TALES

OF THE

HEATHER

BY

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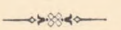
PREFACE.



Most of the Tales in this volume were published from time to time in the *Celtic Magazine* between 1878 and 1888 under the signature of "M. A. Rose." As they originally appeared they were very favourably commented upon by the reviewers, and many of them were reproduced by the press at home and in the Colonies. I have been induced to publish them in this form at the request of friends who perused them when they were first written. I now leave them with no small diffidence to the verdict of an indulgent public.

In addition to those previously published several of the Tales have been specially written for this volume. Two of them—"The King's Son" and "Prince Shin and his lovely Bona"—formed part, under different titles, of a Collection, entitled "Historical Tales and Legends of the Highlands," issued by Messrs. A. & W. Mackenzie, Inverness, in 1878. A version of "The King's Son" was written by the Ettrick Shepherd, which, in all its leading characteristics, is almost entirely different from the one here given. My version closely follows the traditional form in which the incidents are handed down from generation to generation in the locality in which they are supposed to have taken place.

E. R. M.

Inverness, Christmas, 1891.

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TALES OF THE HEATHER.

GRANT OF GLEN-URQUHART.

MANY long years have passed away, and many changes have taken place, since Glen-Urquhart was the scene of this story. Then, the Glen was thickly wooded with magnificent trees, under the spreading branches of which sported the graceful and lively fawn; the squirrel gambolled amidst the green boughs, and the timid hare burrowed at the root without fear of molestation; while the stately stag reclined under the grateful shade, during the hot noon tide of the summer day. But a change had come over this lovely sylvan retreat. Its solitude, rather than its beauty, attracted the notice of a party of aliens, who found in its forests a secure place from pursuit, as well as a grand hunting field, well stocked with venison and game.

These aliens did not belong to any particular clan or sept, but were, as their name implied, "broken men" from all the clans. Some of them had been hounded from their home and people for misconduct; others had voluntarily severed themselves from the ties of kindred and clanship, and, disowning subjection to their own chiefs, lived in uncontrolled liberty, which, alas! only too often lapsed into license and lawlessness. As "birds of a feather flock together," so did these men by degrees band together for mutual protection, and, in course of time, became very formidable enemies, not only to the Lowlanders, but to all the neighbouring clans. As they owed allegiance to none but their self-elected captain, they plundered their neighbours indiscriminately, except where they were bought off by the payment of black mail. It not unfrequently happened, when one clan opposed another, that one of the rival chiefs engaged the aliens to fight on his side; and, as they were free from all clan obligations and hereditary feuds, they cared not on whose side they fought, provided they were well paid; and according to the old proverb, "honour among thieves," while so engaged, they not

only served their temporary leader faithfully, but held his property sacred from attack. But as soon as the term for which they had been engaged expired, they held themselves quite as much at liberty as before to carry off his cattle and burn his barns by a midnight raid.

At length their numbers increased so fast, and their depredations became so frequent and formidable, that the surrounding proprietors complained to the Governor of Strone Castle for allowing such a lawless set of men to settle within his territories, to be a source of annoyance to his neighbours, and pleaded with him to order them out of the Glen at once and for ever.

The Governor, accordingly, sent one of his men to the alien captain, with a message to the effect that he and his band must vacate the Glen, and seek other quarters. A week would be allowed for their removal, but after that time any of them found lingering in Glen-Urquhart, or on any of the lands under the Governor's jurisdiction, would be proceeded against with fire and sword.

The alien leader listened in grim silence to the message as it was intimated to him by the bearer; then, breaking out in rage, he bade the man begone. "Go back," he thundered, while his eyes flashed with angry scorn, "go back to your master and tell him I care not for him nor for his threats, and let him beware of sending such messages to me again. Take back his letter, and tell him this is how I treated it," at the same throwing the paper to the ground and stamping his heel upon it. "Yet stay! perchance you might lose this precious epistle; to make sure of it, you shall eat it." This proposal was greeted with shouts of laughter from the aliens, and, in spite of the expostulations and struggles of the messenger, he was forced, amid the jeers of his persecutors, to chew and swallow the document; then stripping him of his arms and most of his clothes, they sent him back, warning him on peril of his life never again to venture on carrying such mandates to them. Thankful to escape with his life from the hands of such desperate characters, the man hurried back to Strone Castle and reported the ill-usage he had received. The Governor was naturally incensed at the recital of the indignities inflicted upon his ambassador, and vowed that he would have vengeance upon the insolent intruders. Collecting a large number of his dependents, he placed them under the command of

his only son, William Grant, with orders to proceed up the Glen, and drive out the aliens at the point of the sword, giving no quarter.

This William Grant was a singularly handsome young man considerably over six feet in height. He was yet so well proportioned, that only by comparison with his fellows one noticed his unusual stature. With his blue eyes and fair hair—a clear, white skin, which any lady might envy, and a graceful athletic form—he was a very Adonis personified; and his qualities of head and heart being in unison with his good looks, he was loved and admired by the whole clan. The men selected for this expedition up Glen-Urquhart cheerfully placed themselves under his command, and started in high spirits, anxious to punish the interlopers for their many acts of oppression and insolence. Reaching the wood, they proceeded with caution to prevent being taken unawares by the wily foe, and after travelling some distance without hearing or seeing anything of the aliens, they redoubled their vigilance, fearing the enemy was trying to lead them into an ambuscade. But, when they had traversed the Glen from end to end without any signs of opposition, they hardly knew what to think. The young men of the party, exulting in their strength and courage, boastingly asserted that, taking fright at the preparations made against them, the aliens, considering "discretion the better part of valour," had decamped *en masse*. The older men, knowing better the desperate character of the men they had to contend with, shook their heads, and gave it as their opinion that, instead of flying, the aliens had merely hidden themselves in the thickest part of the forest, among the numerous caves and hiding-places in the rocks, and were there waiting an opportunity to take their pursuers unawares.

William and his party continued their search for several days without discovering any trace of the aliens, till, at last, they decided upon returning home. He, however, was so delighted with the beauty of the Glen and the appearance of good sport which it afforded, that he determined upon spending a little time to pursue his favourite pastime. Some of the most prudent of his followers tried to turn him from his purpose, by suggesting that, if the aliens were hiding near, they might possibly soon return, and that his life would be in danger if he was found alone. But

the brave youth only laughed at their counsel, and, telling them to inform his father of the reason of his delay in returning to the castle, saw his comrades depart with a light heart in which fear was unknown.

