heather and sat down to wait. He had so much to think about that the time did not seem long. He had scarcely become impatient when he heard the sound of Cluny's voice and the tramp of his feet. He roused himself and stood up, listening intently. The night was still and starlit. The young moon had set an hour before, but there was light sufficient to see the happy fellow coming along with rapid, swinging steps, keeping time to his own voice as he sang,

“Wha would be a traitor knave?  
 Wha would fill a coward's grave?  
 Wha sae base as be a slave?  
 Let him turn and flee.

“Wha for Scotland's king and law  
 Freedom's sword will strongly draw,  
 Freeman stand and freeman fa',  
 Let him follow me!”

The fair enthused countenance, uplifted from the flowing dark tartans, was clearly seen by Monteith. Oh, if he had known the art of the Thug, what a delight it would have been to strangle the young life and the song together! The thought roused all the cruel instincts of his mother's race. He remembered a score of inhuman tortures he had heard of Asiatic tyrants practising, and felt a joy worthy of Satan in mentally subjecting Cluny to them.

Cluny was alone. "I am in good luck," he said, "and have evidently begun in a fortunate hour." He waited until there was about a quarter of a mile between them; then he advanced to the edge of the mountain and uttered two long, piercing cries. "If there are any shepherds on the hills they will hear them; every link will make the chain stronger."

Cluny heard the cries and answered them. That was more than Monteith had considered. He hurriedly found his horse, and galloped as rapidly as the mountainous road permitted towards the village which it was his object to reach. About midnight, being near to it, he turned loose his horse, and pursued his way on foot. He could see the few white houses clustered together at the foot of the cliffs. He could see the very boat he wanted lying quietly at anchor at the small jetty. All was as still as if nature herself had gone to sleep. An occasional cry from some seabird whose nest was on the cliffs was almost the only sound that broke the deep silence. He was not too high above the beach to hear the soft plashing of the waves. The sea was as quiet as the land, and what wind there was was southwest.

Nothing could be more favorable. He was not a good walker, but under the excitement of the hour he felt no fatigue. He was building cas-

ties whose foundations were in hell. Suddenly his foot found nothing to rest upon. A second of quick terror, a futile effort to fling himself backward, and he knew that he was falling down, down, down to the very beach. He had scarcely time to realize this till a pang of agony, a shock beyond all expression terrible, emphasized the fact. An interval of unconsciousness followed. When he came to himself it was in the early gray dawn, and he heard the lapping of water not far away from him.

He tried to move. The slightest effort produced an agony whose torture was terrible. His right arm lay under him broken; but this was evidently the smallest part of his injury. Again and again he made the effort to move, each time with the same excruciating result. The sound of the water was coming nearer. The tide was advancing. Oh, if it should reach the place where he lay before he was discovered!

The mental terror of this thought was almost worse than his physical agony. To die! Oh, anything but that! He was not twenty-eight years old yet. He had so many new hopes to realize—so much to do yet! Would no one pass that way?

No one came. The day grew bright; it grew hot and sultry. He was perishing with thirst.

He was in an agony so intolerable that nature refused consciously to bear it without intervals of oblivion. Oh, that awful morning growing to noon! Oh, that awful afternoon which slowly grew to night! Oh, that long still night, when his need of water was so maddening that it put aside all other agonies; that lonely, awful night when, after short respites of unconsciousness, he became again sensible to his sufferings, and

“felt as he

Who, waking after some festivity,  
Sees a dim land and things unspeakable,  
And comes to know at last that it is hell.”

Thus another morning dawned, and with the dawn there came a gracious shower of rain. It refreshed his burning body a little, but, oh, the tantalus torture it was to his dreadful thirst! With his left hand he managed to take his handkerchief from his pocket, and letting it get thoroughly soaked, he put it to his parched tongue and lips; but the effort wrung from him shrieks of torture. Not in all the strange varieties of pain which he had pleased himself with imagining for his enemy could he have believed such torment possible.

These shrieks, however, caught the attention of four men a little way out at sea, and one of them, a man of remarkable dress and aspect, stopped rowing to listen.

“That iss a ferry sorrowful noise whateffer, Sandy; and we will land, and we will see what it does mean.”

“Ay, and it iss the tide we will miss then, deacon.”

“And who iss there that will not miss the tide, rather than to miss doing a good deed? Yes, and we will go and we will make haste, mirover.”

The men pulled swiftly towards the shore, and the first speaker was soon wandering about the cliffs, keeping his eyes and ears intently watchful. Almost when abandoning the search he entered the little rift or gully down which Monteith had fallen. With fast-lapsing consciousness Monteith gazed into his eyes and whispered one word, “Water !”

The man ran to the boat and brought it. For the first time, perhaps in his whole life, Monteith felt a sentiment of gratitude.

“Take me away.”

“Ay, and you are a sick man whateffer; and where iss it that I shall take you?”

“Wherever you are going.”

“I wass going to Torsag in the Lewis; that iss where I wass going; and I will take you, if you will want to come. Ay, and it will be a goot thing, mirover, for it iss Neil Allister can

set a proken bone; he iss the cleverest man in all the islands."

The three men in the boat readily came to assist in moving Monteith. They lifted him very gently and carried him in a litter made of their plaids, but long before they had laid him in the bottom of the boat he had swooned with anguish. When he came to himself the boat was skimming rapidly the waters of the North Minch. The man who had been most active in his relief watched him with a sombre and pitiful face. He had heard from the sufferer's lips nothing but groans and complaints; not one cry for God's mercy, not even a word of thankfulness for human help.

At last he stooped, and said, "There iss only One that can help you; yes, there iss only One, Jesus Christ. You will go to him, and he will not say 'No' to you whateffer."

But Monteith's fierce blasphemous answer so shocked the simple fishermen that for a time every one drew away from him in horror.

"But what will we?" said the deacon, after a little thought; "he will not pe his ain sel' with the great suffering; there are other men, ay, there are other men that will say the petter words, but we will not judge the sick man whateffer;" and he went to the bow of the boat and prayed for the man who would not pray for himself.

When he next approached Monteith he asked how soon they would be at Torsag.

“I do think, if this goot wind does last, we will get Neil Allister for you to-morrow, that will we; and if you shall get well, you shall come pack with me when I do go pack on the next visitation. Yes, shall you.”

“When will that be?”

“It will pe in the spring; ay, will it.”

Monteith shut his eyes in despair. Oh, why had he allowed himself to be carried away from the mainland? To remain in a little Hebridean hovel for eight months! How could he bear it? Then he remembered his plot to incriminate Cluny MacPherson. If Cluny really had murdered him, he could scarcely be more completely cut off from the world than in Torsag. He took what comfort he could from this thought. But, oh, the misery to himself!

And when Torsag was reached, and he found himself upon a bed of wool in the deacon's cottage, and his arm poulticed and cared for, his despair was boundless. He was unable to move himself. Neil Allister was certain there was a fatal injury to the spine. He prophesied paralysis, and counselled Monteith to make his peace with God and prepare for death.



## CHAPTER IX.

## UNDER THE CLOUD.

“The wicked plotteth against the just, and gnasheth upon him with his teeth.

“The Lord shall laugh at him, for he seeth that his day is coming.”

“For yet a little while and the wicked shall not be.”

IN the meantime the very thing which Monteith had contemplated was in progress at his home—the home which he had so unfortunately deserted. The horse had found its way thither riderless, and the groom, after attending to him, went out to look for his master. “He ’ll hae got into ane o’ his queer ways, and slipped awa aff the beastie,” he said. For Monteith had allowed himself at times to be seen by the servants while under opium exaltation or despair, and they, happily ignorant of the satanic drug, had imputed these effects to some sort of delirium or mental aberration.

Not finding his master on the road, he had pursued his inquiries in Gairmore, and soon a vague feeling of wonder, and then of suspicion, gathered. But it was three days before any one

began to think of taking legal measures in the matter. It happened that Cluny was in the village with Stuart. Stuart stopped in the street to ask a fisher's wife after a son who had got hurt at sea; and Cluny's eyes, wandering up and down, settled upon a man posting up a notice. He was full of curiosity, and he went to read it at once.

It was a reward of £50 for any information of James Monteith. The placard implied a suspicion of foul play, and a cold, heavy pang, as if he had actually been wounded, struck Cluny's heart. He drew Stuart to the ominous-looking bit of paper, and asked him what he thought of it.

"I do not like it, Cluny. After your quarrel with the man, his disappearance may place you awkwardly."

"I see," answered Cluny gloomily. "Yet my quarrel was fair and open. Twenty people were present. I could have taken no other course. Donald says I did quite right."

"It is very hard for a man to escape from the traditions and feelings of centuries. I remember, when I was at college, being insulted by a fellow-student. I had put my hand to the place where my ancestors carried their dirks before I knew what I was doing. If it had been there I might have used it."

“How can a man escape from such an obvious insult to his honor?”

“Only by remembering Him who endured such great contradiction. Besides, Cluny, I have come to believe that honor which needs washing in blood, or even a constant defensive attitude, is little worth.”

“What would you have done in my case?”

“I think when I first saw Monteith, I should have put up a mental prayer for some divine help. There is an Eastern legend that says, a holy man once stood silent by his friend while that friend was abused by his enemy. As soon as his friend lost patience, and returned the abuse, he walked away. Being afterwards reproached for his indifference, he answered, ‘While you kept silence, I saw two angels standing at your side, answering for you; but when you began to return your enemy’s insults, they went away. Then I also left you.’ I would have first asked this divine aid, for ‘the wrath of man shall praise him, and the rest of the wrath he will restrain.’”

“And then, Stuart?”

“I might have taken the whip from Monteith, if certain that it was his intention to strike, or even if I believed it necessary to do so in order to prevent the temptation; but I hope and trust I should not have given the first blow. Possessed

of the power to punish him in such a degrading way, I do not doubt but that he would have obeyed your order to leave the room. That would surely have satisfied you. I want you to ask yourself, Cluny, one question, for on it the sinfulness of your anger mainly rests. Did you resist the temptation? or did you gladly seize the opportunity for publicly humiliating your enemy?"

"I was glad of the opportunity."

"Then it was a voluntary sin, and voluntary sin in the very order of things must be followed by suffering. Ah, Cluny, it is not well to use up in our passions the materials God gave us for happiness."

"But my honor?"

"I am convinced that what men call their 'honor' is often a supreme egotism. It is 'I.' How could 'I' bear it? They take steps whose misery will not stop with them. Did you think of Miss Maxwell, or your mother, or Donald, or even me? Was not the gratification of your own feelings paramount? Yet if trouble comes of this quarrel, all who love you will suffer with you. I will go farther, and assert that the man who injures only himself is not innocent."

Thus conversing they had approached old Adam's cottage. He was sitting on the stone bench at his door, with the Bible open on his

knees. He was not reading it, but it was a habit of love, even when only in meditation, to keep the page open. And frequently he let his eyes drop from mountain peak and sunny sky upon it. It was as if a man should sit with a letter from a dear parent in his hand, thinking of the beloved writer.

“How peaceful is this place, Adam.”

“Ay, dominie, it is always Sabbath in the mountains. They are that end o’ the ladder which rests on the ground. I grasp it, and I ken the other end is in heaven. That’s the comfort o’ them, dominie.”

“The second book of the Kings, Adam. You seem to be very fond of the Old Testament.”

“The Auld Testament is aye a New Testament if we go to it in a right spirit, dominie. I am sure ye ken that yoursel’, sir.”

“I do.”

“Adam,” said Cluny, “you have heard of my quarrel with Monteith last Tuesday night. What do you think of my conduct. Speak frankly.”

“I think ye did exactly right, Laird Cluny. It was weel for him that I didna hae the whip in my hands.”

“Adam!”

“’Deed, dominie, I think sae. I’m no for

letting sinners off wi' a threat and a promise. I dinna think Moses did a bit wrang to kill that ill-tongued Egyptian."

"But he had to flee to the wilderness for it. God's rod is for his children as well as his enemies."

"Ay, dominie; but he maks the rod to blossom for the bairns. Moses got his commission in the wilderness."

"But, Adam, you forget one great distinction. Moses killed the Egyptian, not as his personal enemy, but as the enemy of the people of God; just as the Covenanters killed Archbishop Sharp and Cardinal Beaton—not that they hated them personally, but because they were the enemies of pure religion."

"Ay, weel, I could say something anent David, but it's no my place to be preaching to ye, dominie; and ye'll allow that it's a vera aggravating thing for folks to misca' the MacPhersons on their ain hills."

"Adam, I am glad you have named David; Laird Cluny could have no better example. You'll allow that Saul had been very aggravating to David, yet when David could have easily slain his enemy in the cave of Engedi, he only took away his spear and his water. I think Laird Cluny might have taken Monteith's whip out of

his hand. Saul knew that the man who had taken his spear could have slain him with it; Monteith would have known that the man who could take the whip out of his hand could use it upon him."

"I'm no contradicting ye, dominie; but David would hae been a mean, meeserable warrior if he had killed a sleeping man. It taks a Jael to do that kind o' thing, dominie. And there's nae comparison between a brave man like King Saul and a hound like Monteith. Saul had the grace to weep o'er his own wicked heart, and to pray to the Lord to reward David for his kindness to him. Laird Cluny would hae waited lang ere he would hae got either sorrow or gratitude from Monteith. Grace is just flung awa on the deil. I'm vera glad indeed Monteith got the whip. I would hae gien him the measure o' Moses—forty save one; nae mair and nae a lick less;" and Adam, with a dour, angry face, began to turn over the leaves in order to refresh himself with the sight of the Mosaic law.

Stuart could scarce refrain from a sympathetic smile with the positive old man, and he said pleasantly, "Never mind the text, Adam; you get closer to Sinai than to Bethlehem, that is all. But I am afraid we are going to have trouble about the quarrel. There is a reward of £50

offered for any information about Monteith. He is not to be found."

"That's mair than likely. He'll hae rin awa. He would hae sense enough to ken that every MacPherson would hae an aching arm till they had had an interview wi' him. But what for would folks spend gude siller anent him? Wha wants to ken his whereabouts? Let him go."

"But there is a suspicion that he is murdered."

"Parfect nonsense! Wha would care to file their dirks wi' him?"

"But, Adam, if Laird Cluny should fall under suspicion!"

"That's just impossible;" yet a sudden pallor spread itself over Adam's face, and with a swift involuntary movement he stood up at Cluny's side. The sympathy seemed infectious, for Stuart got up also, and taking Cluny's arm, drew it through his own with a strong, loving pressure. Both men, without a word, had said as plainly as if they had spoken, "Whatever comes, I will stand at your side."

After they had gone Adam was in great distress. A terrible doubt would force itself into his mind. On Tuesday night he had been at the castle until late, for Janet had been unusually



pleasant and his supper very tempting. It was after ten when he started for his cottage, and before going to bed he had stood some time at his open door in meditation. There he had heard those wild, purposeful shrieks of Monteith's. He could imagine no situation so terrible to himself as to be placed between the truth and Cluny. If any one else had heard those cries, and he should be interrogated, he must tell the truth, and the truth might be compromising. Cluny must have been somewhere near the locality at that very time. He durst not follow his thoughts in any direction to an end. He was wretched; all nature had suddenly become benumbed to him. He put on his bonnet and went down to the castle. Janet was ironing, and looked up with a flushed, irritable face.

"A' the folks that arena wanted seem to hae trysted themsel's here this day," she said crossly. "Hae ye seen Laird Cluny?"

"Ay, have I. The dominie and he hae been spending an hour wi' me. The dominie likes weel to hae a crack wi' old Adam."

"The dominie has mair patience than ordinar folk. Here be three gentlemans waiting to see Laird Cluny, and MacPherson himsel' is in a sair and angry taking about it."

"Monteith isna to be found, and there's mon-

ey offered for him. I fear there are some that think Laird Cluny should ken his whereabouts."

Janet set down the iron and faced Adam. Her quick feminine instinct grasped the suspicion and its consequences in a moment. She scorned any shirking of them.

"Do ye mean to say that they think Monteith is murdered, and that Laird Cluny has done it?"

"Just that. What time did Laird Cluny get hame on last Tuesday night?"

"Ye are neither judge nor jury; what are ye wanting to ken for?"

"I'm no just free to say."

"There's other folk nae freer nor yoursel'."

"You had best answer my question, Janet."

"I'se answer naeboddy's questions. Ony fool can talk; talking comes by nature, silence by understanding."

So quickly does doubt find lodging even in the truest hearts. If those who loved Laird Cluny were so easily influenced, there is little wonder that outside of his personal associations the feeling grew with greater strength and rapidity. Circumstances favored it. The attorney for the crown soon felt it to be his duty to take the case in hand. He was not a native of that locality, and had no special respect for the MacPhersons. In fact, he had received several small affronts

from the great feudal families of the district, and had a feeling of animosity against what he considered their absurd family pride. Then, Monteith had employed him on two occasions; he felt that any wrong done Monteith touched him in a financial aspect; and he had just that spice of unacknowledged envy against Cluny which men of inferior personal appearance are apt to indulge towards those of remarkable physical beauty.