After spending the day enjoying the excitement of the chase, the evening found him wandering slowly and pensively along the shady avenues and leafy groves, formed by the drooping birch trees, admiring the beauty of the scene, inhaling the sweet perfume of the floral treasures which Nature had so profusely strewn around, while his ear was charmed with the sweet notes of the nightingale warbling his evening song.

As he strolled along, drinking in deep draughts of pure delight at the beauty and sweetness around him, he heard the refreshing, cooling sound of running water, and, shaping his course towards it, he soon reached a clear, limpid, bubbling spring issuing from the rock, and which, as if glad to get free, rushed impetuously from the narrow opening in the rock, rattling down over the stones with a deal of noise and bustle, and then, getting more subdued, spreading out, and, forming into a very bonnie stream, winding and meandering through the forest glades, growing slower and quieter as it proceeded, sometimes even coyly hiding underground for a few yards, only to re-appear with renewed life and beauty, until it finally lost itself in the river. As William followed its devious windings, his ears were assailed by the sound of a sweet female voice, singing one of those pathetic half-mournful airs peculiar to the Highlands. He stood still with astonishment at hearing such a totally unexpected sound, and, as he listened, he felt a sort of superstitious awe stealing over him; for he could scarcely bring himself to believe that it was not some supernatural being that was producing such enchanting strains. Curiosity, however, getting the better of his fear, he moved gently forward to catch a glimpse of the singer —fairy or naiad, or whatever else she might be — saying in an undertone, "The cross be betwixt me and thee," and involuntarily laying his hand on his breast, where he wore a charm composed of a piece of singed cow-hide, called the "Caiseanuchd," and some rowan berries, picked by moonlight, which was a sovereign remedy against the arts and wiles of fairy, warlock, or kelpie. Cautiously parting the bushes and intervening branches that opposed his view, he caught sight of the vocalist.

With bated breath and dilated eyes, he gazed upon her. Again he pressed his hand on the amulet; again he mentally repeated his exorcism, for now he felt certain that he beheld an inhabitant of another world; for nothing mortal could be half so beautiful. Within a few yards of where he stood was a lovely maiden, just budding into womanhood, sitting on the grassy bank of the burn. She was cooling her feet in the clear running stream, while her hands were deftly entwining fresh-culled wild flowers in her long silken tresses of jet-black hair, while ever and anon she bent forward to see her beautiful form reflected in the crystal water. Her plaid lay on the grass beside her, and her fair white neck and bosom were gracefully undulating, as she sang the sweet plaintive notes of a Gaelic love song. All the stories about fairies and their dread enchantment he had ever heard now flashed across his mind, but he felt so fascinated that he could not tear himself from the captivating sight. Soon, however, this sylph of the wood relieved him from his entranced state by getting up, placing her plaid over her shoulders and slowly walking away, still singing as she went. With a long-drawn sigh, partly of relief at his escape from the influences of the fairy, and partly at regret of losing sight of the fair vision young Grant pulled himself together and continued his ramble. But all the beauty and sweetness of the evening he had so enjoyed before seemed to have vanished with the nymph. Everything now appeared grey and cheerless, so he improvised a hunter's bed, and lay down to rest.

Next day he resumed his sport, or, at least, attempted to do so, but in reality his mind was occupied more with the lovely figure he had seen on the previous day. He often stood in reverie listening for the sweet notes which had so charmed him before, while the brown hare passed close to him unheeded, and the gentle doe came within shooting distance unharmed—for his bow was held unstrung and the arrows rested in the sheaf. The evening turning out wet and stormy, Grant looked about for a better shelter than that afforded by the leafy bowers of the forest. He at last discovered a natural cave among the rocks, and gladly availed himself of the protection it provided against the fast-increasing storm. He found that the cave ran in a good distance, and, though the entrance was narrow, it was a good size inside, and had evidently been made larger by the hands of man than it originally was; and as Grant

penetrated farther, he was surprised to see tokens of its having been very recently occupied as a dwelling-place. "Ah!" exclaimed he, "this, no doubt, was one of the aliens' hiding-places, and not a bad one either. I can rest here like a prince." There were several beds made of dried heather, covered over with skins, ranged round the walls of this natural cavern; and, selecting the best, Grant stretched himself upon it, and was soon fast locked in the arms of Morpheus. How long he slept he knew not, but he awoke with a start by a light shining in his face and the noise of men's voices in loud and eager conversation. The new comers had lighted a fire, the smoke of which, circling round the cave to find an exit, made the place so dark that the aliens had not perceived the presence of the intruder upon their hospitality.

William Grant was one of the bravest of men, yet his blood ran cold, and seemed to curdle in his veins. His heart beat fast, while a cold perspiration broke from every pore, as the imminent danger of his position dawned upon him. Here he was alone, far from his friends, surrounded by dozens of his inveterate foes; any moment the merest chance might discover him, when he was sure to meet with a sudden and inglorious death, without the least opportunity of defending himself; and, worse than all, his body would be cast out as carrion for the birds of the air to devour, and his friends would never learn his fate.

Shrinking down on his heathery couch, and making himself as small and invisible as possible, he lay, hardly daring to breathe, while eyes and ears were strained to the utmost, noticing every movement and listening to every word of the aliens, to discover if, by any unlooked-for chance, he might yet escape their deadly clutches. Suddenly another figure appeared upon the scene. The new-comer was a tall, powerfully built man, in the prime of life; and, as the fire-light played on his rugged features and fierce countenance, Grant recognised him as the leader or captain of the aliens. He entered the cave with a quick step, and, glancing angrily around, demanded in a loud, imperious voice, "What mean ye, fellows, idling here, quarrelling among yourselves, when there is real work to be done? Up! every man of ye; go instantly and discover whether there yet lurks in our glen, as I suspect, any of the accursed Grants. Hasten! and return here at once, for I'll make the red cock crow in every byre for twenty miles round

before another day is over." At their leader's entrance, every man sprang to his feet but stood silent, and receiving their orders, they all rushed from his presence, eager to atone for what he seemed to consider their previous negligence by extra agility in carrying out his present commands. For a few moments the alien captain stood in deep thought; his compressed lips and scowling brow plainly indicated that his meditations were not the most pleasant; then, with a yawn of utter weariness, he threw himself on the nearest couch, and in a few minutes his stentorian breathing conveyed to Grant the pleasing intelligence that his foe was asleep. Now, indeed, Fortune appeared to smile upon him; his opponents were reduced from scores to one individual, and that one was asleep.

For a moment, William felt tempted to bury his dirk in the heart of the slumbering man, but he was of too chivalrous a disposition to take an unfair advantage even of his bitterest foe, and, besides, his main object at the moment was to escape unnoticed from the toils in which his own imprudence had so entangled him, and to make his way to the castle as speedily as possible to warn his father of the intended raid of the aliens against him. He therefore rose gently, and, grasping his weapon with a firm hand, stole on tiptoe towards the entrance of the cave, to reach which he had to pass the still sleeping captain. Holding his breath, and, creeping with cat-like tread, young Grant advanced step by step; now he reached the alien's couch; another instant he would be past him, but, as ill-luck would have it, he stumbled over a half-burnt log of wood that had formed part of the fire. He recovered himself in a moment, but the noise, slight as it was, proved sufficient to arouse the alert captain, who, springing up, at once demanded who of his followers had dared to disobey his commands by staying behind? Then, as he caught sight of William, his eye pierced him with concentrated fury, exclaiming, "Ah! a Grant! did'st think to beard the lion in his den, thou smooth-faced boy?" Well was it then for the bold youth that he had his trusty claymore ready; with it he warded off the first rapid blows of his antagonist, who, perceiving the advantage the sword gave to Grant, while he was himself only armed with a dirk, suddenly closed with the youth, and, pinioning his arms with a bear-like hug, essayed to bear him by sheer strength to the ground. But he miscalculated the strength of his young opponent, who was equally skilled in wrestling as in sword-

manship. Letting fall his now useless claymore, Grant took a firm grip of his opponent, and then began the life and death struggle between them. With close-set teeth, knitted brows, from under which darted the angry flashes of vindictive and deadly hate, and panting breath, every muscle was strained to the utmost, they reeled to and fro; now backward, now forward. They soon reached the mouth of the cave, still clinging to each other with almost supernatural strength and determination; round and round they went, locked in their deadly embrace; the veins standing out like whip cord on their heated temples, their breath drawn in quick, convulsive gasps, but still their eyes glared on each other with unflinching defiance. The tremendous exertions they were making soon began to tell on both—their limbs trembled, their heads became giddy, but still they wrestled like two gladiators thirsting for each other's blood. Turning and twisting they reached the edge of an ugly rock, which at that place shelved down to a great distance. As they neared the brink of this frightful precipice, Grant saw a yet fiercer gleam in the bloodshot eye of the alien, who, collecting all his remaining strength, made a final effort, and attempted to throw Grant over the rock down to the yawning chasm below. Our hero was unable to resist the sudden, impetuous attempt of his foe; but determining that if he died, at least his enemy should not survive to boast of his victory, he clung to the alien with a vice-like grip, and together they rolled over the frightful precipice and disappeared.

The combatants still retained their hold of each other—even during their frightful fall. The alien being the heavier man, fell underneath, and his head striking on the rock with terrific force, he was instantaneously killed, but, strangely enough, young Grant escaped with his life. The shock, however, was so great, that for a long time he lay bruised and insensible. When at last consciousness returned, it was some time before he could comprehend his position. He lay, looking up to the star-lit sky, wondering in a half stupid sort of way how on earth he got to the bottom of such a deep gorge. Little by little his memory became clearer, and, finding all his limbs unbroken, he turned and looked enquiringly around to ascertain what had become of his antagonist. At that moment the moon, emerging from behind a cloud, shed her pale cold light full on the distorted features of the dead

alien. Recoiling with a shudder from the ghastly sight, Grant reverently bent his knee with feelings of supreme gratitude that he had been spared from an awful and sudden death. He now began to consider how he should escape from his still perilous position. It indeed required no small amount of thought and deliberation. "No doubt," he soliloquised, "those fellows will soon return to the cave, and then the captain's absence will be discovered; besides, their dogs will soon scent his corpse, and draw their attention to it and to me. What shall I do?"

He thus remained buried in thought for several minutes; then suddenly lifting up his head, as if struck with a new idea, he began to divest himself of his outer clothing, which he rolled up into a bundle, and hid in a crevice of the rock; then, approaching the dead man, he, with a gentle hand but with a little reluctance removed the kilt, plaid, hose, and bonnet, in which he quickly arrayed himself. His next step was to examine, as well as the moonlight would allow, the face of the precipitous rocks on all sides of him. Having, with an experienced eye, selected the most sloping and rugged side, he commenced his difficult and dangerous ascent, now clinging to the rock with hands and feet, now springing like a goat from one coigne of vantage to another; again, swinging over the precipice, only holding on by his hands, while by main strength he drew up his legs and gained a footing, with the steady brain and skilful movements of a trained acrobat. At last, by dint of climbing, springing, and clinging, he reached the top in safety; but was fain to lie on the ground for a few moments to recover his breath after the extreme exertion. He then cautiously crept towards the cave, listening intently for the slightest noise as a clue to the whereabouts of his foes. But all was still save the soughing of the wind through the trees, singing, as it were, a sad requiem over the dead man, the harsh croaking of the frogs, and the dismal "hoot, hoot" of the owl, that ill-omened bird which shuns the light of day. Grant regained the cave, and, finding it still unoccupied, busied himself in removing all traces of a struggle having so recently taken place, repossessed himself of his trusty claymore, and again lay down—not indeed to sleep, but to watch and wait, meanwhile trying to contrive a plot which would give him an advantage over his enemies. He had not long to wait before the aliens began to drop in by twos

and threes, each as he entered casting a furtive glance on what they took to be the sleeping form of their captain; but, having no pleasing news to report, they all gladly passed the couch in silence, and settled themselves down to their much-needed repose.