Besides, he told himself that circumstances did really point to some tragedy. The idea that Monteith had fled the country, universally accepted at first, he was now inclined to dispute. He had carefully examined Monteith's residence. Everything indicated an expected return. No clothing had been disturbed; an unfinished letter was on his desk; there was not only money in the private drawers, but diamonds of value. If he had been going to abscond, there was nothing to have prevented his returning for these valuables.

His quarrel with Cluny MacPherson was a public event; so also was Monteith's threat to pay the insult with his dirk. It was quite in keeping with the man's character to waylay Cluny, and quite possible that an affray had taken place in some locality where a push from a strong

arm would send an antagonist over some precipice or rocky gorge.

Twenty years earlier Cluny would hardly have been in much danger from such a state of public opinion. The country was then entirely in the hands of the great lairds of the soil, and a strong feeling of clanship existed among them if any question touching their ancient privileges arose. On their own hills every chief considered himself a fountain of justice. Had Cluny then killed Monteith, his peers, assembled in jury, would have declared the deed justifiable.

They still held these opinions; but another element, equally powerful and quite antagonistic, controlled them. The great estates had been cut up and rented out to rich Englishmen for shooting-grounds. And wherever Englishmen go they carry two dominant ideas with them—the sacredness of human life and the absolute authority of the law. If Monteith had been the poorest tramp that ever slept under a hedge, they would have demanded an inquiry into his disappearance; and it is probable that they were glad to take this opportunity of showing the old Highland chieftains that even a MacPherson on his own hills was in subjection to English law. Stranger residents, indeed, would have cause to feel anxious if they were to have no redress against the anger, just or

unjust, of a large and powerful family banded together as one man.

So, in a week from Monteith's disappearance, Cluny MacPherson was under police surveillance, and in two weeks sufficient circumstantial evidence had been collected to warrant his arrest for the murder of James Monteith.

There are calumnies at which even innocence loses courage and stands aghast. Cluny, at first indignant and almost indifferent, came gradually to feel a dull hopelessness as the pressure of these events came nearer and nearer to him. It was bad enough to feel himself under suspicion, and to have all his movements watched and restricted; but in that condition there had been a hope, which vanished with his arrest. Before it had come to this, Lady MacPherson had been compelled to share the shame and the anxiety. As long as it was possible the knowledge had been kept from her; but when officers of justice were in the house, and Cluny's arrest certain, Donald told her.

She sat speechless under the blow for a few minutes, hardly, indeed, realizing its importance. Then her first words, perhaps naturally enough, were a reproach. "If some means had been devised to keep Cluny in the army, this conspiracy against him would have been impossible." For

with the swiftness and keenness of lightning her mother-heart divined the truth. "The villain has absconded purposely to give Cluny this shame and trouble," she said; "he is hiding somewhere at this moment, perhaps rejoicing at the success of his scheme. If Cluny is taken to prison, I will go with him. Whatever the pain and wrong, I will share it." And when at last, one dreadful day, Cluny was taken to Gairmore and imprisoned, she insisted on going also.

To the active young man, accustomed to spend all his days on the hills or the sea, the very sense of confinement was a frightful circumstance. Any amount of bail would have been gladly furnished by Stuart and the neighboring lairds, but there was no bail for a charge of murder there. Cluny chafed like a young Libyan lion in his narrow cell, and not the tenderest love could do much for his condition. His mother and brother were only allowed access at short and stated periods, and though Stuart, as a minister, was more favored, Cluny was compelled to spend, alone and unsupported by human sympathy, by far the greater portion of his time.

But much as he suffered, it is doubtful if he suffered as Donald did. Religion with Cluny had become an actual, personal thing. In spite of his hours of rebellion and despair, he could very often

resign himself to the will of God. Donald's religion was more a calm intellectual assent, a reasonable service which he thoroughly approved and was glad to render. His class prejudices were much stronger than Cluny's; his pride in his position and family the ruling passion of his heart.

He would not see that in striking Monteith Cluny had done anything wrong. He approved the deed with all his heart, and positively refused to hear Stuart dissent from him. He was as sure of Cluny's innocence as of his own, and he resented the whole inquiry as a farce of justice got up by an intruding English element to mortify a class who were more willing to accept their gold than their company. In those days Donald was almost dangerous to approach. He was like some animal, wounded in its tenderest part, and chafing to find its persecutor.

At the first news of the disaster, David Maxwell had hastened to Tor, and claimed the right to defend his nephew; and Katherine would not be denied her right to comfort and stand by her lover. Her presence was a great help to Lady MacPherson. When Katherine threw herself at her knees in a passionate rain of tears and sobs, Lady MacPherson bowed her head over the girl and wept bitterly. Her grief had been before

dry-eyed and hopeless, and this gracious shower of sympathy probably saved her a severe illness.

Fortunately, Cluny's imprisonment was not long. The court opened in the beginning of October, and his trial was early on the list. While the morning was yet gray and chill, the MacPherson pipers were gathering the clan from every quarter. At eight o'clock the town was crowded with them. Cluny, in his cell, heard the wild notes of the MacPherson gathering and the tramp and stir that accompany an excited crowd. The flocks on the hills had been left with the dogs; the boats were all at anchor in the bay; the women had left their houses, the children their school; and every MacPherson not too old or too young to walk was on the street of Gairmore.

Fisher and shepherd alike had on their tartans, and as they stood in groups, dark-faced, and talking earnestly in the passionate cadences of their native Gaelic, their large, brown, hairy hands touched with frequent and emphatic rapidity the sheath of their national weapon. The Highland women, in all ages the companions of their husbands in any quarrel, mingled freely among them, stimulating their feelings with tender or scornful speeches. But neither men nor women felt the shame and wrong to Laird Cluny with half the burning sense of anger that was in



the hearts of the children. For Cluny had been especially good to them. If any had wanted a knife or a ball, a bat or a pair of skates, it was to Laird Cluny he went. If any little lass wanted a new kerchief, or a new ribbon for her snood, it was always Laird Cluny who found it out and got it for her. Which of the fishers had he not sailed with? And was there a shepherd on the hills whose oaten cake and milk he had not shared?

To all the men, women, and children of the clan, Cluny's wrong was their wrong, Cluny's cause their cause. As they stood talking thus, Donald passed among them, speaking in Gaelic to each group. There was some purpose in his eye and his step, which communicated itself like wild-fire to the clan. That morning he was every inch Donald, the eighteenth chief of the clan MacPherson. His tartans were of the finest wool and colors; the brooch that held his plaid was the gift of the second Stuart; the buckles on his shoes, the garters at his knee, the handle of his dirk, the clasp that held the eagle's feather in his cap were richly jewelled. Men and women watched him with a love and pride no words can adequately express to those who have no actual knowledge of the tie between a clan and its head or chief.

As the time drew near for the opening of the court, a large number of strangers appeared.

Every shooting box far and near contributed a party of a greater or less number. Their dress and speech, and their gay manners on such an occasion, were offensive to the natives of the soil, and stern, dark looks followed all their movements. The strangers, however, were very free with their opinions; they were sure that the Highlands would never be a safe residence for English sportsmen while these attachments to old customs and ties were permitted to exhibit themselves. It was a point of conscience with them on this occasion to see that law was not subjected to local influence. And as the little town had grown up by their patronage, it was not indifferent to their opinions. Many of the tradesmen, steamboat officials, and telegraph operators were Lowlanders, drawn thither by special circumstances, and dependent upon a continuance of those circumstances. The two interests and feelings were as distinct as the two races of men, and there was between them no element of toleration or fusion.

But even the English element felt a thrill of admiration and pity for the group of which Cluny was the prominent figure. He was pale and stern-looking, but dressed with the same splendor and care as his brother; and his great stature, noble carriage, and beautiful countenance made

him a most remarkable-looking prisoner. Donald was on one side of him, Stuart on the other. Stuart's wealth, family position, and sacred office were well known; he seemed to remember only that he was Cluny's friend. It was the pressure of his hand and the light and confidence on his face which seemed to say continually to Cluny, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." And every one, friend or foe, must have felt the anguish in Lady MacPherson's white face and the faithful love that beamed in the eyes of Katherine Maxwell.

The clan soon filled every available foot of ground inside the court, and massed themselves around it. When Cluny was ordered to stand up, he turned first of all to them and lifted his bonnet. A great sob, a sob that no man could repress, answered it, and Donald then turned to his kinsmen, and looked at them with glistening, grateful eyes.

David Maxwell's whole soul was in the case, and his pleading a masterpiece of legal skill and oratory. But there were several points which no oratory could clear up, the significance of which was that the evidence on them was drawn from Highlanders as reluctantly as if every word was an eye-tooth. Five different shepherds admitted they had heard Monteith's shrieks, and

that they occurred about the time Laird Cluny must have passed a given point. Janet was made to confess that on that night Laird Cluny had gone at once to his room on returning from Gairmore, and that such was not his usual practice. A white lawn cravat, edged with a peculiar lace, was found among his clothing twisted and torn, and was recognized as that worn by Cluny on that unfortunate night; and it was shown that he had given away the tartans he wore at the same time to his foster-brother, Roderick MacPherson. But the gravest testimony in favor of Monteith's murder against that of his flight, was the discovery in the gorge where Monteith had fallen of a handkerchief bearing his name, and lying not far from a stone bearing most unmistakable traces of blood—the stone on which Monteith had fallen. It was argued that if Monteith had fallen accidentally, his body would have remained there; or if discovered and buried, the reward offered, and the thorough search made through all neighboring clachans, must have produced intelligence of such an event.

On the contrary, Laird Cluny asserted that he also heard the cries, and answered them; but having no response to his inquiry supposed them to have been some signal among the shepherds. He admitted that it was unusual for him

to retire without seeing his mother and brother; but said in explanation that he was unusually late, and that Lady MacPherson was asleep. He did not go to his brother's room, because he did not wish to tell him of his quarrel with Monteith and spoil his night's rest. The cravat was asserted to have been torn by Monteith in his struggle with the prisoner for his whip; and the tartans given to Roderick MacPherson were produced and found without rent or stain. As for the discovery of Monteith's handkerchief near the bloody stone, the defence argued that it was impossible for Cluny to have been within five miles of that neighborhood, the time at which he left Gairmore and the time at which he reached Castle Tor having been proved beyond question.

To David Maxwell the circumstances were clear. He was certain that Monteith had been intending to reach the coast in order to leave the country, and not being familiar with the cliffs had fallen and been killed. He thought it likely the tide had carried away the corpse. The prosecution thought it just as likely the man had been murdered first, and the body flung down the lonely gorge afterwards.

There were many witnesses to examine, and the case occupied a whole week, the interest in it growing every hour. Some of these witnesses

were from Edinburgh, and their testimony revealed sufficient of Monteith's character to arouse a very thorough contempt for the man, even in the minds of those to whom he had been a stranger. Englishmen could appreciate the almost unpardonable injury and insult implied in deliberately mutilating the faces of a man's dead ancestry; and men glanced with respectful admiration at Katherine's lovely countenance, and said to each other that any lover must have felt such an outrage offered to his betrothed as beyond endurance.

They freely sympathized with Cluny for flogging such a contemptible scoundrel; but murder! murder was a different thing. The day had gone past for Highland chieftains to measure out their own justice; if not, strangers would not care to spend their holidays upon the Highland hills. Such sentiments had been freely canvassed in the town days before the trial. The jury were quite familiar with them and conscious of their moderation and wisdom. Happily for them, Scotch law has provided a sentence to meet and punish those unfortunates whose guilt is not clear, but who cannot prove their innocence. After a six days' trial they brought in a verdict against Cluny MacPherson of, "*Not proven.*"

David Maxwell had early in the trial divined the drift of feeling, and had tried to prepare all

for this sentence. But it fell like a blow upon every heart. Cluny gave a quick gasp, turned deathly pale, and sat down. Lady MacPherson rose up quivering with anger, and then fell helpless into Stuart's arms. There was a dangerous movement throughout the MacPherson clan, and strangers looked uneasily around; but an upward motion of Donald's hand quieted them, and they left the room in a sullen, orderly way. Cluny had drawn close to his mother, already feeling that unless Katherine made the advance to him the shameful sentence had parted them. In this extremity his mother's heart seemed the only one to trust.

But in a moment all cruel doubts were dispelled. Katherine, usually shy as a wild bird, now drew close to his side, took his cold hands in hers, and whispered the tenderest words of love and constancy and faith in him. Donald put his arm around his neck and kissed him, and Stuart said, "Here I am, Cluny; I am going home with you." David was to take charge of the ladies in the carriage; Donald and Cluny and Stuart were to walk home with the clan. It was a sombre march. The pipers had no heart to play a joyful strain, still less a "Lament." Donald seemed unconscious of the absence of the usual marching music, and gave no order for it.

When they reached Castle Tor he stood a moment and glanced down the long line of his kinsmen. "My brothers," he said, "I thank you for your sympathy. If I had needed your services this day, you would have stood by me, I know."

"We swear it."

Then Donald lifted his bonnet in adieu, and overcome by the emotions and excitement of the past week, turned to Stuart and grasped his hand with a passionate strength that revealed the mighty constraint he was putting upon himself.

"Do not shame to weep, Donald," said Stuart. "Let nature have her way."

Then Donald, with heaving breast, broke out, "Oh, the poor lad! The dear innocent lad! Such a shame for him! Such a sorrow! O Stuart, Stuart, I am heart-broken; let us go to him!"

"No, not yet. He wants no one with him now. Cluny is not deserted. It is impossible that God, when he bids men 'come up higher,' should not at the same time let fall some golden cable that they may cling to."

"It is impossible that this should be for Cluny's good."

"Wait and see. I am quite sure it will."



## CHAPTER X.

## A NEW DEPARTURE.

"I hold it truth with him who sings  
To one clear harp in divers tones,  
That men may rise on stepping-stones  
Of their dead selves to higher things."

"Our times are in His hand  
Who saith, 'A whole I planned;'  
Youth shows but half; trust God:  
See all, nor be afraid."

It was not during the first days that Cluny suffered most. There was then a kind of exaltation and sympathy in his misfortune which helped him to bear it. The sacrifice demanded was not one of those supreme renunciations in which the first pang is the greatest. His trial was a harder one than this. Sorrow, like a calm tide, rose slowly, but it kept rising. There was little he could do for others, little for himself. The trouble he had borne was telling upon his courage and energy. As weeks went on, perhaps it wore away the freshness of sympathy. Who but God can give and give, and never weary? The best affection has its seasons of weariness. Cluny saw that a sigh could give Donald and his mother pain, and he learned to be silent. Concentrated

sorrow soon turns to bitterness, and then an excited sensibility affects the temper.

David Maxwell had wished him to return to Edinburgh with him and study law. But one idea possessed Cluny: he believed that Monteith had fallen down some precipice, or else in an opium hallucination wandered far out of the usual routes and got lost, perishing from hunger or from some accident. Accompanied by his foster-brother he spent nearly six weeks in an unavailing search for some trace of the missing man. Then the snow came, and further search was useless. All his old habits had gradually been abandoned, and Stuart saw with grief and anxiety the growth of a solitary and sad spirit.

One day, a bleak one in early December, he saw him pass the manse window. He seemed too lost in thought and dejection to have any purpose before him, and had evidently reached that state which is worse than the keenest pangs of misfortune—the passive state of a subjugated heart. Stuart went to the door and called him. He came back with a sad smile, the mere shadow of the old joyous one.

“Cluny, sit down with me. You are not going away from my heart. Now you must have satisfied yourself that Monteith, either dead or alive, is not in this locality.”

"Yes, I think I have."

"What are you going to do?"

"What can I do, unless it be to study law with Uncle David? Is there any regiment that would accept an officer with the suspicion of murder on his name? any business man that would have me for a partner? I am a constant grief to mother and to Donald; they can only look at me with tears. If I meet any of my neighbors, they are too shy or too friendly. A constraint hampers the very clansmen, who, I know, love me honestly. The proper thing is said on both sides, but there is no more speaking as the heart prompts. I am so unhappy, Stuart, so unhappy!"

"You believe that I love you?"

"I know you do."

"Then listen. You feel that you can do nothing until this shameful stain is removed from your name?"

"That is what I am sure of."

"Go to Benares. Monteith's connections live there. Is it not probable that he has gone to them, especially when you consider what a slave he had become to opium?"

"Why did I never think of that before? Or you?"

"I have often thought of it; but it was as well for you to satisfy yourself with regard to this

place. Also I wanted you near me until I was sure you had conquered your sorrow. I see now that it is best for you to go away."

"But I cannot go; I have no money."

"I have plenty; it is all the same. Now sit down and let us calculate what you will need, and arrange your route and plans."

In three hours Cluny was another man. Everything seemed clear and possible. Stuart was one of those bright souls who have no discouraging words. "I shall expect wonderful things from you, Cluny," he said cheerfully. "It is the man who has known the grasp of grief who feels the wakening of an inward power."