When the last man had lain down, young Grant still lay quietly waiting, with the lynx eyes and patience of a wild cat watching an unsuspecting bird. As soon as he felt convinced that they were all sound asleep, he quietly got up and made his way to the opening of the cavern, intending to speed like the wind towards his home, but, casting a parting look on his sleeping foes, he paused. The god of battle stirred up his mind to fight, while the goddess of wisdom counselled immediate flight. For a moment he hesitated between the adverse promptings of Mars and Minerva; his own inclination and training gave the casting vote to Mars, and he re-entered the cave; but, though he decided not to accept Minerva as his sole guide, he was willing enough to avail himself of her aid, so, catching up a large newly-flayed deer-skin still soft and slippery, he spread it out just before the entrance; then raising his powerful voice to its utmost pitch, he shouted out the resounding and well-known war cry of his clan. In a moment the startled aliens jumped to their feet, and rushed tumultuously out of the cave. The foremost men in their hurried exit slipped and fell on the skin, the rest, urged forward by their impetuous desire to get at the foe, and still further stimulated by the repeated war cry of the Grants ringing in their ears, stumbled over their prostrate companions in most admired disorder, while the doughty William laid about with his claymore with right good will. The darkness of the night favoured his suddenly conceived scheme, for, as the bewildered aliens struggled to their feet they struck out wildly at their comrades, mistaking them for the enemy. The carnage was dreadful, and the shouts of the combatants, mingled with the groans and imprecations of the wounded and the clashing of steel, formed a horrid combination of sounds, "making night hideous."

The conflict was too severe to be long continued, and in a short time the aliens were reduced to four, while Grant still remained unhurt. In the grey light of early morning, the discomfitted aliens tried to make out the number of their assailants, when, to their utter amazement, they perceived their friends

lying dead in dozens, while the only enemy they could see was the youthful William, standing erect, uttering his slogan, while his sword dripped with the blood of their slaughtered companions. With a howl of baffled rage, the four survivors threw themselves upon him. Now, indeed, he was hard beset. Quickly warding off their blows, he sprang back, and remembering the old adage of, "He who fights and runs away, lives to fight another day," he took to his heels, and fled with the speed of a hunted stag.

The men followed, keeping him well in view, when they noticed by the growing light of day that the figure they were pursuing wore the same tartan as themselves. Confounded at this unexpected discovery, they stopped and gazed at each other in doubt and perplexity. What could it mean? Were they chasing a friend? or had one of their number turned traitor? Yet surely they had heard the battle-cry of the Grants. It was a riddle they could not solve, but anyhow they had better overtake the runaway. But when they looked he was nowhere to be seen. Here was a fresh puzzle—he could not have run out of sight in such a short time; yet, where was he? They ran on for some time longer, but not catching sight of him again, they gave up the chase in despair, and stopped under a large tree to consult what to do next. They talked and argued among themselves, but could come to no satisfactory solution of the mystery, except that the *diaul* must be at the bottom of it all. One by one they ceased speaking, and, overcome by fatigue, resumed the slumber from which they had been so rudely and recently awakened by their unknown foe.

Now, once again peace and quietness reigned in the forest of Glen-Urquhart, the twittering of the birds, the murmurings of the burn, or the splash of the water, as it fell over the rocks in miniature cascades, being the only sounds audible. Pity that such sweet repose should again be disturbed by the turbulent and fighting propensities of man. Yet hardly had the last of the aliens closed his eyes, than the boughs of the tree under which they lay were shaken and moved aside and from it the face of a man peered down on the sleepers; then appeared the body of the owner of the face, slowly and carefully descending the huge trunk. As he sprang lightly to the ground, the figure proved to be that of William Grant, who, finding himself hard pressed, adopted, during the momentary panic of his pursuers, this mode

of concealment; and, as fortune would have it, the aliens halted under the very tree in which he was hidden. As he, with dirk in hand, crept warily towards the sleeping foe, his countenance was lighted up with a look of fierce joy; his eye gleamed with savage pleasure, while his mouth bore a hard, determined expression. So changed was his aspect by the unholy passions aroused in his breast, by the exciting scenes through which he had lately passed, that one would scarcely recognise him as the same man who, a few hours before, was rambling peacefully by the side of the burn, and enjoying the beauty of Nature in her gentler mood. Bending over the aliens, one by one, with a single blow, his dirk was buried in the heart of the victim. So sudden and deadly was the stroke that the sleepers never woke from their slumbers, but, with a single gasp, passed into the long sleep of the grave. Three of them shared the same fate, when Grant bethought him that it would be too much like murder to kill a single foe without giving him a chance of fighting for his life. So, sheathing his dirk, he drew his sword, and, shaking the still-sleeping alien, bade him defend himself. The man jumped to his feet, and, seeing his three comrades lying motionless, and this disguised man or demon, he knew not which, standing before him, he attacked him furiously, determined to prove if he were mortal or not. Long and severe was the combat, fiercer and fiercer grew the fight; the blows descended with the rapidity of hail, while blood flowed like water. Grant was severely wounded, and felt his strength giving way. This his opponent noticed, and redoubled his blows, striving to avenge the wholesale slaughter of his friends. Grant grew weaker, his limbs trembled, and his head was giddy from loss of blood, when a last recourse flashed into his mind. He was an expert hand at throwing the dirk, a common pastime with the young men of his time. It was his last chance; if that failed him he was a dead man. In a moment he drew his dirk; with a quick movement he jumped back, and turning himself round to gain force, he threw the dirk with unerring aim; he saw it strike the alien, saw him fall, and then sight, hearing, feeling left him—he dropped senseless to the ground.

Where is now his strength and manly beauty? His symmetrical form and graceful limbs are huddled shapelessly on the ground; his fair head, gashed with many a cut, lies low on the trampled grass; his yellow locks, stiff and discoloured with gore, hang over his

livid countenance ; his blue eyes, so brilliant, so expressive a few minutes ago, now half closed by the drooping lids, have the fixed, glazed look of death.

Among those who joined William Grant in his expedition to Glen-Urquhart was an elderly man named Ronald, who, being greatly attached to his young master, felt anxious and uncomfortable at his staying back alone in the Glen, and after going part of the way home with the rest of the party, he made up his mind to return, and try once more to dissuade William from his purpose, or, if he could not do that, determined to stay with him and share any danger that might threaten the young hero. Having been engaged all his life as a forester, he had no doubt that he would quickly light on the track of his young master. Nor was he disappointed ; with the skill and patience of a Red Indian he followed the trail, by the merest trifles—here a footprint, there a broken twig, anon the bent grass and crushed wild flower, gave him the desired clue. At length he reached the cave, when his alarm was intense at finding such a number of footmarks, and only too evidently the traces of a desperate struggle. Most carefully he scanned the lineaments of the slain aliens, dreading lest he should alight on that of his beloved and honoured young master. With all his skill he was a little at fault ; there were footmarks, and evidences of struggling, all around. In what direction should he now direct his search? After many efforts he struck on the trail again, followed it to the edge of the precipice, and then with distended eyes and cold sinking in his heart, he leaned over the rock and scanned the frightful chasm below. What is that object lying so white and still, far, far down? Yes! no!! yes, it is!!! a human body. How shall he reach it? and solve the terrible doubt that is agitating his breast. Cost what it may, he must make the attempt. Slowly, carefully, and painfully he descends the rock, never daring to look below, for fear of getting giddy. He at last achieves the difficult feat. Then alas! what does he see? The poor remains of a human being, so broken and disfigured by the fall and the attacks of birds of prey, that the features are totally indistinguishable. But no doubt remained in the mind of faithful Ronald. It could be no other than his beloved foster son, William Grant, who had met this cruel fate at the hands of the accursed aliens: and his

opinion was strengthened by finding the clothes which William had hidden. He recognised each article, and kneeling on the ground, holding the hand of the dead man, he swore an everlasting feud against the aliens, and vowed to avenge the death of his favourite upon the first man of them that should cross his path.

By taking a circuitous path, and by almost herculean efforts, he at last succeeded in gaining the top of the rock with his ghastly burden. Naturally, his progress was very slow, and, after going a considerable distance, he sat down to rest, tenderly laying the body down beside him. Looking back he was surpised to see the figure of a man approaching by the same paths he had just come through. Starting to his feet, he watched eagerly, and soon, in spite of the distance, made out by the man's movements that he was tracing out and following the trail he himself had made. In point of fact, he was being tracked and followed. As this conviction became clearer to the old man, he drew himself up, took an arrow from the quiver, fitted it to the bow, and stood ready, with a determined look and grim smile, pleased to think how soon fortune had sent him a chance of revenge. Steady as a rock he stood, watching until the man got within bow-shot, then, with deadly aim, the arrow flew from the shaft. Scarcely had it left the bow before Ronald gave a violent start, and, throwing up his arms with a shriek of agony, rushed forward as if to stay its swift career: for in the moment of shooting he recognised, to his unutterable despair, that it was his own son who was thus searching for him.

In an ecstasy of uncontrollable grief he saw the arrow pierce the breast of his child. Who can picture the horror of that moment, when, wrung by remorse, overwhelmed by despair, weeping the salt tears of bitter sorrow, uttering unavailing complaints against cruel fate, and melancholy self upbraidings at his fatal precipitation, Ronald bent over his dying son? The innocent victim of this most lamentable accident had only strength enough to assure his father of his entire forgiveness, and to explain that he had been sent by the Governor of Strone to trace out and recall both his own father and William. Then with a last fond message to his mother, and a faint pressure of his father's hand, the poor fellow breathed his last. Though overwhelmed with grief at this terrible misfortune, still his private sorrow did not make Ronald oblivious

to the claims of his chief; accordingly he prepared to return at once to the castle, but now he had two corpses to carry. His strength being unequal to this double load, he had to carry one at a time, returning at the end of every mile or so to fetch the other. This slow and tedious process retarded his progress so much that evening found him only about half way down the Glen. As he travelled mournfully along, carrying his son's body on his back, he came suddenly upon two persons—a man and a young girl. The man reclined against the trunk of a tree, in a half sitting and half lying position; the pale face, closed eyes, and listless, drooping attitude, denoted great weakness, which his severe and still bleeding wounds explained. The girl was attending to the sufferer, laving his face with the clear water of the burn, and employing such simple remedies as she had at command to aid in his recovery, while the compassionate pity depicted on her lovely features made her appear a veritable "ministering angel." As Ronald gazed on the interesting couple, the frame of the old man was shaken with surprised and compassionate emotion, mingled with no little fear. For, could he believe his eyes? or was grief turning his brain? There before him, in an alien's dress, lay William Grant, his chief's son. Yet had he not only a few hours since found his lifeless body, which was even now lying stiff and stark a little way behind, waiting until he should return for it. Then who was this lovely maiden attending to the wounded youth with such tender solicitude? His head reeled; reason tottered on its throne. Ronald imagined that he was involved in the meshes of some diabolical plot of the arch enemy of man, and, with a frenzied cry, he broke the spell which astonishment had thrown over him, and ran, afrighted, away, bearing his son's body on his back, terror making him unmindful of fatigue. He never stopped until he reached the castle, when he laid down his son's corpse in the great hall, and with rolling bloodshot eyes and incoherent utterance, tried to tell his sad, sad story to the amazed and awestruck inmates. Then the poor overtaxed frame gave way, and the faithful Ronald fell on the floor in a convulsive fit.

While these stirring events were taking place, young Grant lay between life and death in the forest of Glen-Urquhart, waited upon with the most assiduous kindness by the fair unknown, whose pity was fast ripening into affection. When at last William opened

his eyes, with returning consciousness, his first impression was that he had died, and that he was already in Paradise. He lay in a not unpleasant langour ; the fresh morning air, sweet-scented with the perfume of flowers, gently fanned his brow ; above him the green boughs of majestic trees met and interlaced, forming a natural canopy through which the sun struggled to send his scorching rays, but only succeeded in throwing pleasing and fantastic lights and shadows ; at his feet rippled the joyous swift-running burn ; beside him sat the lovely being whose vision had so enchanted him before ; with gentle hand she smoothed his forehead and toyed with his hair, the touch of her taper fingers sending a thrill through his heart and the blood coursing through his veins with renewed life. Again his ears were charmed by the sound of her voice, singing, low and sweet, a plaintive ditty. Strange, he did not feel afraid of her now ; on the contrary he felt as though he could lie there listening and looking at her for ever. As she turned her face towards him and met the admiring glance of his eyes, she gave a little start of surprised pleasure, and, ceasing her song, asked him in a gentle womanly voice if he was better, and if she could do anything for him ?