"O Stuart, there are sorrows I could have borne, and waxed greater through them. But this thing that happened to me was as if my antagonist had taken some vulgar tool to torture, instead of a sword to wound me. At first my sorrow had a magnitude which put to flight all petty griefs. It was like a clean flesh wound. It made me shudder, but did not make me feel contemptible. But in a little while the festering stage came—small annoyances, vexatious stings, miserable, mean humiliations."

"Jesus delights to walk in these desolated places. He must have passed near you. Why did you not cry to him? Take him by the hem

of the garment; only whisper, 'Son of David, have mercy on me!'"

"Why have you not spoken to me before?"

"I have been watching you. There are hours when an angel's word would bruise the heart, when only the Comforter is sufficient."

"O Stuart! I have been so weak and faithless; you do n't know all."

"Tell me. I can never despair of a soul that is wretched. The souls that appall are the souls which are at ease."

"I have asked myself if God really loves me, or cares whether I do right or wrong. When I was compelled to give up my commission, I accepted the punishment as bravely as I could. I was looking forward to redeeming my idle and foolish past; and then came blow upon blow. How can I believe these things are for the best? A little happiness would have made me love God. He refuses me it. Others are happy, why should I be one of God's disinherited children?"

"'I,' Cluny. This constant dwelling upon 'I' is like a short chain that fastens us to the earth. We turn round and round upon our pivot, and the soil beaten hard by our footsteps ceases to be fertile. In the same way our heart grows dry and miserable. Remove your centre, Cluny; carry your glances farther and higher; love wide-

ly and strongly, and you will breathe an air so fresh that it will restore you to happiness.”

“If I could believe, I could love. I will tell you all the truth. Sometimes I have made one of those mighty efforts which it seemed must reach the heart of God. There has been no response. If God heard, he did not care. Then I have said hopelessly, ‘Let Him who made my soul be concerned for it.’ I have no longer power to weep. Why should I pray? He crushes me, and I will let myself be crushed. There is no longer any resistance, and there is no longer any heart. If God had been my Father, he would at least have let me weep at his feet and given me one word of comfort. I could not feel like a corrected child; I was more like a beaten slave.”

“My dear, dear Cluny.”

“And that has not been the worst. I have walked the hills day after day when my suffering caused me a shuddering impatience and indignation. I knew well it was rebellion against God. I prayed indeed, but my prayers were an imperious question. I asked Him by what right he afflicted me thus. I declared to him that these extreme griefs would do me no good, and that each fresh disappointment sunk me lower. I said, ‘God is not love; he has no pity; I cannot love him;’ and my heart grew hard as flint.”

Stuart stretched out his hand and grasped Cluny's; his eyes were full of tears, and his fixed attention seemed to ask a still fuller confidence. In a lower, sadder voice Cluny proceeded.

"Then came questions from all directions. If, after all, there was no God! If blind forces impelled by chance controlled this world! If the heavens were empty! If prayer was useless! If Jesus were not come! If the Word of God were a lie! Satan pointed out to me that God had not sent me the help I asked for, that he had not subdued the sin I prayed against, that he was quite indifferent even about the doubts which dishonored him."

"O Cluny, Cluny, if you could feel thus towards God, no wonder your heart grew doubtful and cold towards your earthly friends."

"Ah, Stuart, now you touch the sore very keenly. I know that I have become a great trial to every one that loves me. I tell and retell my trouble. I weary the kindest ears. The love that could pardon and bear with my faults gets worn out with my lamentations. I feared even your friendship."

"I will answer your last complaint first, Cluny. Human love will give way before its own incapacity. So long as love can help or soothe, it willingly listens, because doing kind-

ness stimulates it. But if sympathy is useless, if it finds us every morning just as it leaves us every night, its spring gets exhausted, and yet our thirst is as great as ever. Love can no more maintain its life in a state of impotence than a flame can burn in a vacuum."

"Then what is there for the unhappy?"

"Christ Jesus, and all the secrets of his boundless patience. Go to him every hour, and you will find that his consolations are not small. It is not to the unhappy that Jesus forbids 'repetitions.' Importune him without fear; tell him all; go, and go again. All day long he is moved with compassion. 'And he had compassion upon them.' Keep that one text in your heart."

"If I could! If I could!"

"See now, Cluny, how dangerous it is to play with sin. When you were gay and prosperous, you tampered with doubt as an agreeable mental exercise, calling the many-sidedness of intellect into play. You let your soul oscillate on a wave now dark and now luminous, and found in the indecision something alluring; besides it looked clever."

"I acknowledge it."

"Guarded as you were by education and habit, these doubts traversed your soul like lightning flashes, burning and destroying before them."



“I think I always loved God and truth. It was the mysteries of our faith that exercised me, Stuart.”

“If there are mysteries in faith, there are far more mysteries in doubt. Through faith you can touch and possess; but while you doubt, even your own thoughts efface themselves as you draw close to them. Inconceivable horizons retreat before the doubting soul. The eyes of the mind are like the eyes of the body; they can see only a certain distance. But because you cannot see beyond that point, is there therefore nothing beyond it? The doubts you played with in prosperity became your tyrants in the hour of your trial. They came on then in dire earnest, smiting the very fibre of belief. I can see them standing amid the ruin they have made, rejoicing in the great silences of your despair or in the bitter reproaches of your rebellion.”

“But I am horrified at my rebellion, and my doubts have been the last stroke to my misery. What shall I do?”

“Throw yourself on your knees, and ask for faith. I love you dearly, but I cannot give you light. The Infinite is veiled from me as much as from you. I might reason with you, but *reason is not light!* To address yourself to your own mind is to turn in a weary circle. Go at once to God.

Who but God can help you to find God? He may slay you, but die at his feet, clinging to that cross which is the sceptre of his love. I am not ignoring the perplexing events by which you are surrounded; but the soul was not made to be governed by events, but to govern them."

"And to suffer under them."

"Yes, sorrow that led us to lethargy would have missed its end."

"But who can understand this necessity? Oh, why, why does God afflict so sorely?"

"Why? Thank God, Cluny, that is the question that he wants from us. It is a movement of the soul towards him. The tree struck by the axe receives the blow in apathy; the animal struck by a brutal hand does not ask, 'Why?' But man offended by his brother man walks straight to him and puts the question; and the soul that God has smitten, if it lives, springs to his feet and cries out, 'Why?' "

"I have been asking it, Stuart, and have had no answer."

"Ah, but you have been asking it as a protestation. You have been saying, 'What have I done to Thee?' Your question was a defiance and a complaint. That was the 'why' of your rebellion. In your despairing moments it was hardly shaped before it became a reproach—not a

prayer. If in these hours God had answered you, you would not have listened to him."

"How must I seek it then?"

"To the broken heart God makes himself very gentle. Cling to the Father's hand, even while he smites you; and lovingly, loyally, with an earnest wish to know the truth, ask him 'Why?' and the rod will blossom, and the cross will bear its inscription."

The next moment the two men were on their knees together. Stuart's face was lifted in a rapture of joy and confidence, Cluny's wet with tears. Softly the gentle, holy words of contrition and entreaty fell upon the silence. Angels never saw a fairer sight. Childhood is beautiful at the feet of the Father, age when it bows before him. But, oh, the beauty of the sons of God bending lowly in all the glory of their manhood's strength and grace! The young dominie in the grave garments of his holy office, the young chief in the plaided dress of a thousand warlike and heroic traditions; both forgetful of everything but that they were in the presence of their God and Father. It was a sight nobler and fairer than court or camp can show.

And from that holy audience-chamber Cluny went forth a different man. Up the hill he strode with his old swinging step. Donald saw the



CLUNY MACPHERSON.



bright smile on his face, and went out to meet him. His mother called him to her, and made him stoop and kiss her.

“You look like my Cluny this morning,” she said happily. “Where have you been?”

Then Cluny told them of Stuart’s proposal; and they were not sorry to hear of it. Stuart came to the castle in the afternoon and had a conversation with Donald and Lady MacPherson on the plan. All objections were overruled, and it was decided that he should leave at once. In the way of preparation there was not much to do at Castle Tor, and the leave-taking was a hopeful one. It was easier to see Cluny going away to India, full of a new energy, than to see him wandering about Laggan and Tor, gloomy and wretched.

The night before he left Stuart put his check-book in Cluny’s hand. “It is impossible,” he said, “to calculate your needs. Draw on me for what you require.”

“But, Stuart, what security can—”

“I will take none but your honor. That is quite sufficient;” and with a smile he threw his arm across Cluny’s shoulder. But Stuart knew that in that very trust he had bound Cluny MacPherson by a bond stronger than law or gold could forge.

His week in Edinburgh was like a breath of his old innocent childhood. He spent most of it in Katherine's company. The beautiful girl had become a grand and beautiful woman, chastened by trial, and sweetened also. All traces of regret, all shame in her humbled condition were long since passed. She had made her small home so pretty and comfortable that even her stately loveliness did not look incongruous in it. And she accepted Cluny's absence with a hopeful heart. She would not hear of being absolved from her troth; she told him, with a face radiant with love, that waiting for him was sweeter than being the wife of any other man. She filled him with hope and enthusiasm, and promised to wait, though she should wait all her life.

David also showed a tenderness to this youth that he had never shown to any one before, no, not even to Katherine. He had forgiven all his follies; he had taken Donald's view of his quarrel with Monteith.

"He represented the whole Clan MacPherson at that hour," Donald had said to his uncle; "he stood, too, as the avenger of the insult offered to Katherine Maxwell and her forebears, and he did right to punish the insulter. If he had not, the oldest crone in the clachan would have despised him."

And David in his heart thought as Donald did, though to Cluny's face he spoke more cautiously. "For there's little need," he thought, "to gie any encouragement to a Highlandman about fighting; it's second nature to him."

He believed Stuart's suggestion to be a very likely one, and prepared the necessary papers enabling Cluny to secure his arrest if he should come across the rascal. "I'm wanting him myself," said David dourly; "there's twa or three things I'll mak him clear up afore 'the Lords,' and I'm thinking they'll send him o'er the seas again for them."

"He was a thief."

"Ay, was he; sae great a thief that he would hae stole the Commandments."

David had rarely taken an hour's holiday since his failure; but he determined to go with Cluny to Liverpool and see him sail. Hardly anything could have so plainly indicated his love for his nephew. And as they stood together at the last hour leaning over the railing of the East India-man, David opened up his heart in a singularly kind way to the young man, even venturing, for Cluny's sake, to speak far more plainly of his affairs than he had ever done to any other person.

"Ye'll keep a good heart, Cluny MacPherson; I dinna think things are going sae bad wi'



ye as maybe ye fancy they are. When ye get into the wide warld ye'll find it a warld too wide; sae as soon as ye can mak it up wi your heart, come awa hame again. I'm no a poor man now, Cluny, and I'm like to be richer;" then fearful of having said too much, "that is, I'm no as poor as I was, and if ye dinna hurry back vera soon, we'll maybe gie ye a welcome in the auld hame."

"I hope so, for your sake, uncle."

"Ay, laddie, I had my folly, and I hae paid for it. It is a gude thing to bear the yoke in your youth, for it galls bitterly when your head is turning gray. I'm looking for great things yet from you, Cluny, only ye'll be to find some wark to do. Life without wark is like a body without banes; ye canna hold it up."

"I hope to do something yet, uncle."

"Hope is an auld gypsy, Cluny, for ever prophesying; never heed her; stick to Duty, and take a gude grip o' her hand. And dinna ye do anything while ye're in a passion; it's like putting to sea in a tempest."

"I seem to have made a poor thing of life yet, Uncle David; but if God could make the world out of nothing, he can make a success yet out of my failures."

"Bode good, and ye'll get it; naebody kens where a blessing may light. And about Monteith

mind this: be cannie; keep your ain counsel about it; the deil's a busy bishop in his ain diocese; and folks ye never sent might carry news. We lawyers ken that the day has eyes, and the night ears;" then taking a letter from his pocket-book, he said, "I did a gude turn once for Sandy MacLaurin. His brother is now in Benares. He's got to the top o' the tree; but the MacPhersons might ca' the king their brother and no be thinking o'er much o' themselves. Sae here's a letter that will mak ye known to him, and I counsel ye only to visit among your ain kind. Keep gude company, and ye'll be counted ane o' them. Have you thought o' what ye'll do to mak an honest penny? MacLaurin will dootless offer ye a clerkship, and I'd tak it; thae Indian clerkships hae some opportunities."

"A clerkship! I have no taste for that. I am a born soldier; all my genius lies that way."

"Perfect nonsense, Cluny; people arena born wi' a particular genius for particular employments. It would be like saying a man could see a long way east, and couldna see west. It's just gude sense and diligence applied to opportunity that maks specialty. Tak the first opening that comes. And whate'er ye do, be shy o' making acquaintances. Gude men are thinly sown, and ye canna hope to find them like blackberries in

season; and bad men are like a bit o' charcoal; if they dinna burn ye, they blacken ye."

"Uncle, I want to speak to you about Katherine; she has acted to me like an angel—"

"Ay, ay, some women are but a little lower than the angels; but we'll say nothing o' Katherine. She loves ye weel, Cluny, and sae do I, and we sall both o' us weary for ye back again. Katherine will be weel cared for in her father's house till ye get a house for her. For her sake and for my sake tak care o' yoursel'; a man that is ill to himsel' will be good to nae ither body. You'll hae money to do your turn?" asked David cautiously.

"Yes."

"If ye should need a few pounds for any lawfu' expense, I'll no grudge them, though I'm a struggling man yet, a struggling man, Cluny. But there's naething like living within the rim o' the shilling. There's the last bell, my dear, dear lad. God bless ye. God Almighty keep ye safe frae sin and danger;" and with the tears welling up in his shrewd gray eyes, he bared his head as a last farewell to his nephew and passed out of sight.

## CHAPTER XI.

## THE COMMUNION SERVICE.

“Come when the weird, untutored psalm is borne,  
Far-resonant, o'er the purple-breasted hills,  
Stirring strong hearts and bending stoutest wills  
As the September breeze the full-eared corn,  
Sing thou; and with the plaided people here,  
If art be far, feel God and nature near.”

RICHARD TALBOT.

GOD has appointed time to console all sorrows. Many strange messengers of grief and trial had come to Castle Tor during the lapse of five years. But the five years of trouble were followed by five years of placid and pleasant existence. After Cluny's departure for India all breathed freer. Every one had taken in fresh hope about his future. India was still a land of romance and splendid mystery, a land from which impossibilities might be expected.

Lady MacPherson settled back into her serene and happy routine; and Donald, coming in from the village or hills, found it a real joy to meet her with a happy face again, a face free from anxious lines and heavy eyes. She had her needle, her books, her flowers, her consultations with Janet,

her charities among her poor kinsfolk, and her religious duties; these filled her life and made it a blessing.

Cluny's letters soon began to reveal a return of his old activity and enthusiasm. He had been exceptionally fortunate. The letter given him by David Maxwell had been better than gold. Judge MacLaurin received Cluny with great kindness. "I'm frae the braes o' Angus, mysel'," he said, falling quite naturally into the dear patois, "and it will be an ill day when Highlanders dinna stand shoulder to shoulder." Few people could resist the influence of Cluny's bright face and engaging manners, and MacLaurin had not lost among Asian autocracies his respect for his own feudal authorities. A MacPherson, even in an Indian city, was a MacPherson, and to be treated with due consideration.

This favorable first impression was strengthened by one of those apparently trivial incidents upon which lives turn. A partial acquaintance of MacLaurin's, an entire stranger to Cluny, wishing to please the judge, from whom he expected some favor, said to him, "I saw you with your son yesterday, judge, an extraordinarily handsome young man, and very like you." MacLaurin had no son, but he was pleased with the supposed resemblance and the subtle personal

compliment. He made Cluny his private secretary, and found a singular delight in his society.

In the long sultry nights, as they sat together under the dark, rich foliage of the peopul-trees, they talked of the cloud-capped mountains and misty corries of Ross; and ere many weeks had passed the young man had told his new friend all the strange trouble that had befallen him, and received a wise and hearty sympathy and coöperation. Monteith's relatives were easily found, and through the judge's emissaries cautious inquiries were made for him. But no information could be procured. One of his cousins showed a letter from him, but it was dated a month anterior to the quarrel. Cluny was advised to take no steps in the matter. Judge MacLaurin voluntarily undertook the search, and entered into it with a zeal that showed how heartily he had espoused his protégé's cause.

Every month Cluny's letters were more hopeful and bright, and at the end of the second year he had repaid all that Donald had advanced in his behalf. He had peculiarly fine opportunities for making money, and he was not only making it, but saving it. "Nae better sign for a young man," said David Maxwell, "for it shows that he is practising self-denial, and that's a grand virtue for a foundation." Having paid his debts,

Cluny wisely left the future "o'ercome" in MacLaurin's hands, who invested it for him with an astuteness born of great natural shrewdness and large experience.