"No," answered he, "only sit and sing, I want nothing more." Soon, however, he murmured faintly, "Where am I ? and who are you ? Are you a fairy or an angel ?"

"Neither," she replied with a smile, "only a mortal like yourself. You are in the forest of Glen-Urquhart ; I found you lying wounded and senseless ; there has been sad fighting going on, and I fear many lives are lost. My name is Mona, I am the sister of the Captain of the Glen. I see by your dress that you are one of his band, but I do not remember to have seen you before. Now that you are somewhat better, I must leave you for a while till I find my brother. I begin to get anxious about him, as he did nor return to me at the promised time."

"Alas, maiden," said William, "your search will be in vain. Your brother's head lies low ; you will never see him more."

"Can this be true ?" exclaimed the young maiden in accents of grief, "no, no, you must be mistaken ; my brother was strong and skilful with his sword. Who could overcome him ? I won't believe it."

"It is true," continued William faintly, "I saw him lying cold and white last night ; ah ! it was a dreadful sight."

"My poor, poor brother," sobbed Mona; then she added, turning an indignant look on her youthful companion, "why did you not protect him, aye, even with your life; shame to you to be alive to tell of your captain's death."

"You are mistaken," rejoined William, "I am not an alien, though I wear their dress; I am a ——." His voice ceased suddenly, the excitement of talking was too much for his weak state, and he again relapsed into unconsciousness.

Though stricken with grief at her brother's death, still Mona's kind heart would not permit her to leave William alone and uncared for. She went hastily and called some other women, who, like herself, had retired to a place of safety on the commencement of hostilities, and between them they conveyed the still senseless William to their retreat, and, in spite of the unexplained mystery respecting him, they nursed him with great kindness. For days and weeks he lingered between life and death, at one time raging in high fever, at another lying helplessly weak. Mona was his chief nurse, and she soon gathered from his incoherent, disconnected ravings while the fever was high, that he was a Grant, and consequently the avowed foe of her brother and his comrades. She was startled and sorry at this disclosure, but prudently kept the knowledge to herself, as she did not feel sure of her companions' forbearance if they should guess the truth.

Mona and her companions had meanwhile discovered the body of her brother and the rest of the aliens, and had given them burial as best they could. She mourned sincerely, but more because he was her brother and only relative than from any strong personal affection; for the late leader of the aliens had been a stern, harsh, unlovable man, who had always repelled any show of affection on her part. The other women, finding their husbands and lovers were all dead, had now no desire to remain in Glen-Urquhart, the scene of such a dreadful tragedy; they consequently wandered away to seek their former homes. Poor Mona had no inducement to accompany them; she had no home or kindred to return to; the only living being in whom she felt any interest was her patient, now slowly approaching convalescence under her kind and ceaseless attention. She therefore remained in the Glen to nurse him.

Long was the struggle between life and death, but at last

youth, a good constitution, and the simple natural remedies employed, drove back the King of Terrors step by step, until at length William was out of danger, but so weakened that weeks would elapse before he could travel. To his great admiration of the personal charms of his fair companion was now added the most profound gratitude for her skilful benevolence. In short, our hero was head and ears in love, and is it much to be wondered at that during the long weary days they spent together in the glen that William succeeded in gaining the affections of the true-hearted Mona?

Cold, dark, and cheerless had been Strone Castle since the unhappy day on which the frantic Ronald had related his tale of woe. No banner streamed proudly from the battlements; no stirring sound of martial music was heard within its walls; no warlike games and trials of skill in the courtyard; no revelry in the hall. The aged bard sat drooping over his silent harp; the clansmen wore a dispirited look; the servants moved about dejected and sad; for all grieved truly for what they believed had been the certain and untimely fate of the brave and noble-hearted William and sympathised with the bereaved and sorrow-stricken father, mourning the loss of his only son.

Towards the close of a fine day in early autumn the warder on the watch tower perceived two figures approaching the castle. He saw at a glance that they were not any of the inhabitants round about, and he scanned them with a curious eye, for their appearance was unusual. They were a man and a woman slowly making their way towards the castle. The man appeared to walk with difficulty, and leaned heavily on his companion's arm. The keen eye of the watchman soon detected that the man wore the dress of the detested aliens, and he gave the signal to his comrades of the approach of an enemy. They crowded round in curiosity, and waited for the solution of the puzzle. Strange, the figure and the air of the advancing alien seemed familiar to them all. Surely they know that tall, athletic form, those chishelled features, those fair yellow locks, and as the advancing man looks up and sees them watching, he takes off his bonnet and waves it in the air. Then they all call out in unison, "Tis he, 'tis William; hurra! hurra!!" and with joyful shouts they all run forward to meet him In a moment he is surrounded and carried shoulder high in

triumph to the great hall of the castle, the warder gallantly leading his lovely companion, each and all eagerly crowding round to grasp his hand, every one talking at once, asking endless questions. The hubbub reached the Governor, and brought him from his seclusion. He entered the hall, and stood still with amazement; then with a cry of joyful surprise, he heartily embraced his beloved son, who sprung forward to meet him. Gently releasing himself from his father's grasp, William turned to where the fair Mona stood a timid and silent spectator of all this enthusiasm. Taking her hand he led her up to his father, and, amid the greatest attention and stillness of his audience, said in a firm but respectful tone, "My father, you see before you the preserver of your son. If it had not been for the unremitting attention and kindness of this fair maid, I should never have seen you again; and as the only return I can make for her great disinterestedness is to make her my wife, I thus publicly betroth her before you all as witnesses, and I ask, father, for your sanction and blessing on our nuptials." The old Governor was visibly affected; he was a proud, ambitious man, who had hoped his son would have formed an alliance that would have increased both his influence and power. But natural affection overcame all schemes of aggrandisement. Could he deny the first request of his newly-recovered son? With a glistening eye and quivering lip he gracefully drew the blushing Mona towards him, and imprinted a kiss on her white brow, while in a voice tremulous with conflicting emotions, he said,

"My son, I accept your choice, and willingly give my consent to your marriage with the fair maiden, your deliverer. I do not know the lady's name or lineage, but this I do know, that in all wide Scotland you could not find a more lovely bride."