That his letters contained no news of Monteith soon ceased to be a regret; our sorrows, as well as our dead, are best buried out of our sight. Cluny's happiness and prosperity were sufficient, and Donald's face lost its sombre, anxious look; he began to trust, as Stuart bade him, that God would show forth Cluny's innocency in his own good time. And soon other interests varied and beautified his life. He fell in love and married. This change was brought about in the most unforeseen but the most natural manner.

One morning Stuart came up to the castle in all the glow and enthusiasm of a new project. "MacPherson," he said, "I want you to give me three acres of the land at the edge of Inver Glen."

"Why?"

"I am going to build a new kirk. You shall give the land; I will build the kirk."

Donald took the matter much more coolly.

"Why should we build another kirk? The one we have is large enough."

"But it would not be if it was at Inver Glen. The shepherds and fishers could both reach it.

The present one is too far away for the shepherds. At many seasons of the year they cannot leave their flocks a sufficient length of time. At Inver the kirk would suit all, and my steady congregation will be a third larger."

It was impossible not to catch fire from Stuart when his heart was set on a good object, and Donald and Lady MacPherson soon entered heartily into the project. Then Stuart determined to go to Edinburgh for a plan and for a skilled man to superintend the work; and Donald having business there also, they agreed to travel together. They had a pleasant visit, and on their return went out of the way to call upon Stuart's family. When they entered the house a beautiful girl ran to meet Stuart, full of joy and affection, and Stuart proudly presented her to Donald as his "little sister."

Little she was, but Burns' "bonnie wee thing" was not fairer and sweeter—a fairy-like being, half child and half woman, with a child's pure heart and innocent frankness. It was this more than her sparkling eyes and loose-flowing golden hair, that conquered Donald—for conquered he was, and in the first hour of his acquaintance with her. And Jessy Stuart found the handsome young chief just as attractive. In less than a year Donald brought home his bride.



To every one the marriage gave great satisfaction. Stuart acknowledged after it that he had in this very hope introduced Donald to his sister; and Donald felt the compliment with all his heart, and his happy face acknowledged it in the way Stuart loved best of all. Lady MacPherson took her daughter to her heart without reserve; and even Janet, when she knew that the marriage was finally settled, gave a grumbling assent.

“She comes o’ a gude kind, and she’s no bad-looking and no bad-minded; and MacPherson might hae done worse, and she’ll maybe hae the bit siller?” and Janet looked inquisitively at her mistress.

“She has £15,000, Janet.”

“Ay, weel, she’ll do—wi’ that.”

One wedding in a family generally brings another; and Donald’s was followed by one which took everybody by surprise. About three months after it, Janet came into Lady MacPherson’s room, exhibiting a singular uncertainty of manner.

“What is the matter, Janet? Are you sick?”

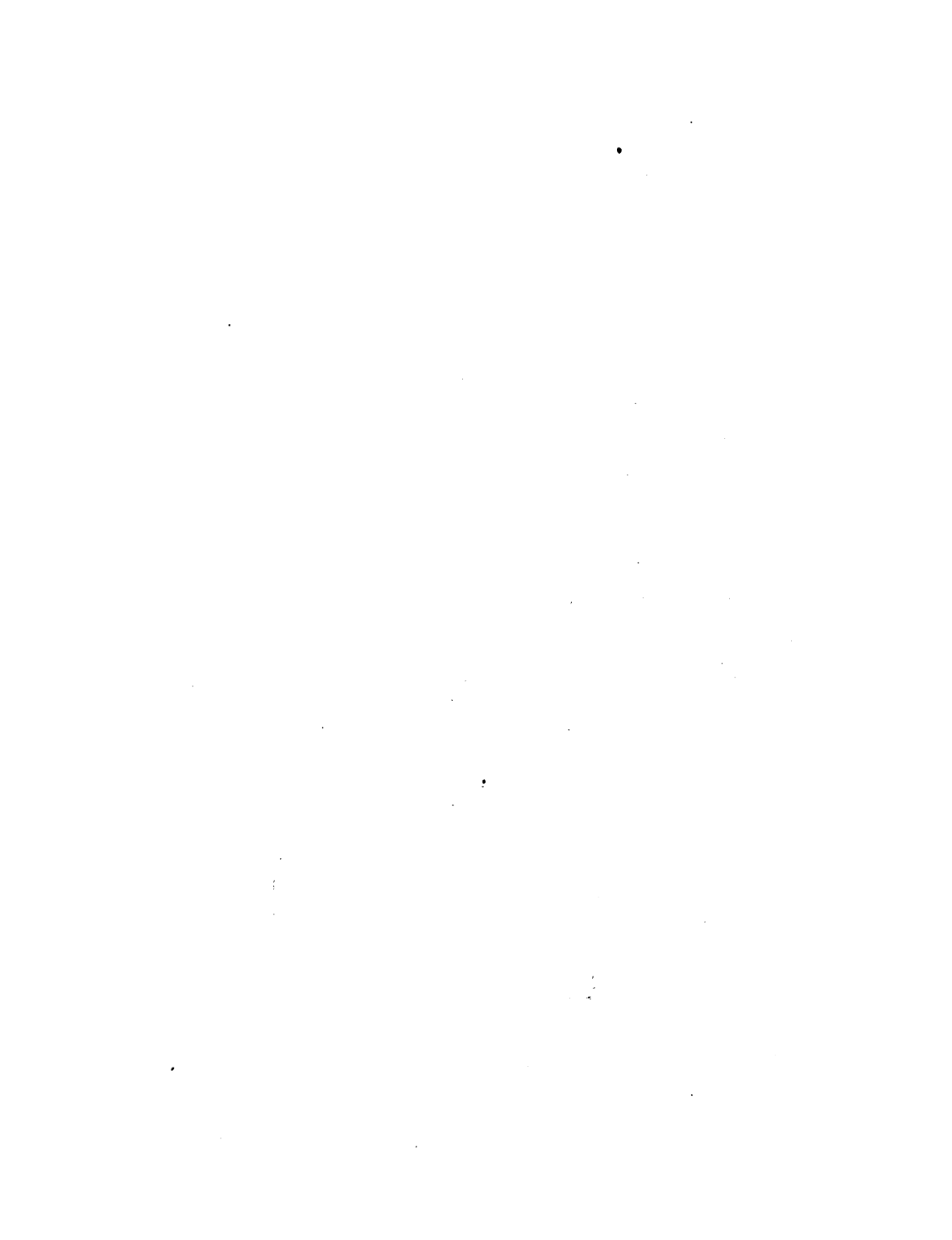
“’Deed, my lady, I’ve a sickness I willna win over, I’m thinking. I got married yestreen.”

“Janet! Are you crazy?”



"I GOT MARRIED YESTREEN."

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“Nae wonder ye ask me that, my lady. I dinna ken what cam o'er me, but Adam—”

“Adam?”

“Ay, it's just Adam. I'd got that used to making his supper o' a night, and haeing a bit crack o'er things wi' him, that I couldna thole the notion o' him going awa. He's a wonderfu' entertaining man, my lady.”

“I know that, Janet. But where was he going?”

“‘Ony gate,’ he said, if I didna wed wi' him; and sae we just walked our ways to the dominie and he tied him fast to me. He'll na rin awa noo, I'm thinking.”

“But I can't understand what you married him for, Janet.”

“No, my lady, few folk hae sense enough to understand the whys and the wherefores o' a wedding. Howsomever I had his supper to mak and his claithes to mend, and he doing naething for me. Now that he's my man I can mak him do many a hand's turn for me. Giff-gaff maks friends, and keeps them too.”

“Well, Janet, here is £5 towards your plenishing. MacPherson no doubt will give you the cottage at the end of the garden; it is really Adam's right, only he preferred his little cleft in the rocks.”

“He ’ll hae to leave it now, my lady.”

“Do you think he will?”

“Do I think sae? I ken weel he ’ll hae to do what Janet MacPherson bids him do;” and Lady MacPherson smiled and thought it very likely.

She watched for Adam, but got no sight of him for three days. At the end of that time the cottage in the garden was tenanted. When my lady passed it, Adam was mending a broken pane of glass. He bowed dourly, and with an extreme attention devoted himself to his work.

“I’m glad to hear you have at last got you a good wife, Adam. A good wife is from the Lord.”

“Everything comes that way, my lady, baith blessings and trials. I’m no able to say yet which is ordained for Adam MacPherson.”

“I see you are mending the cottage.”

“Ay, ay, it will be this wanted, and that to get, nae doot, a’ the time. A man canna wive and thrive in the same year.”

“I never thought that any one could make you leave the hills, Adam.”

“I’m no the first Adam beguiled out o’ his Eden by a woman, my lady; and sae lang as the world lasts I’ll hae plenty o’ good company.”

Here a clear, authoritative voice called,

“Adam!” Adam went on with his work, but in an irresolute fashion.

“Adam!”

“I’m just here, Janet.”

“Then gae your ways down to the village, and tell Dugald to hurry up here wi’ the mutton for dinner. Dinna let the grass grow under yer feet, for ony sake.”

“You had better go, I think, Adam,” said Lady MacPherson slyly; and Adam dropped his tool and went doucely down the hill.

But if Adam learned gradually to submit himself in domestic matters to a stronger will, he revenged himself by an increase of positivism on all outside affairs. He was an especially strong dissenter on the subject of Stuart’s new kirk. The pretty building, with its tapering spire pointing heavenward like a silent finger, reminded him of popery. The painted windows and ornamental stone-work grieved his very soul, and the comfortably-cushioned seats he regarded as a sinful luxury. He “expected nae ither thing less after them but a kistfu’ o’ whistles.”

Stuart had frequently grieved him before by what Adam considered a general relaxation in the strictness of Calvinistic faith and practice.

“Whirligigums on the stane-wark, and carvings on the wood-wark, and windows that turn

the vera sunlight into a' kinds o' colors, no to speak o' the cushioning and the precentor! It is a' a sinfu' waste o' money," he declared plainly to Stuart.

"But," said Stuart, smiling good-naturedly, "it was my own money, Adam, and it was lying in the bank doing no good to any one."

"Ye should hae gien it to the poor, domine."

"That is just what the disciples said when the box of precious ointment was broken over the Saviour's feet. O Adam, Adam! after eighteen hundred years' experience of His love, is there anything too beautiful or too rich to offer him?"

"I'm no grudging Christ anything, sir. I'd lay down my life gladly at his wish. But I am vera jealous for the purity o' the faith; and I dinna approve o' things that are sort o' mixed up wi' popery."

"Is popery, then, to have all the beautiful things? Do you really have so little faith in the creed of John Knox as to believe that a bit of carved stone or painted glass can weaken it?"

"I believe that the creed o' John Knox will stand while the warld stands; every gude Scot's heart is the ark o' its covenant. I'm no feared for onything founded on the Ward o' God, domine."

“ You ’ll remember, Adam, about Solomon’s temple.”

“ Ay, ay, I ken everything about it, dominie.”

“ You do n’t object to its splendor?”

“ What for would I? There was nae pope in those days.”

“ But there were Baal and Ashtoreth and Dagon, and heathen gods without number. God preserved his worship pure amid the splendors of the first and second temples. Is Protestantism weaker than Judaism? Is God weaker? In our days, pope and pagan are two giants very weak in their knees. You will have read that picture of them by John Bunyan?”

“ Na, na; I hae done naught o’ the kind, dominie. I dinna approve o’ John Bunyan. He’s a red-hot Arminian, and he’ll sort weel wi’ thae half-and-half Episcopalians; I just stick to my Bible and the Westminster divines.”

“ But you will come to the new kirk, Adam? I have set my heart on your coming; and a married man ought to go with his wife to kirk, and set a good example. And I tell you frankly, Adam, that I shall think you are neglecting your plain duty, if you stay from the worship of God because that duty does not meet your prejudices.”

“ If ye put it in that way, dominie, I’ll hae to come.”



“I am glad to hear it. I believe you will soon enjoy the change.”

“You’ve a wise tongue, dominie; you’ve won clean round me. But I’m no blind; I ken every step ye hae taen.”

“I am glad you do, Adam. I would not care for a convert to any opinion who did not. For the future, we shall work together, eh?”

“I’ll no wark again ye, dominie. There’s my hand on the promise.”

Stuart was particularly glad of this reconciliation because the May sacramental occasion was at hand—the high day and great day of every Highland heart. This year it was to be held upon the hills around Tor and Laggan; and the castle was already prepared for the great company of ministers that was expected. These holy convocations bring together immense gatherings of people, and occupy five days. Stuart’s conversation with Adam had occurred on Monday; the following Thursday was the first day of the meeting, and was kept as a universal fast. All throughout it the people were arriving in boatloads, and joining the prayer-meetings upon the hills.

“Lo, the folk in streams are flowing,  
Both from near and far, enticed  
By old wont and reverent feeling,

Here to keep the hallowed tryst,  
This calm sacramental Sabbath  
Far among the hills with Christ.

“Dwellers on this side the country  
Take the shore-road near their doors.  
Poor blue-coated fishers, plaided  
Crofters from the glens and moors,  
Fathers, mothers, sons, and daughters  
Thither trooping, threes and fours.

“You might see on old white horses  
Aged farmers slowly ride,  
With their wives behind them seated,  
And the collie by their side ;  
While the young folk follow after,  
Son and daughter, groom and bride.

“There a boat or two is coming,  
From lone isle or headland o'er ;  
Many more, each following other,  
Slowly pull along the shore,  
Fore and aft to gunwale freighted  
With the old, the weak, the poor,

“The bowed down, the lame, the palsied,  
Those with panting breast oppressed,  
Widows poor, in mutch and tartan  
Cloak, for one day lent them, dressed,  
And the young and ruddy mother,  
With the bairmie at her breast.

“Sends each glen and hidden corry,  
As they pass, its little traîn,  
To increase the throng that thickens  
Kirkward—here to keep the hallowed tryst,  
This calm sacramental Sabbath,  
Far among the hills with Christ.” \*

\* From “Kilmahor ; a Highland Pastoral,” by Rev. Principal Shairp.

But the most remarkable of all the worshippers were a group of those evangelists distinctively attached to the Highland church, and called "The Men." For before that grand procession of the five hundred, with Dr. Chalmers at their head, walked out that glorious day in May, 1843, to sow Scotland broadcast with free kirks, many Highland parishes were so large as to be beyond the power of any minister to oversee. Then there arose a body of catechists, employed by earnest ministers, and sometimes self-constituted, to supply the spiritual wants of these districts.

They were in all cases serious Highland peasants, deeply read in the Scriptures, and often possessed of a natural oratory. It is true that, being without regular education, they were often contracted in their ideas and singular in their dress and expression; but they had extraordinary earnestness, great power of will, remarkable sagacity, and were well able to enter into all the sorrows and trials of the people, for they had borne the same crosses and drank of the same cup. Many of them had great spiritual influence, but they remained peasants, working at their daily labor, and cheerfully subordinate to their minister.

They were distinguished by a uniform dress, not prescribed, but adopted by general consent—

a long black camlet cloak, and a handkerchief bound around the head.

Before the end of the fast day there were at least a dozen of these lay teachers among the groups on the hills, but everywhere people were inquiring for Kean Donachy, and many an eye looked eagerly over the Minch northward to watch for any boat that might bring their favorite speaker. He landed during the first night, and Friday being "the day of the questions," every heart was full of holy gratification.

Early in the morning at least a thousand people were gathered on the natural slope of a hill in a semicircular shape, covered with bright green turf, dotted here and there with tufts of juniper-bushes and bleached granite boulders. It was capable of holding a congregation of from three to four thousand worshippers. To the left were the shimmering waters of the Minch, and northward and eastward rose mountains and mountains, overtopping each other until they were lost in the mystery of clouds and distance.

Stuart, standing with bare head and uplifted hands, opened the meeting with prayer and a Psalm. Then any one was at liberty to rise and propose a question of practical concern to which he would like to hear an edifying answer. The first questioner was Adam, who wished to ask,

from 1 Peter 2 : 9, with what significance Christians could be called a royal priesthood, when priesthood was a heathenish and Jewish institution, and there were no priests in Protestant churches. One layman after another stood up and gave his solution of the question, the speakers generally being "The Men." Then Stuart summed up the discussion and made such remarks by way of correction or application as he thought right and fitting.

In all the questions asked that Friday Kean Donachy took no part; but in the evening, when the gloaming gathered over the hills, and the May moon, full and brilliant, rose, he took the place Stuart had filled all day and poured out his soul in a fervid sermon in Gaelic. He had a grand Hebridean face, dark and swarthy, with peculiarly luminous eyes, and the exalted expression of a prophet. Stuart, weary with his day's labor, but still lingering among his people, looked at him and thought of Elijah the Tishbite and of John crying in the wilderness.

After the sermon he referred to one of "the questions" of the day—whether there is reasonable hope of salvation upon the death-bed. Kean declared solemnly that he believed the sinner dying has no honest thought of contrition; that, like the people of Sodom, he has only time for

terror and for a fearful looking-for of judgment, for infinite despair and all the images of that hour of desolation; and he deprecated that careless throwing of salvation upon the infinite goodness of God as unthinking and unscriptural. Then he began the history of a death-bed which he had witnessed, and almost at the first sentence Stuart divined what was coming, and drew close to the speaker, listening with speechless amazement and a throbbing heart.

It was a terrible story, especially when told in the highly-imaginative Gaelic tongue. Its tones sobbed and sighed like great winds imprisoned in mountain caves; he wept and wrung his hands, and the whole people wept with him. He plunged them into the terror of the dying man's despair, and lifted them, singing, to their feet in the joy of their own redemption. Stuart could not move, but with his head in his hands, listening and praying, he waited till the service was over.

Then he went to Kean. "Kean Donachy, you must come with me now. You have glorious tidings to carry to MacPherson. He has been seeking even in India the news you have brought to his door. Never did God send a more welcome messenger."

MacPherson was in the court, leaning over the western wall and watching the moonlight upon the waters of the Minch. He turned with a grave

smile and gave Donachy his hand. "See, Stuart, what a beautiful path the moonlight makes across the water!"

"And, MacPherson, 'how beautiful are the feet of those who bring good tidings!' Across that path has come to you this night the news of Cluny's innocence and of Cluny's justification."

Then the three men went silently to Donald's private room, and Donald locked the door. "You had better ask the questions, Stuart, and I will write down the statement as it is made. Then we can attest it at once."

"It will be five years ago on the third day of the last September, and I wass coming up from Loch Torridon, and Hector and John MacMurshov, they wass with me; and Hector Reay, he wass with me. And it wass ferry early in the morning that I did hear the cry of some one that wass in a great agony. And I did land, and I did search among the rocks until I fount a young man, and he had fallen from the cliff apove him. And he wass sair hurt, and we did lift him in our plaids and take him with us to Torsag in the Lewis; yes, we did take him to Torsag."

"What was the man like, Kean?"

"He wass a young man, and he did hef eyes like to an efil spirit; black they were and glowering; and tark wass he, and his clothes were like

the clothes of the Sassenach when they come to the mountains; and I will tell you what the clothes were like;" whereupon Kean described accurately the English shooting-suit which Monteith had worn that miserable day at Gairmore.

"And he died with you?"

"Ay, he did die in my sheiling, and his death-wass at the gates of hell, that it wass. I hef seen many die, but I hef seen none like him."

"Did he suffer much?"

"He did suffer more than tongue can tell. And it wass no one that could help him. And it wass five months that he could not move a finger, no, not for the trink of watter. And it was opium he was calling for all the tay long and all the night through. Neil Allister did go to Stornoway and get there all that wass in the place, but not much wass it, and he did curse it for peeing so little."

"Did he tell you who he was?"

"He sait he wass a stranger, and wass going to Benloch to get a poat, and he did not know the coast, and fell down; and he would not speak his name whateffer, no, he would not; but he did say there wass only one man that would want to fint him, and he did hope he would neffer fint him—he did hope he would neffer fint him."

"Did you not pray with him, Kean?"



“Iss it prayer you say? He did mock and curse at the sount, dominie. And at the last a time did come that wass worse than I can tell you. It wass begun one night at midnight, and there wass a great storm; there was neffer such wind and rain in Torsag; ay, it iss me that can tremple yet when I do remember his awfu’ shrieks that night. And I asked him the matter whateffer, and he did say that his father, whom he had murderet, wass in the room, and he did beg me to turn the old man out in the storm; and, mirover, the sweat of agony rolt off him, and such horror wass he in that I did throw myself on my face and pray, for I will tell you there wass something dreadful in the room that night.”

“Do you believe he murdered his father?”

“Ay, I do believe it. It iss so, mirover; for many iss the times I hef heard him say that; and he did think that the murderet man always wass in the corner of the room or by the bedside, and he did say that he turned his trink of watter into plood, and his bit of food into things I will not name to you whateffer.”

“Poor, poor soul!” said Stuart, lifting eyes full of a great pity.

“You need not to pity him, dominie; for he wass full of pitterness and cursing; no, you need not to pity him.”

“Ah, Kean ! while we were yet sinners Christ loved us.”

“For the whole world then, dominie, wass like to the men who crucifiet him—they knew not what they did. But this man, he did know the whole truth, and he did hef his God to curse by, but neffer to pray to. And when I did fint out that there would be some poor man in trouple apout him, I did beg him to tell me the man’s name, and I promised him, though it would pe a journey I could get no one to share with me, to try and cross the Minch and safe the man. And if he would do that, I did tell him he might hope for some place of repentance; and mirover, I did plead with him tay and night, and tay and night.”

“And he would not tell you?”

“He did only curse the man, and hope he wass hung, and did say he would go to hell rather than to safe him. And there wass no way I could get news to the mainland, and mirover, I knew not where to send the news. For when I tolt him I would go in the ferry first tay of the spring to Benloch, he said he had come many hundrets of miles and that no one whateffer did know him.”

“And he never told you his name?”

“At the last he tolt me to sent his money to

a man callet Begum Sun at Benares. There are many 'Bens' which I know well in Scotland, but I know not of any Benares. There iss Benloch, and Benmore, and Ben Nevis, and Beniffer, and many more 'Bens'—and whateffer Scot did effer hef a name like Begum Sun?"

"O Kean, he did not surely die without one word of sorrow or prayer?"

"He did, dominie. It wass the death of a wicket man, and it was an awfu' death-hour. Well might we all pray, 'Let not my last end be like his.' Long pefore it came, the pains of hell gat holt upon him; and his shrieks and cries did fill the house with horror. There wass with me six men, for I did fear to pe alone with him, and we did spent the whole night upon our knees, and apout four o'clock in the morning, with one long, terrible cry, he went to his own place."

Stuart had bowed his head upon his hands, and Donald, awe-struck and silent, sat looking into the stern, dark face of Kean Donachy. There was a minute's silence, and then Kean lifted his eyes and hands and cried out,

"I hef seen what Jesus came to save us from! I hef looket into the pit from which we hef been taken; and nothing but the New Song that the angels hef learnt can effer tell the greatness and the might of that delifferance!"

“Have you his clothing yet?”

“All that he left iss with the dominie at Torsag. There iss £650 in his pocket-book. None in my house or in Torsag would touch plack or bawbee of it. There 's no wealth in the sinfu' penny, and there 's no plessing. So the dominie took charge of it, and he tolt me that whereffer I went I be to tell the story, 'for perhaps, Kean,' he sait, 'there will pe some poor man in trouple apout his death.'”

“And you have not been in this neighborhood since?”

“The year that he died I went to the Cromarty sacrament; and the next two years I went to Skye, and the next year to Mull, and last year I was at Coulbeg. And efferywhere I tolt the story, but I had no hope whateffer that I would hear more in this world apout the matter.”

“Kean Donachy,” said MacPherson, “you have done me the greatest kindness that I could receive from mortal hand. Is there anything that I can do to prove my gratitude to you?”

“There is, MacPherson. Our kirk at Torsag needs a new roof and a new Bible; and the dominie iss old and ferry poor, and his stipent ferry far behint; forbye his wife iss sick and needing mony things. If you'll thank God through the kirk and the dominie, I'll pe the happy man.”

“Indeed I will, Kean. Will you go to Tor-sag with me on Monday? I must recover all the evidence relating to this affair, and I want it in such shape as can be presented to the Home Secretary as soon as possible?”

“I will go, MacPherson.”

“Now, Stuart, call together the household for worship. I will go for my wife and mother. To-night we will have a joyful service, and Kean shall lead it.”

The next day was the great day of the holy feast. Very early in the morning, little parties could be seen coming over the mountains in all directions; and when the services began that Sabbath morning nearly four thousand voices joined in the Psalm:

“The Lord our God is merciful,  
and he is gracious,  
Longsuffering and slow to wrath,  
in mercy plenteous.  
He will not chide continually,  
nor keep his anger still,  
With us he dealt not as we sinned,  
nor did requite us ill.”

And the sweet, strong melody was carried by the wind not only heavenward, but far out over the tossing Minch and across the belts of foam skirting the lonely isle of St. Kilda.

The tables, spread with fair white linen cloths

and bearing the sacred emblems, were standing before the great rock which had served as a pulpit; and there were some rude benches placed along them. Stuart preached the preparatory sermon, that sermon so expressively called "fencing the tables." If there had been any fear among these stern northern Protestants that the rich young dominie would relax a point of the creed so dear to them, their fears were soon allayed. Never had the terrible consequences of "unworthy participation" been set before a congregation with more simple grandeur or more tremendous earnestness.

There was little wonder that when he descended and invited the people to come to the board and eat and drink that solemn mouthful "in remembrance," they trembled and sat still. Twice the appeal was made, and though all were praying, none moved.

" 'Fear not, little children, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.' 'Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out;'" and Stuart, with these gracious words on his lips, stood gazing over the multitude with a face full of peace and confidence.

There was a movement, and Donald, rising from between his wife and mother, bared his head and slowly walked forward. It was his first sac-

rament. He had not been sure of his ability to receive it and had named his intention to no one. But at Stuart's words a great wave of love and confidence rushed into his soul. What could he do but give himself to Christ *then*, in the presence of the great multitude acknowledging his gratitude to God? He had but a few steps to take, but he took them consciously and with his whole soul; and, oh, how many hearts and prayers went with him! Stuart's face was illumined by a flash of holiest joy; an irrepressible sob of emotion went up from the whole clan; and after a moment's pause Donald's mother arose and sat down at the holy table by her son's side.

For a few moments no one else approached; but Stuart's pleading voice was heard among those nearest to him, and far down the lines of worshippers other ministers were pointing out to the trembling-hearted "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." Gradually a few of the most aged ventured to draw near; but it was half an hour before the first tables were filled, and the guests, with trembling hands and dropping tears, eating the sacred meal. And each time they were served there was the same difficulty in inducing the people to come forward. At two o'clock the meeting was dissolved an hour for rest and refreshment.

As they went to the castle they met a party of strangers, and Donald invited them to partake of some food. In the conversation which ensued this reluctance to approach the sacramental table by Highlanders was designated, by a young man of the party, "superstitious."

"Well," replied Stuart, "I prefer this 'superstitious' fear to that forward confidence which makes the sacred rite as much a token of worldly respectability as of adoring memory. Let us remember that the Searcher of hearts is at that table; and then recall what the apostle says to those who eat and drink at it unworthily. After these reflections we may well pause and consider whether we have on the wedding garments suitable for the supper of the Lamb."

At three o'clock the people had gathered again and were listening in groups to their favorite teachers; and at five Stuart was again leading the whole multitude in that grandest of sacrificial hymns:

"'Twas on that night when doomed to know  
The eager rage of every foe,  
That night in which he was betrayed,  
The Saviour of the world took bread.

"And after thanks and glory given  
To him that rules in earth and heaven,  
'That symbol of his flesh he broke,  
And thus to all his followers spoke :



“My broken body thus I give  
For you, for all; take, eat, and live;  
And oft the sacred rite renew,  
That brings my wondrous love to view.’

“Then in his hands the cup he raised,  
And God anew he thanked and praised;  
While kindness in his bosom glowed,  
And from his lips salvation flowed.

“My blood I thus pour forth,’ he cries,  
‘To cleanse the soul in sin that lies;  
In this the covenant is sealed,  
And heaven’s eternal grace revealed.

“With love to man this cup is fraught,  
Let all partake the sacred draught;  
Through latest ages let it pour,  
In memory of my dying hour.’”

The evening would have been a chill one to those unaccustomed to a stern climate, but these hardy mountaineers felt nothing but the joy of health in the clear, caller air, and as their voices rose in the grand, pathetic strains of “Communion,” the strength of the hills above them and the immensity of the ocean before them seemed to enter into their souls. Donald had never before felt such pure and perfect joy—wife and mother and child, Cluny and Stuart; and Christ with all and above all; oh, how full his heart was! How grand a gift life was; a good life, the earnest of a glorious eternity! He sat musing over these things until his heart burned within him.

And at that very hour in India there was fire and slaughter, and unheard of cruelties were being perpetrated. If some angel could have shown these plaided worshippers among the mountains the scenes then passing among their countrymen and country-women in the blazing streets of Indian cities, what an agony of supplication would have gone up from them! But in the safety and peace of their native land they lingered on the mountain, praising God, until the gloaming became bright moonlight, and the Sabbath was quite over. Then, singing as they went, they scattered over the hills, or put off to sea with the early tide, ready to take up again their daily labor, with hearts full of holy strength and peaceful joy.

## CHAPTER XII.

## VICTORY ASSURED.

“Who, doomed to go in company with Pain  
And Fear and Bloodshed, miserable train!  
Turns his necessity to glorious gain,  
Controls them and subdues, transmutes, bereaves  
Of their bad influence, and their good receives.”

THE news of the outbreak at Meerut did not take Cluny by surprise. Judge MacLaurin had anticipated and prepared for it. His savings and Cluny's had been placed in English securities, and he was ready at a moment's notice to fly to a hill station considered impregnable. When the hour came, however, Cluny could not remain with him. All the martial instincts of his race rose paramount and allied themselves with the natural impulses of a brave man who sees his countrymen fighting at fearful odds against human fiends who had transgressed every law of humanity and decency.

While letters were hurrying across the sea bearing to him the news of his complete justification, Cluny was fighting night and day in an almost desperate cause. He had joined as a volunteer the handful of brave men then holding

out before the gates of Delhi; but circumstances placed him almost immediately in command of a movable column of men whose duty it was to keep open the only road available for succor. Constant and fierce was the conflict to be maintained—a ceaseless watch, a continual fight. His soldiers were Englishmen, and answered with a ready cheer every call on their honor as Englishmen, and every demand for retribution on the brutes who could mutilate women and children. But, oh, now for the MacPherson's steel! Oh, for the men of the Forty-second! Oh, for that fierce Highland charge when the claymores flash out with the fierce stimulating shout of, "Sa, sa, sa, sa! sa!! sa!!!"

When the news of the Indian rebellion reached Donald he was just pleasing himself with the thought that Cluny had received the joyful intelligence which Kean Donachy brought. His first movement was for his sword, his first remark, "I must go to India. I must find out what regiments are going; I will equip a company and go with them. If anything happens to Cluny we will be there to protect or avenge him."

"Hush, Donald, my dear brother," said Stuart. "Think a moment. You cannot leave one duty to assume another. Think of Jessy and your children, your aged mother, and the whole clan.

God will take care of Cluny. In the present condition of the country you could not reach him as a private traveller; if you attach yourself to a regiment, you must go where it goes, and that may be, for all practical purposes, as far from Cluny as if you remain at Castle Tor."

"O Cluny, Cluny!"

"Cluny is all right. This is just another chapter of the great lesson he is learning for some good end. When God is about to stamp the coin with the heavenly die, he puts it back into the furnace, he melts and re-melts it till the gold, made malleable, is capable of receiving his own image in indelible impress."

"I am so sorry for Katherine."

"Yes, and for David Maxwell also. He loves Cluny as his own son. Katherine I do not fear for. She has a nature like those lands towards sun-rising; she will catch the first glint of light, and she believes all good things for Cluny."

Stuart had understood Katherine's heart perfectly. On the morning of the day on which the news came to Edinburgh, David had an especial reason for noticing his daughter particularly. He thought she had never been so handsome—a calm-browed, queenly woman upon whose face the dove visibly brooded. She was still blooming and winsome, with soft blue eyes, clear and open,

looking the world straight in the face. Her dress was only a lilac chintz, with a black silk apron and a narrow linen collar, but it seemed the most beautiful of garments on her. As she poured out the tea she chatted pleasantly of the coming spring, of her pansies and lilies, and her aunt MacPherson's last letter. David was watching her without much understanding anything she was saying. He was only thinking of the joy he was going to give her.

"Katherine."

"Yes, father."

"You were speaking of house-cleaning."

"Yes, we shall have to begin to-day."

"Not here, Katherine; not here, my child. Thank God, we are going home again."

"O father! I am so happy, so happy! Cluny says he is coming home by Christmas; shall we be settled by then?"

"You have only to go and select the new furniture. The house has been cleaned and renovated from the foundation to the roof. My darling, are you glad?"

And when Katherine put her arms round his neck and kissed him for answer, David Maxwell was the happiest man in Edinburgh. He sat an hour with Katherine talking over the details of furnishing, and then agreed to come back for her

at twelve o'clock. And as he walked down the street that morning he did hold his head a little higher and walk more elate than usual. He was telling himself that it was a good thing to face a fault and conquer its results, and that in spite of his mistakes David Maxwell was a better man every way than he had been before them.

But when he came back at twelve he was in a different mood. Katherine had never seen him so distressed. "Me bragging o' mysel' to my ain heart, and going sae crouse and happy down the street, and the dear lad may be dead, or far waur than dead. I'm clean heart-broken, Katherine."