At this public tribute of admiration the bashful Mona blushed still more charmingly than before, while hearty congratulations and joyous hurrahs rent the air.

Presently an old man is seen pushing his way through the throng, exclaiming,

"Let me see him, I won't believe it till I see him with my own eyes."

They all drew back to make room for poor old Ronald; for it was he. Changed with grief, his figure, once so upright, was bent and bowed under the load of sorrow caused by the sad

and tragical fate of his son ; his hair was white as snow, not from age, but from the strain on his mind, from the never-ceasing, torturing reflection that he was the slayer of his own son. When face to face with his foster-son, he looked at him long and earnestly, then, clutching his hand, he exclaimed, "Speak, tell me is it indeed you? did I not find you dead at the bottom of the precipice? now, how is it then that I see you here?" "Be calm, good Ronald," replied William, "I am just he and no one else. It was not my body that you found in Glen-Urquhart, but that of my enemy ; thanks to this kind lady, I survived to see you all again." The old man was quite satisfied with this explanation, and relieved his pent-up feelings by shouting a hearty hurrah, which was quickly taken up by the rest of the household, who cheered the favourite and his bride again and again.

A few days afterwards there was a great festival at the Castle; flags and banners hung from every available place ; music both loud and sweet was to be heard on every side ; the cooks and waiting men ran hither and thither with an air of great importance ; visitors, gentle and simple kept constantly arriving at the Castle, in the great hall of which stood the grey-headed Governor, with a smile and pleasant greeting for all his numerous guests. Anon comes floating on the breeze the sound of voices, chanting the impressive music of the church ; soon is seen a procession slowly making its way forward amid the respectful greetings of the crowd. It is the Bishop and his attendant clergy coming to solemnise the ceremony, which is shortly to take place. Gradually the bustle becomes less, the spectators settle in their places ; the priests and choristers are ready ; there is a hush of expectation ; then a door at the further end of the hall opens, and William Grant appears, leading in the beautiful Mona, surrounded by the noblest and loveliest ladies of the district. Nothing was omitted that could grace the occasion and lend additional pomp to the ceremonial. "All went merrily as a marriage bell," and as to the feasting that followed, it can not be described. Such eating, such drinking, such dancing, such rejoicing, was never before, never since, seen in the beautiful vale of Glen-Urquhart.

IAN MACTAVISH:

A LEGEND OF STRATHNAIRN.

NESTLING in a beautiful and secluded glen, sheltered by the surrounding hills, near the picturesque Loch Ruthven in Strathnairn, might be seen, during the latter part of the seventeenth century, a small, yet comfortable homestead. The exceptional tidiness of the outhouses, the cleanliness of the cottage, and the evident attention bestowed upon the garden, plainly indicated that its occupant was a man of very different habits and temperament to the great majority of his fellow-countrymen of that period. In fact, Ian Roy Mactavish was a man far in advance of his age in his ideas of political economy, though doubtless he was innocent of the meaning of the term. While the rest of the clan were thinking of nothing but fighting and destroying, preferring to raid into other territories for their supplies of cattle and forage, leaving their own land untilled and unproductive, Ian chose this, the most secluded and fertile spot he could find, built his cottage, planted his garden, sowed his crops, and brought home his young wife, Jessie, desiring to live at peace with all men. Little more than a year had elapsed in the most perfect happiness and security, when the summit of Ian's felicity was reached by becoming the proud father of a fine healthy boy. His wife was attended to on the auspicious occasion by an elderly woman, Janet Macdougall, a noted character in the district, her fame having spread far and wide, as a successful midwife, or "howdie." Having also an extensive knowledge of the medicinal properties of herbs, combined with great experience and shrewdness, she was universally applied to in cases of accident or illness—such a personage as a doctor being then almost unknown in the Highlands. Janet was a remarkable-looking woman, a tall spare figure, slightly bowed with advancing years, with a pale, grave face, in which care and sorrow had drawn many a wrinkle, expressive black

eyes, fearless and bright when work was to be done, but which, in moments of repose, wore a sad, far-away, eerie look. No one knew her age, and few her history, which, though humble, had been tragic. She was once a happy wife and mother, but her husband had fallen, claymore in hand, and face to the foe; her dwelling was burnt over her head, and herself and children were turned adrift helpless and alone on an unsympathetic world. By the time she came to Strathnairn she was childless as well as widowed, and she afterwards remained the same lonely woman, devoting her time and attention to the physical wants of those around her, in the capacity of midwife and general physician for the district. She was treated with considerable respect, combined with no little amount of awe, for she was popularly believed to be a Taibhsear, gifted with second-sight, and many were the wonderful tales related of her visions and their strange fulfilment.

It was the afternoon of a fine autumn day; the parting rays of the declining sun illumined and beautified the scene, and played on the wavelets of the loch, till the water looked like molten gold, shining on the heather-clad hills, until they appeared crowned with a halo of many-coloured glory. Ian was engaged tending his cows, quietly grazing by the side of the loch and chewing their cud with that air of placid contentment so characteristic of those docile animals when well cared for. Mactavish, being an industrious man, was enjoying himself and utilising his time fishing, as well as tending his cattle, which he managed easily with the valuable assistance of his faithful and well-trained collie. As he angled in the loch or glanced at his herd, he felt supremely happy, free from any anxiety about his beloved wife, now so far convalescent that Janet was leaving them that same day. He mused with pleasure on the thought of his infant son, how he would train him up with the same ideas as his own, that he might prove a blessing to him in his old age. These agreeable meditations were suddenly interrupted by old Janet, who had left the cottage and come to bid him farewell. While thanking her for her kind attention to his wife, he was struck with astonishment at the change that came suddenly over her countenance. She stood and looked earnestly in his face, her grey head bent forward, with a pair of staring eyes, which appeared to look through and beyond him, as it were, while her face became deadly

white and drawn up as if with pain. For a moment or two she stood thus; then, with a low moan, she removed her fixed gaze, and trembling violently, sat down on the grass, moaning and lamenting, "Ochan! ochan! sad and sorry am I to see such a sight, and the poor young creature with the dear babe, what will she do, alas, alas." Ian was quite unable to comprehend what ailed her, and begged her to explain the cause of her grief. This Janet at first appeared most unwilling to do, continuing to lament to herself in half-broken sentences of which Mactavish could make no sense. When she became more composed she asked him if he had an enemy from whom he had any reason to dread violence. He assured her that, to the best of his knowledge, he had no personal enemy, at the same time asking an explanation of her strange behaviour. Being so urgently pressed, she told him that she feared his life would not be a long one, for she had had a vision concerning him, and "Oh," she continued, while her voice trembled, "Oh, Mactavish, it will not be long before you are called, for I saw the death shroud covering you up to your head, and ochan! ochan! there was a big rent in it too, which showed that it will be a violent death you will come to. Indeed, it's me that's sorry for you and your poor young wife, but it's too true, too true."