She was just a little angry at the remark. "Do n't forbode sorrow, father; it is just like giving it an invitation. And I will not believe any harm will come to Cluny; Cluny has put himself in the hand of God, and He will both guide and protect him. I shall look for him at Christmas."

"My dear lassie, ye mak me ashamed o' mysel'. We'll get the hame ready, and we'll trust God to send the lad back to its shelter."

But the magnitude of the rebellion soon convinced David and Katherine that their hope for Christmas was hardly likely to be realized; and after some weeks' anxiety a letter was received from Cluny which filled her with a proud satis-

faction. "Joined the army, has he?" said David. "I'm vera sorry to hear tell on 't. If he'd been a wise lad he'd hae come hame wi' Sandy MacLaurin's brither."

"And in that case, father, you are the very man who would have given him the cool word and the back of the hand; and I am very sure that Katherine Maxwell would despise a man who could desert his country's cause in such a desperate hour."

"Then whatna for did ye mak sae much o' Judge MacLaurin? He rin awa' from danger, I'm thinking."

"He had been a father to Cluny, and when a man is sixty years old and weighs three hundred pounds he would be of little use as a soldier. Besides, he is a lawyer."

"Lawyers can fight, my daughter; sae dinna be flinging your sarcasms this way. Your ain great-grandfather was writer to the Signet, but he flung awa his pen in the '45' and followed Prince Charlie."

"And my dear father, if he had been in India, would have gone to the army with Cluny. I have not a doubt of it. The Maxwells wrote their names with their swords all over the Borders. It is the manliness in them that makes them such good lawyers."



“You’ve a flattering tongue in your bonnie head, Katherine; but ye arena far wrang, I dare say. I wish the lad was safe hame, though.”

“He’ll come in a good time, and I do not want him to come until.”

“You women-folk beat a’. Ye will, and ye will not. Ye want, and ye dinna want. The laird chief justice himsel’ couldna understand ye. Ye are inscrutable beings, but the warld would be a deal warse without ye.” He was buttoning his great-coat and shaking his head at the beautiful woman as he talked, and she stood smiling bravely and brightly into futurity.

At Castle Tor the same hopeful feeling soon was the prominent one; for one morning, about six months after the rebellion broke out, the newspapers were full of a marvellous march made by Cluny MacPherson’s movable column to relieve a British garrison in a most perilous position. And after that there was little need of letters. Cluny’s movements were watched and chronicled, and thousands of anxious hearts followed him until he joined the Army of Retribution, and bore a noble part in that wonderful march of six hundred miles in twenty-two days, taken in the hottest month of the Indian year.

At least once a week the MacPherson pipers played the “Gathering,” and from every cottage

men, women, and children hastened to the old kirk to hear Donald read aloud to them the progress of the war and the doings of Laird Cluny. It was a kind of literature that stirred them like a trumpet; even Stuart, sitting beside Donald, could not help catching fire from his kindling eyes and from the mute eloquence of hundreds of angry, pitiful, proud faces lifted to the reader. There was not a MacPherson who did not walk more erect, and hold himself in more heroic mood, those days. If Cluny could have stood upon his own hills one hour, every man able to bear arms would have longed to range himself at his side.

Even Lady MacPherson could not settle to her sewing. She was always wandering away to talk to one or another of Laird Cluny. Donald and Stuart had the same theme, and with the men among the sheep, the fishers in the boats, the women at their wheels, the children at their play, it was always Laird Cluny. And as news was always arriving of fresh dangers to be encountered, and fresh victories won, the interest never flagged. Every step of the rebellion, every step of the stern retribution, every step back to order and tranquillity, was known to these secluded mountaineers; and with the natural instinct of warriors, they judged accurately of the approach of peace.

“We’ll hae them a’ under our thumbs by

July next," said Adam to a party discussing one of Donald's readings; and he was right. Early in July, 1859, Sir John Lawrence declared the rebellion over, and Cluny was honorably free to return to Scotland. It was September when he arrived in London. Donald was there to meet him. As the steamer neared the dock, his eyes sought among the crowd the form he loved. Almost simultaneously the brothers recognized each other. They were too simple-hearted to put any restraint upon their joy because of the crowd around them. But the crowd was a sympathetic one. True feeling always touches the heart, even of strangers; and when Donald and Cluny sobbed upon each other's neck there were few who did not weep with them. All understood that the young man, bronzed with Indian suns, had come through great dangers, and was received as one back from the grave.

"My name is quite clear, Donald?" That was one of Cluny's first questions.

"It is clear without a shadow. The wrong has been legally recognized and acknowledged. You have covered your name with glory. There is not a MacPherson living who is not proud of you."

"I did my duty; every man did. How is Katherine looking?"

“She is as lovely and as good and true as ever.”

Then they spoke of Donald's marriage and children, of the new kirk, of David Maxwell's prosperity, of everything but Monteith's death. They could not discuss so dark and terrible a subject on such a happy day.

When they arrived in Edinburgh David Maxwell was at the railway station. He had made no secret of the visitor whom he was expecting, and there was a crowd to assist him in his reception of him—the provost and bailies, the officers from the garrison, and hundreds of citizens who had followed the young man's brave career with all the pride and partiality given to a national hero. Cluny was not insensible to the honor. His brown, happy face took into it the reflection of so many smiles and good wishes and thanks.

David had never felt such pleasure in his recovered position as when he led Cluny once more into the old home. And, oh, how beautiful Katherine was! She had not thought her richest silk and finest lace too good for this hour. For a moment Cluny felt almost abashed by the lovely queenlike woman who stretched out her arms to welcome him and fell on his neck with a joyful cry. “Come awa, Donald,” said David; “let them hae their crack and their greeting by their

ain sel's; we auld folk mustna forget we hae been young."

The delay in Edinburgh was short; Cluny was very anxious to see his mother and Stuart and all his poor kinsmen. There had never been a holiday in the memory of the clan like the day of his return. The men and women and children pressed around him and kissed his hands, and poured out in Gaelic ejaculations the pride and joy no English could have translated for them. Donald's bonnie wee wife met them at the gate of the court, little Cluny in his first kilts by her side. And Cluny's heart went out at a bound to Stuart's sister. He laughed with a fond delight at her beauty and childish appearance, and almost lifted her in his arms to give her his first kiss.

But not even Jessy and the little Cluny could delay him more than a moment, for there in the open door stood his mother, his beautiful, good, dear, loving, trusting mother. No face like her face, no kiss like her kiss, no honor like her blessing, no joy like the joy of that all-atoning embrace!

Stuart, with a thoughtful kindness, had purposely delayed his welcome. He would not intermeddle with the joy of that meeting between mother and son. He knew that Cluny would be sure to come to him early in the morning, and

they were too sincere friends to require ceremony or to take offence. He had not finished his breakfast when he heard the quick firm tread he knew so well. He leaped to his feet to welcome his friend, and Cluny was in the room and had grasped his hands.

“O Stuart, Stuart !”

“Cluny, Cluny !”

That was all they could say for a moment. They gazed into each other's faces, and Stuart saw a great change in Cluny's. The fresh blooming beauty of youth had passed away. It was marked and bronzed and heavily bearded. But it had gained a far grander beauty. The wavering lines about the mouth had all disappeared; it was a firm and purposeful face, the face of a man who has fought and conquered, who has passed through deep waters and come out safely on the other side.

Generally the conversation of newly-met friends after a long parting is unsatisfactory—there is so much to tell. But with Stuart and Cluny this stage was avoided. All common points of interest were understood and could be at once entered upon. But these were not what Cluny had come to talk about. “It is of my future, Stuart, I want to speak,” he said, “and I have learned that I can rely on your counsel.”

“Yes, you cannot remain idle, even if you are rich enough.”

“I am not rich. I have about £10,000.”

“I thought you began the study of the law with Judge MacLaurin.”

“The war put law quickly to one side. I only studied long enough to find out that I shall never be a lawyer. But I have learned something since.”

“While you were fighting?”

“Yes, while I was fighting I learned that there is a nobler warfare than even that undertaken by the Army of Retribution.”

“You mean that it is nobler to save than to punish.”

“That is what I mean. I want to study for the ministry. When I was succoring the flying, and helping the suffering and dying, I knew a joy that was far beyond the joy of victory in the battle. I want to work among those who are in fear and shame and despair. I know how to pity and help them.”

“You have thought this solemnly over, Cluny? To put your hand to the plough, and then turn back, would grieve the Master.”

“I know what I am saying, Stuart. My whole soul is in this desire.”

“And Katherine and Donald and David Maxwell?”

“Katherine approves my desire. I do not think any of my friends will oppose it; but if I loved any one better than Christ I should be unworthy to serve him.”

“You will join the Free Kirk?”

“Yes, I will hold the faith of my fathers without any modifications or trimmings: the gospel in its pure and simple integrity.”

“You are right. The pure and firm faith of our fathers is an irresistible saving power for weak and wavering souls. It leaves a man no loopholes for ‘peculiar opinions;’ it permits him no drifting upon currents of modern speculation. If we widen it, we weaken it. Force must be duly concentrated.”

“I believe that.”

“You will go to Glasgow to study?”

“Yes; I will go to the old school. I have one strange holding back, and I will confess it to you: I am so unlike a minister physically—I mean, that I look more like a soldier than a preacher. It seems a little thing to discourage me, but it does.”

“Do not let it. Is it necessary that a minister should be pallid with study, or weak for want of using the muscles God has given him? Am I the worse pastor because I can pull a boat with the fisher, and outwalk the shepherd upon the hills?”



“But you live among men who are athletes. My aim is to minister among the wretched workers of a large city.”

“God demands athletes, men mighty in body and soul. Never did ministers need such strength as they do now, for never was so much demanded of them. Our age is running at full speed. Other machines have multiplied their power tenfold; the human machine remains what it was. Nevertheless, it must keep up. If you are not strong every way, you will fail under the appeals that will come from every point of the compass. Grievances, anxieties, discontents, reproaches, requests—all crying aloud, all insisting on your listening to them. One will be exacting, another angry; a third will lay upon your conscience obligations which he has invented sitting comfortably by his own fireside. It will be, ‘Come here,’ and, ‘Go there,’ and, ‘I shall see you at such an hour.’ People will be constantly coming in and going out at your doors; strange faces and uncongenial characters will drop into your home circle. Unless you are strong in body and soul, unless you have within you the gushing of living waters, I know not how you will bear it.”

“I think I can bear it, Stuart. I have given myself and my life to these very classes of people; I shall feel as if they had a right to come to me.”

“Yes, but also you will have a right to breathe. You have one Master, God. There is no other. So much the worse for those who allow themselves to be tyrannized over by their fellow-mortals. No matter what a man’s vocation may be, if he would achieve anything good or great, he must possess his existence, must have his own hours. If you do not take time to breathe, you will have no time to be kind, no time to be human. The man who has no leisure is apt to have no sympathy. He makes himself an engine, and he grows hard as iron. I am speaking from experience. I was two years in a city church before I came here.”

“I will remember all you say, Stuart.”

Donald’s slight objections to Cluny’s plans were easily overruled, and Lady MacPherson believed she saw in this very office the intention and crown of all Cluny’s trials and sufferings. David Maxwell was harder to convince. He had just recovered his home, and began to please himself with the idea of Cluny’s and Katherine’s presence in it. He was aware that Cluny had begun to read law with MacLaurin, and he saw no reason why he should not continue the study in his office. There was a fine business made for him; there was his home waiting. It did really seem to David for a day or two as if the whole joy of his success had been darkened.

But he had one of those brave hearts that rebound from disappointment very readily; besides, Katherine and Cluny were against him, and what could he do but give up to their wishes? There was no occasion for delay. Cluny desired to enter the theological classes then forming in Glasgow University, and Katherine was quite certain that his desire was right. What two will, in such cases, generally takes effect. Cluny went to Glasgow, and was soon after married. In the intervals of study he prepared a pretty home in one of the crescents overlooking the Kelvin, and thither, with a proud and grateful heart, he brought his beautiful wife.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## A NOBLE WORK.

"I, who saw power, shall see love perfect too.  
Perfect I call Thy plan; I trust what Thou shalt do."

"Youth ended, I shall try  
My gain or loss thereby;  
Be the fire ashes, what survives is gold."

TWENTY-FOUR years have elapsed since Cluny's marriage, and we may now look backward and fairly estimate the harvest whose planting has been described. At Castle Tor there have been no changes but such as were to be expected in the natural course of events. Lady MacPherson died about ten years ago. There had been another Sacramental Meeting upon the Tor hills, and she had had the delight of hearing Cluny preach and of taking the holy feast with him. She seemed wonderfully happy in the experience, and long after the house was still and quiet, she sat talking softly with Janet about the sermon.

It was her last Sabbath on earth. Perhaps the chill of the mountain air, perhaps the joy and excitement, hurried on the last stage of a disease which she had long known must terminate fatal-

ly. Indeed, death had been for years a solemn, waylaying thought, hushing her life into a state of waiting. When Donald and Cluny stooped over her weeping, she knew the great messenger had come. But there was nothing in such a death-bed as Lady MacPherson's to affright: no fears to beat away, no strife to heal; the past brought her no reproach, and the future was sure. At the last hour, breathless with adoration, she whispered, "Sing a hymn, my children;" and she lay listening until the last words,

"And God the Lord from every eye  
Shall wipe off every tear,"

then with a smile of rapture passed from earth to heaven.

The loss was in one respect a blessing to Donald. All things had gone so well with him, and he was so happy and prosperous, that he had grown formal and careless about spiritual things and perhaps too careful about worldly ones. His land had increased greatly in value, he counted his flocks by thousands, and the herring fishery had quadrupled its fleet. His wife, still loving and lovely, retained his affections; his sons and daughters filled the old castle with life and song and love. But heaven is for those who think of it; and Donald acknowledged that in the fretful stir of life, and the unprofitable fever of the world's

success, he had often forgotten the things pertaining to the eternal life.

Janet outlived her mistress a few months; Adam had died two years before her. His reconciliation with Stuart had been a lasting one, and he came to be so attached to the minister and the new kirk that he tolerated, though he never approved, the introduction of a hymn-book containing other psalmody than that version of the Psalms of David "allowed by the authority of the General Assembly of the Kirk of Scotland." He maintained to the last his peculiar love for the Old Testament, though as he drew nearer to the grave it was the Psalms he read the most frequently. "Thae Psaumes," he would say to Stuart, "they tak an awfu' grip o' the heart. I dinna think I would believe an angel if he should tell me they werena inspired." And he died with his hand laid lovingly and trustfully upon the twenty-third, as if the sense of touch helped him to realize and grasp more fully its promise.

Stuart still lives at Tor, but not in the old manse. Shortly after Cluny's marriage he built a beautiful home in a little green corrie running through the mountains from the sea-coast, and when it was finished he brought to it the woman whom he had loved from his boyhood. God only vouchsafed to him a few months of happiness.

One day his beloved was with him; the next she was beyond the stars. Stuart's heart was not an instrument that any and every woman's hand could bring music from. It had kept time and tune too perfectly with one ever to learn another measure. Still the love, though lost, has sweetened his life down to its very roots; and if it has cast a shadow over it, it is a gracious shadow in which all sorrowful souls find comfort.

Cluny, the first and dearest of his friends, has become dearer with every year; but his sympathies do not stop with Cluny and Cluny's family and work. Three other little kirks besides that of Tor owe their existence to his care and liberality; and no young man needing a helping hand into the great army of salvation ever seeks Stuart's aid in vain. Even those who love him most wonder a little at his lasting enthusiasm. They had expected to see him in a few years grow weary of his self-denial and labor of love, and resume his position as a man of wealth and family. He always resents any hint of this kind with unusual warmth. "If," he said to Donald one day, "I had begun to build kirks as some men build yachts, in a passing enthusiasm, this thing might take place. But my kirk-building, as truly as my preaching, is a conviction, not a sentiment. I do not say that the command comes to all alike,

but one night the command came to me. I was sure of it as if I had seen the divine eyes pleading with me, and heard the voice of Him who spake as never man spake directing me. I thank God that he gave me grace to be obedient to the heavenly word."

And it is a pleasant thing to record that whenever, in the transfer of property or drawing out of contracts about this work, there is a necessity for a lawyer, David Maxwell is glad to do the necessary business; for though he is emphatically what is called in Scotland "a close man," he is never averse to giving in what he considers a prudent manner. Thus a kirk in Stuart's brain does not interest him; even when it is on paper David's heart is not moved to help it; but if a certain amount will bring on the top-stone with rejoicing and free of debt, he will give that amount without a grudging thought.

His head is now hoary with years, but he is still among those who keep in the van of life. No lawyer is more astute, and none more trusted and respected. His chambers are like the offices of some great public department, only that the men waiting there have all the preoccupied air of men in difficulties. Every morning at eleven o'clock he may be seen leaving the Maxwell mansion for them. He comes down the steps leaning



upon the arm of a young man, and they drive away together in a handsome carriage. The youth is David Maxwell MacPherson, Cluny's eldest son, and the hope and delight of David's old age.

The two men were sitting at breakfast one morning in May. The room was the one used by Monteith in his short, wretched ownership of the house. But it had been totally changed. It was furnished in the handsomest modern style, and Katherine's and Cluny's pictures ornamented it. As David was drinking his last cup of tea he said to his grandson, "Davie, my man, ye'll be twenty-two years auld next October."

"That is so, grandfather."

"Do ye think, now, that Bessie MacPherson will hae ye for her husband? Ye hae been courting her since ye were a laddie seven years auld; that's longer than Jacob's wooing. She ought to ken her mind by this time."

"I am going to ask her mind the next time I go to Tor."

"Do; and if she taks ye for a husband, I'll tak ye for a partner. It's time ye buckled down to warld's wark, and a man canna do that till he has gotten the wife question settled. Forbye, a married man is aye the best man. When are ye going to Tor?"

“To-morrow. Father is there, and I shall see him also.”

David laughed. “Vera little ye ’ll see o’ him, my lad. I ken the whole programme. The MacPherson and he will be awa thegither from the daylight to the dark; and unless it be Dominie Stuart, nae ither body will get an invite to gae wi’ them.”

“But it is Cousin Bessie I ’m going to see.”

“Weel, ye ken my mind, Davie. And the lassie’s got gude sense; she’ll be o’ the same mind as me, I ’m thinking.”

Young Davie started for Tor the next morning, and when he arrived found his father already there; that is, he had been, the night before. “But,” said Lady MacPherson, “the laird and he left this morning for the Lewis, and when they will come home I do n’t pretend to know.”

It was a singular visit to make, but at intervals there had come to Cluny a desire to visit the last scene of his enemy’s life, and to hear from Donachy’s own lips the story of his awful death. Every spring it was Cluny’s habit to come up to the mountains and refresh himself, to drink in vitality, and to gather heart strength and soul strength in the companionship of Donald and Stuart. At such times Donald abandoned all business cares, and the brothers spent the days

upon the sea or among the hills. Sometimes Stuart went with them, but more frequently Cluny spent the evenings with Stuart, while Donald during those hours attended to such household farming concerns as were imperative.

So, quite in accordance with their usual custom, they had gone to the Lewis. Donald had a swift little steam yacht, and the journey, once fraught with danger and apt to be very tedious, was now easy and rapid. Thoughtfully Cluny followed the route which the rude boat had taken as it bore Monteith away from every human joy and hope to his long and terrible death-bed. The brothers spoke of indifferent things, but the thoughts of both were on this one subject. Torsag had altered in no respect. What was there to alter this handful of bee-hive huts among the bleak, desolate peat-fens of Lewis?

They easily found Kean Donachy's hut, and entering the low door, saw him sitting on his bench, making the rude shoes worn by Hebridean peasants. It was not at first an easy thing to see him, for Hebridean huts have no chimneys, and as much smoke remains in the room as escapes through the circular hole above the peat fire. Kean was working, and singing as he worked one of those metrical Psalms so dear to the heart of every Scotchman. He was happy in its mel-

ody, though its plaintive minor thirds were as mournful as the sighing of the winds across the dreary plain.

He looked up with a glad surprise at the MacPherson's entry, for he was now familiar with Donald. They soon fell into conversation about Monteith, and Cluny listened with a grave, pitiful face to the rude, graphic story. "In that corner did stand the pet on which he died. There was not anybody that would care to sleep on it after him, and we did burn it up. And moreover there is no one that will go too near to the corner where it did stand. My sister Vorna, she does think it is the ferry road to Tophet."

Cluny estimated in a moment, and with a terribly distinct consciousness, the horrors of that death to the self-indulgent man in this lonely hut of stones and turf and thatch, with the ever-present permeating peat smoke, and its scant comfort of every kind. It seemed a fair dwelling enough to Kean, who had lived in it from his birth, and whose soul was full of the glorious land to which he was going; but Cluny could well imagine how frightful its darkness and closeness, its small space, its meagre comforts, and its smoky atmosphere must have been to the dying man. His head was bent and covered with his hands; none but God could see the emotions that

chased each other across his countenance; but Donald looked grimly and with a dour satisfaction around.

“You burned the bed,” said Donald; “what became of the other things—I mean Monteith’s things?”

“They did stay with the dominie until after the man’s sin wass made known. Dominie Stuart gave to me the name of his people in Benares, and our own dominie, he did write to them. But it wass a long time pefore we heart this or that from them whateffer; at the last they did sent for the money, and sait I wass to keep the rest. There wass nothing more whateffer but the clothes he had on and the little golt box that he did carry his opium in; and nopotty would touch that; and we just droppet his clothes and his box into the sea, and we wass ferry glat when there wass an end of the matter.”

Then they went to the graveyard of Torsag, a desolate plot of drifted sea-sand, with here and there a tuft of coarse grass. Monteith’s grave was in the north corner, close under the low stone wall. It had fallen in, and was utterly neglected, the most lonely, sorrowful, deserted grave the heart of a man could imagine. Cluny lifted a handful of sand and let it fall slowly through his fingers upon it. Donald looked sternly at the

despised place of sepulture—the very pariah of a grave. He was not pleased that there was a touch of pity in Cluny's face.

“But who can feel bitterness at a handful of dust, Donald? A handful of dust on a desolate coast is all that is left of his hatred and revenge.”

“Ay, and thae will not pe left,” answered Kean dourly; “he hass taken them with him, ay, hass he. There will pe no doubt that thae will torture him where he hass gone to. When the wicket man hass worn out the patience of the Merciful One, I will not pe sorry for him, no, I will not, for that will pe a reproach to the justice of God. He is ‘plenteous in mercy’ to all who will come for mercy, that iss He; but mirover, if they will choose death rather than life, I will not pe sorry for them.”

Cluny had plucked a few leaves of the coarse grass and was putting them in his pocket-book, and he only answered with a grave movement of the head. Donald took one more look at the evil and unhappy-looking grave and turned away. “If it was possible that his soul could see us at this moment !” he said to Kean.

The man thought a moment. “I will not pe sure, MacPherson, that he will not see us. Dives, when he wass in torment, did see Lazarus in heaven. God hass not said that the wicket shall

*not* see the happiness and the prosperity of those whom they did go apout to harm. Maype thiss iss that 'secret of God' which the Bible does say he hass."

"O Kean Donachy!" Cluny answered, "I do not think that. I will believe always that the secret of God is a secret of mercy."

"A ferry goot pelief, dominie, and I will pelief it with you, mirover;" and then the three men remained lost in thought until they reached the manse of the Torsag kirk. Here Donald and Cluny both left a noble offering of thanksgiving; then they took leave of Kean and went on board the yacht. After this visit both brothers felt that the subject of Monteith was for ever dropped out of their lives and conversation.

On their return, the first faces that met them were those of David MacPherson and his cousin Bessie. Both fathers had a double blessing to give the happy lovers, and when they had gone away, full of their own hopes and joys, Donald and Cluny's eyes met, and they took each other's hands in a firmer and warmer clasp than ever.

"God has been very good to us, Cluny."

"Very, very good, Donald;" and Cluny walked away to the wall of the court looking over the Minch, and counted up his mercies and thanked God for them.

For Cluny in these later years had above all the rest experienced the eternal lovingkindness. From the hour when we left him a happy husband, eagerly and earnestly desiring to look into the highest knowledge and to take part in the grandest of all warfares, a great prosperity and joy had been his lot. For when a soul has seen by means of evil that good is best; when its faith has stood the fiery trial, and the child of God has become a man of God, then the Father gladly burns the rod; its uses are done; and for such of his children, even in this life, there remaineth a rest.

It cannot be said that Cluny made any decided mark upon his university. He passed the ordeal with credit, and if he was not thought to possess much critical knowledge of texts, he was known to have a fervent zeal and great natural gifts of oratory. He had just received his license to preach when Judge MacLaurin died; after providing for his relatives, he left the residue of his fortune to "Cluny MacPherson, whose valor and kindness saved my life during my flight from Benares." The residue was nearly £40,000. Then there was no hindrance to Cluny's widest schemes of usefulness, and he went into them with all the ardor of his nature.

His first sermons were timid and hesitating,



but they gained in strength and confidence with great rapidity. He was preaching to the poor and the sinful and the sorrowful; he could have had no better school for his future glorious ministry. There was small restraint in this class. They came to him, as Stuart foretold they would, every hour of the day, and with every kind of trouble and anxiety. His days were spent among them; and well for him was it that at night, when weary and worn out, he had a calm and happy home and a tender, sympathizing wife to go to.

And it was wonderful how quickly divine wisdom taught him how to reach hearts that seemed to be set by insurmountable barriers afar from his own by that thoughtful charity which was not content with putting a shilling into an outstretched hand, but sanctified the gift with a Christlike and yearning thought. Often there was a fire lit on some hearth black and cold, bread put into an empty cupboard, pleasures devised for those who had only the monotony of their own sufferings—a singing bird to make a garret cheerful, a pretty toy put into little hands that had never before held anything but what was ugly and dirty.

So his field of labor grew like the grain of mustard seed. His influence became a power that was felt far and near. Men began to inquire

after him, to give him honor, to lay wider and grander spiritual interests upon his care and conscience. His eloquence, perfected under every laudable emotion, grew to be a magnet that drew people by thousands to his feet. In ten years he was a light set upon a hill that could no longer be hid.

Every May, when the General Assembly of the Kirk of Scotland meets in the High Kirk, Cluny goes with all his family to Edinburgh. That was David Maxwell's great time of rejoicing. During the Assembly's sitting, the Lord High Commissioner, representing Her Majesty, holds daily levees in Holyrood Palace; and these levees, attended by the assembled ministers, the nobility and gentry of the neighborhood, were, after Cluny's admission to them, never neglected by David. As Cluny's fame grew, his pride in them became constantly greater. He delighted to watch Cluny's noble figure, in its rich black silk gown and snow-white Geneva bands, towering above all as Saul did among the men of Israel; to watch with what respect his words were listened to, and how clergy and peers, and soldiers and citizens alike did him honor.

But when Cluny became Moderator of the Assembly, and David saw him first in that most

august body, he was, as he told Katherine, "like to greet for joy." On the evening previous, the Lord High Commissioner—a Scotch duke of the highest rank—held a levee at which the Lord Provost and the magistrates presented to him the silver keys of the city. Next morning all Edinburgh was out to see that grand line of ministers, nobility, and magistrates which, attended by a military guard of honor, goes in solemn splendor to open the Holy Convocation in the High Kirk.

And Cluny was to preach before them! Never had David dreamed of honor like this. And never had he heard such eloquence. He had no small opinion of his forensic abilities, but he had never made hearts glow to such lofty love or kindle to such grand enthusiasm. He had wished to see Cluny pleading at the bar for some rich corporation or some famous criminal. He saw him shaking the most august assembly in the world, as the wind shakes the leaves of the forest; and he was pleading the cause of the heathen and the rights of the poor. David's soul was melted within him; he went home in a maze of love and gratitude. He wandered from room to room, thinking of this and of that blessing or deliverance, stooping sometimes to kiss Katherine, or to talk to one or other of his grandchildren. He was so happy that he could not

speaking of his happiness, only it made a solemn, all-pervading joy wherever he went.

Donald had come to Edinburgh to see his brother installed as Moderator, and to hear his sermon. He was not a man ready to speak of his feelings, but Cluny understood the glistening eyes and the strong grip which Donald met him with when he left the pulpit of the High Kirk. And many an eye followed the pair as they walked slowly together to the vestry, Donald's dark face and stately figure in its picturesque tartans making a most striking contrast to Cluny's grand form in its flowing ecclesiastical robes.

Foremost in every good work, it is in such scenes as these one portion of the world knows the Rev. Cluny MacPherson, but God and some few good men know him in far different scenes. Let us take the road he took one Sunday night in June two years ago. It was in the eastward direction among streets and wynds that few would care to traverse without a guide and a protector. He needed neither. He walked slowly, for he was a little weary, having preached twice already that day; but he never hesitated. The street, one of the slums of traffic on a week-day, was still on the Sabbath. Its inhabitants were familiar with him. All gave him a respectful silence; some gave him a smile of welcome.

Most of the latter followed him into a large room fitted up as a place of worship and spotlessly clean. There were texts of Scripture upon the walls, Bibles and hymn-books upon the comfortable seats. It was like a bit of a better world let down into the sordid, filthy locality. Does he preach to these poor, ragged, sorrowful men and women a poorer sermon than he preached in the splendid kirk of Free St. Matthias? Nay, it is even a better one. He opens up his whole soul to them. He tells them just how they doubt and fear and murmur and repine, and then he kneels with them, as Stuart did with him, and leads them to the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world. The service lasts but half an hour; then he sits down a few minutes, and with closed eyes rests and prays.

Some few go out; the greater part remain. Very soon a few soldiers from the barracks come quietly in. He sees them at once, and the men feel they are recognized. They are followed by a man and a woman with five or six children, decent working people, evidently. These, with a stevedore, a porter, half a dozen laboring men, as many respectable clerks, and about a score of working women, who are likely employed as household servants, form the next audience. What has brought these various elements togeth-

er in this strange locality? Cluny rises. Listen and you will understand—the magic of a common and dearly-loved language. They are men and women who do not care for a service in English, but one in Gaelic goes straight to their hearts.

And Cluny can sympathize with this feeling. As the musical, singing sentences drop from his lips, he is carried back to the towering mountains and sweet, still corries, and the little lonely lochs set solemnly in the wild moorlands. He can feel the spring of the heather and smell the perfume of the bog-myrtle. He knows that the longing of the exile is in their hearts, and that in the crowded, hot, dirty city far away

“From the lone sheiling of the misty island,  
Mountains divide them, and the waste of seas;  
Yet still the blood is strong, the heart is Highland,  
And they in dreams behold the Hebrides.”

He draws near, very near to them with this thought—enters into all their trials and sorrows. They weep, and his eyes are full. He has for the young men grave, strong words of counsel. He knows their temptations; he does not fear to tell them how the road to sin and sorrow is through the gates of debt. And who can speak to a soldier as Cluny can? How his words glow! How his voice rises! The men are almost on their

feet. He knows also their trials and small oppressions. He gives them the clearest counsel. He sends them back to their barracks better men and better soldiers. Then, with the blessing of those ready to perish upon his head, he goes to his home weary, very weary, but full of a gladness that makes amends for all.

And he has a home that soon rests the weariest body and heart. Katherine is always loving and sympathetic. In his most obscure work she takes the keenest interest. His eldest son, David, has entered on a fair and prosperous life. He has three other sons and two fair daughters. The lads honor him with all their heart and soul. Towards the girls he has a tenderness and chivalry that is something beautiful to behold. And what cords of love bind him to Donald and to Donald's children, to the beloved Stuart and to David Maxwell! Every year his life is throwing out new branches; every year is bringing it to a grander completeness.

His success has arisen, not from luck, not from any fortunate concurrence of circumstances, not from friendship, but from his ability to acknowledge his sins and to humbly accept their punishment, trusting to the mercy and power of God for a redemption of the wasted and wronged years. **And this attitude of true repentance put him in**

the position of a child—not a rebel—suffering chastisement.

“ Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward” — oh, the blessedness of that “afterward”! — “it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.”

Cluny might have become a great soldier, but how much grander is the work that God has set him among that noble army of

“ Servants of God! or sons  
Shall I not call them? because  
Not as servants they know  
Their Father's innermost mind—  
His, who unwillingly sees  
One of his little ones lost.  
Theirs is the praise, if mankind  
Hath not as yet in its march  
Fainted and fallen and died.”

ARNOLD.





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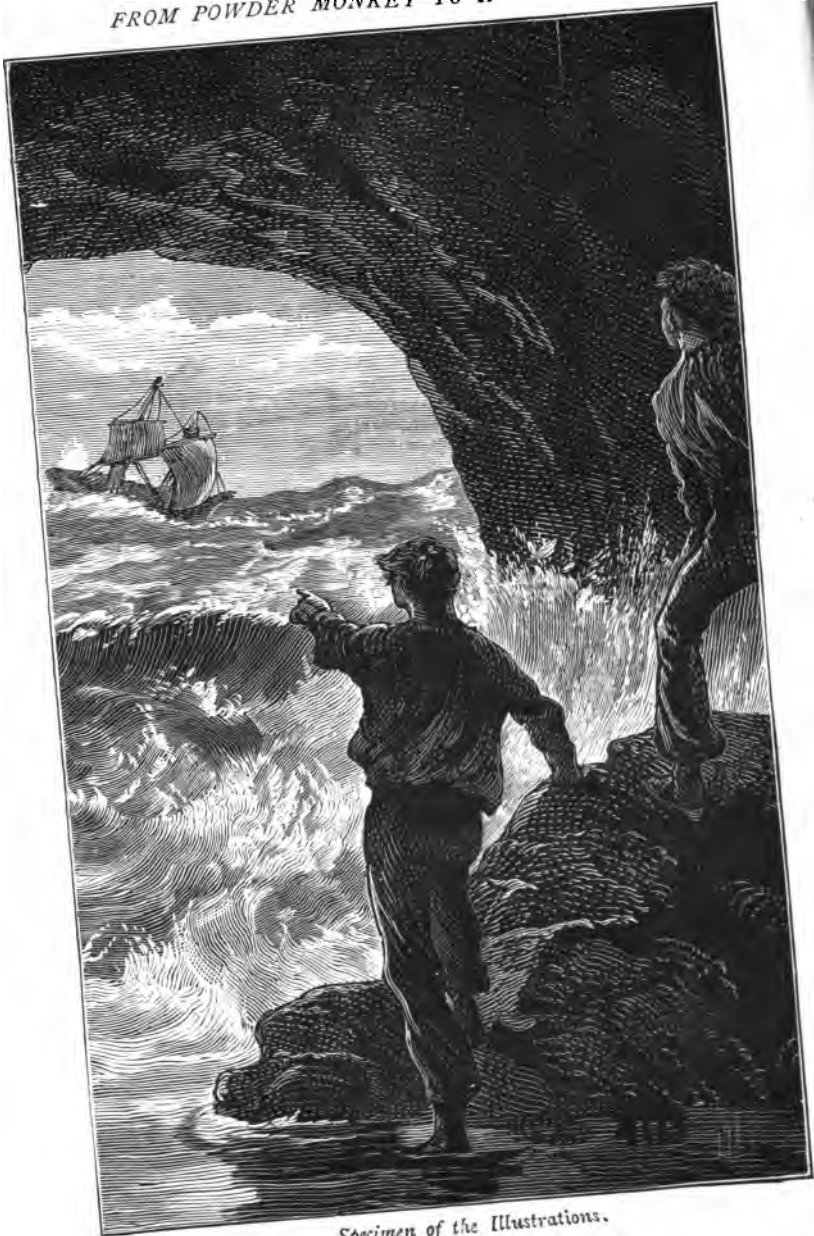
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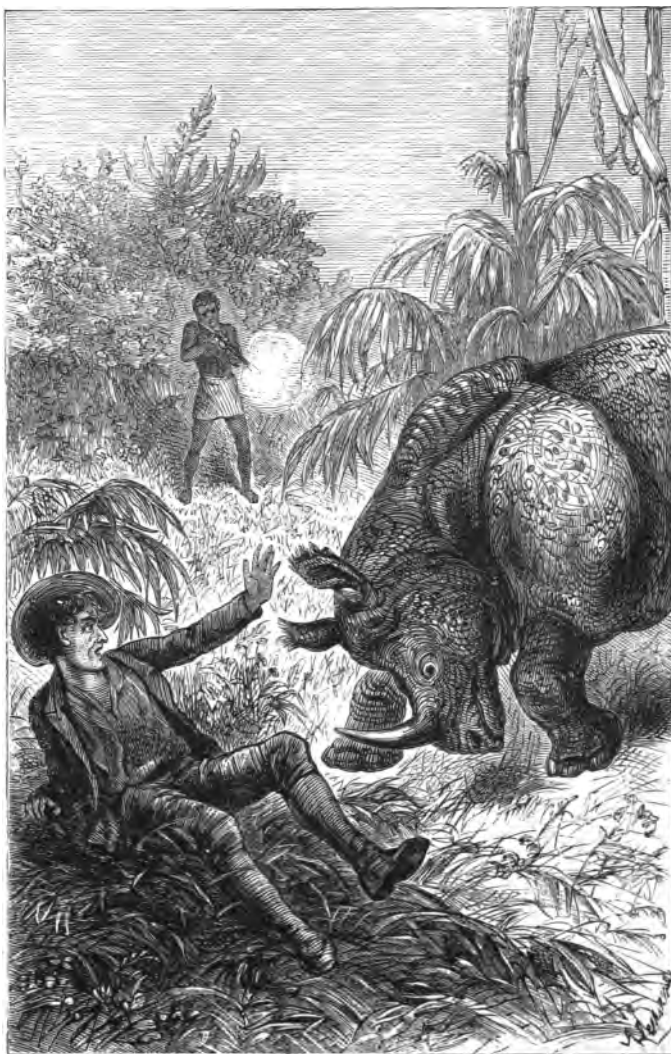
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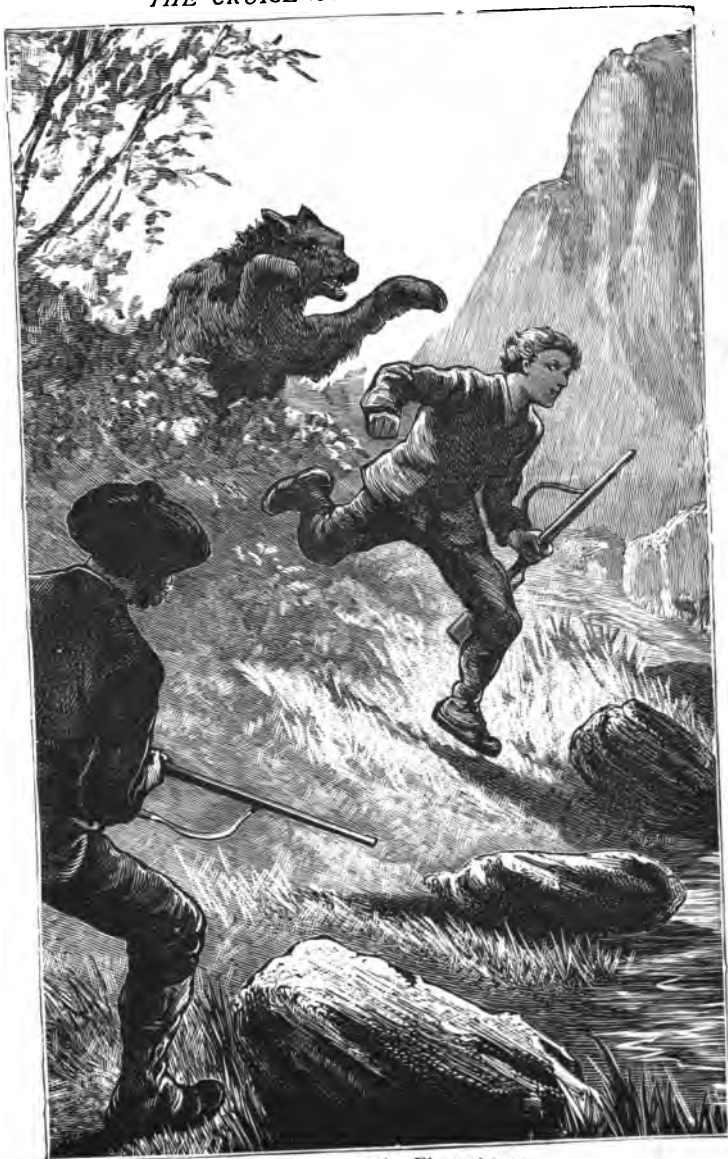
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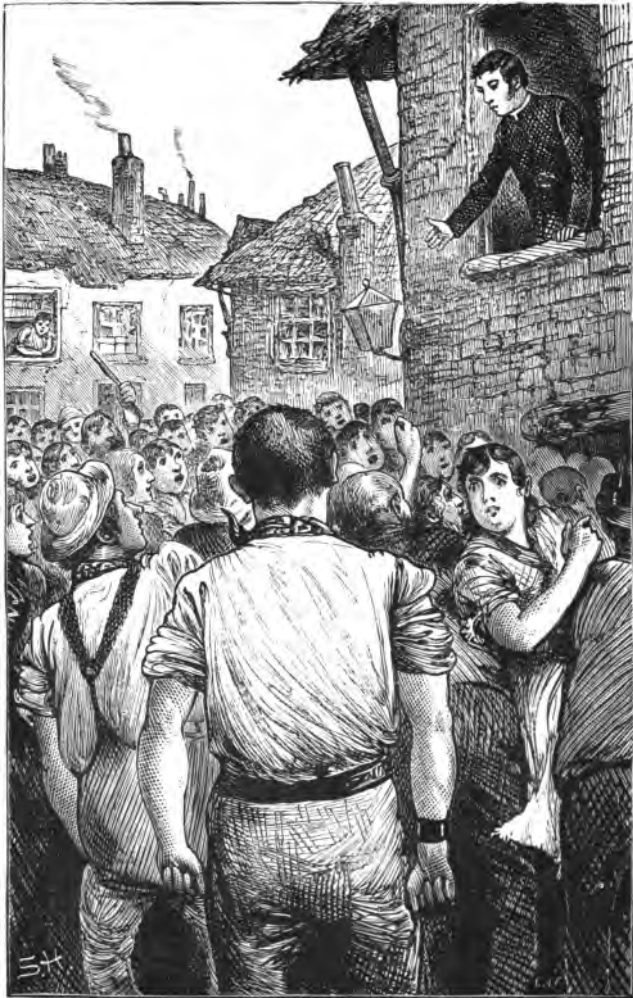
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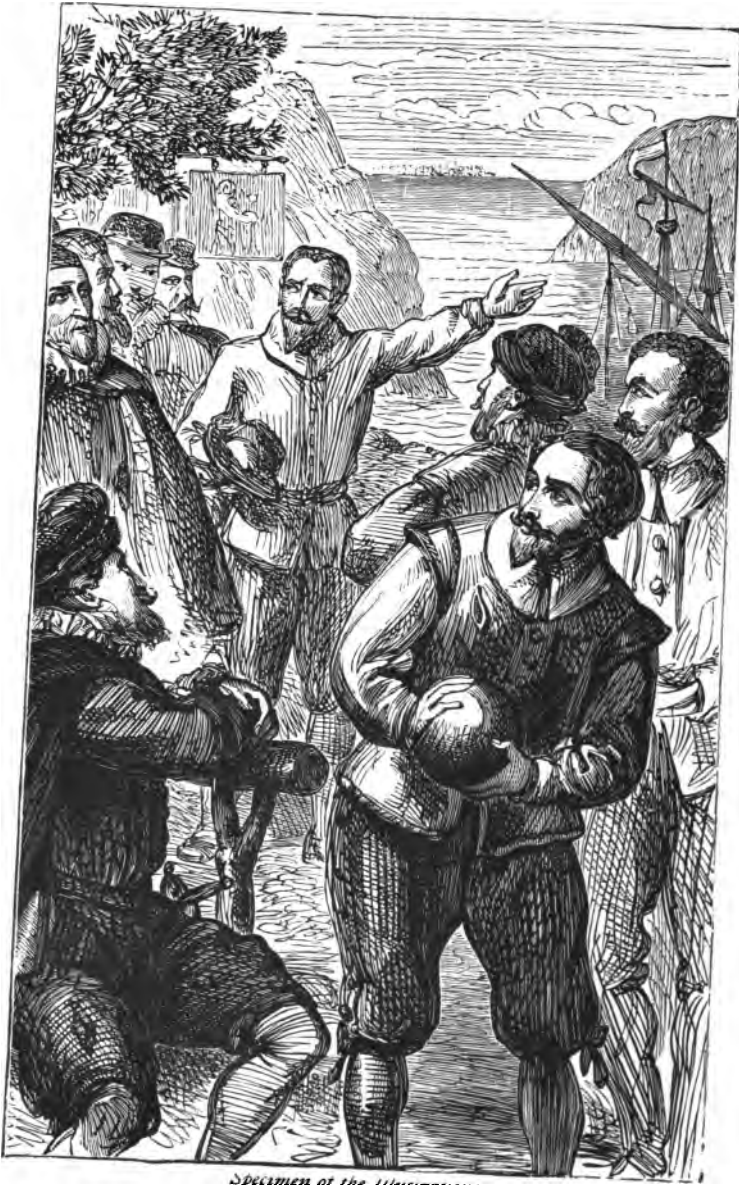
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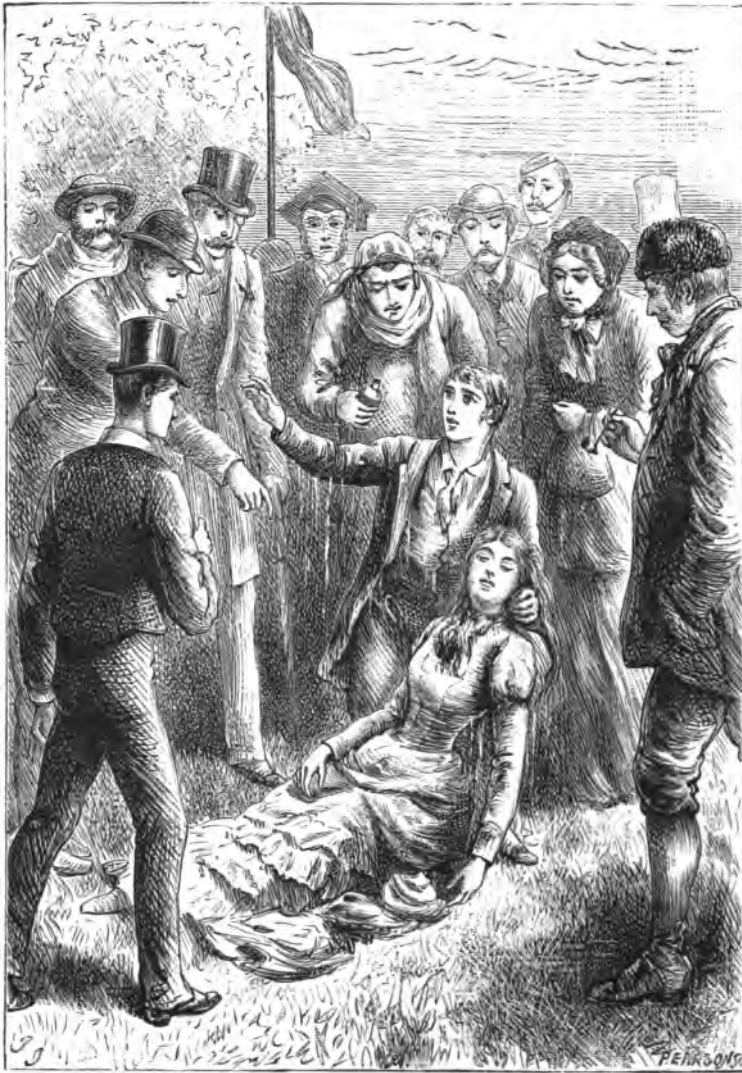
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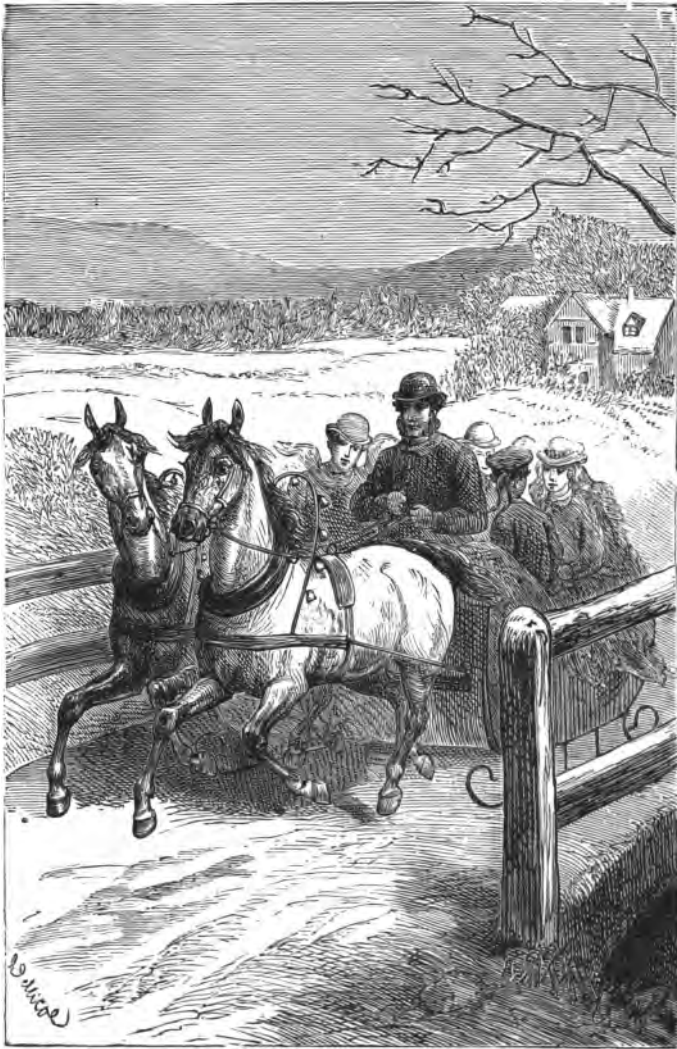
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