Mactavish was naturally startled and somewhat unnerved at this dreadful communication, but being by no means so superstitious as most of his countrymen, he soon rallied, and attempted to treat the matter lightly. Janet, however, was not to be shaken in her belief, and, getting annoyed at his incredulity, took leave of him and proceeded on her way.

Mactavish resumed his sport, and tried hard to drive the ill-omened prediction from his mind. The day waned, and the shades of evening began to gather, throwing the valley into shadow, and making the hills, now dark and dull, stand out in bold relief against the grey sky. Ian had just succeeded in hooking a fine large fish when a low growl from his faithful collie caused him to look hastily around in order to discover the cause of the dog's uneasiness. To his surprise and annoyance he observed a large party of armed Highlanders approaching, driving before them a great number of black cattle, whom he rightly conjectured were some of the aliens, who then held possession of the upper part of

Stratherrick, returning from a successful foray. He felt vexed that they should have discovered his retreat, but apprehended no danger until he saw two or three of them detaching themselves from the rest, and beginning to drive his own small herd away to swell their creach from the Southron. In vain he ran and shouted, asking them to desist. It was by their captain's orders, they said, so, with hurried footsteps, his heart beating with dread and burning with indignation, Ian approached the leader, and demanded the restoration of his cattle. "Why," he exclaimed, "why should you harry me; I am no enemy of yours, and have never injured any of you?"

"You are not a friend of ours, and, consequently, good and fair game," answered the alien chief, a tall fierce-looking man, whose daring and adroitness in planning and executing raids had made his name well known and detested.

"But," pleaded Mactavish, "my few cows can make but little difference to you. You have already such a large booty, and these are all I have, restore them and leave me in peace; perhaps I may be able to do you as good a turn some other day."

"Stop your talking and stand out of my way, fellow, or it will be worse for you," roughly answered the leader, at the same time pushing Mactavish aside.

"Well then," persisted Ian in despairing tones, "at least leave me one cow for the sake of my family, only one."

"No," roared the alien in a terrible voice, "not one, and if you hinder me any longer I'll burn your house over your head, and scatter the ashes to the four winds of heaven, and you and your family can dwell with the wild fox, where you'll have no need of a cow; take that, and hold your tongue," and, suiting the action to the word, he finished his brutal speech by giving Ian a back-handed blow in the face as he moved forward to pass him.

Such an insult was not to be tamely submitted to, and with an inarticulate cry of rage Mactavish darted forward, and, forgetting all prudence, struck madly at the chief with his fishing hook, which he still held in his hand. Before the blow could fall however, one of the party interposed, and with the ever ready dirk, stabbed Mactavish in the side.

With a deep groan poor Ian sank on the purple heather, and without halting to see if the wound was fatal, or even to draw

the dirk out of it, the aliens hurried on, grudging the time they had already spent over what they considered but a very small affair.

"Alas!" moaned poor Ian, as he lay helplessly on the ground, his life blood crimsoning the fragrant heather, till it seemed to blush for the foul deed, and call aloud for vengeance against the cruel murderer, "alas! old Janet spoke the truth, though little did I think her vision would so soon come to pass. Woe is me, must I die here like a wild beast, with no friendly hand to close my eyes or to wipe the dews of death from my brow? My forefathers fought against the Keppochs, and fell gloriously on the fields of Maoil Roy and Inverlair, but I shall die like a goat on the hill top, and my flesh will become the prey of the wild cats and the eagles. My poor wife, my beloved Jessie, who will tell you of your husband's death, who will speak words of comfort to the widow? Must I never see you more! never more see my darling boy! My treasures of love and hope, how can I die without seeing you once more! Oh, mo ghaol, mo ghaol, what have I done that I should be torn from your side, and crushed like an adder under the foot of the stranger? Cursed be the hand that struck me, may his arm wither and——no, I will not curse, I leave vengeance to a Higher Power, it may be that my son will yet avenge the murder of his father."

Here the attention of Mactavish was claimed by his faithful collie, who had followed the cows for some distance, in the vain hope of turning them back, and now exhibited the utmost distress at seeing his master in such a sad condition, licking his hands and face, whining and howling in the most dismal manner.

The sight of the dog roused in the dying man's breast such a longing once more to reach his home and see its beloved inmates, that with an energy born of despair he got up on his knees, and with one arm resting round the dog's neck, attempted to crawl towards the cottage.

His young wife was waiting and watching for his return; the usual time of his coming arrived, but no Ian. An hour passed; Jessie wondered what was keeping him; perhaps, she thought, one of the cows had strayed, he was sure to be home soon now; so she mended the fire and sat nursing her baby, looking at him and discovering new charms, with the absorbed attention and con-

centrated love of a young mother for her first born. Another hour passed; she began to get more anxious; and laying the child down, she went to the door and looked in every direction, but no sign could she see of husband, cows, or dog. Perplexed and alarmed, she knew not what to do, or what to dread from this strange occurrence. There was no one to advise or console with her.

In fear and anxiety she wandered aimlessly through the house, or stood at the door watching in vain for the beloved form that would never more hasten to meet her. With troubled voice broken with sobs, she called aloud again and again her husband's name. In vain; in vain! The night wind carried the sound away, and the cold pale moon looked down, as if in mockery of her passionate grief. The feeble cries of her infant recalled her to the fireside, where she continued her weary vigil until midnight, when, hark! what was that? a scratching at the door! the pitiful whine of a dog. Quickly she opens the door, and calls the dog by name; he bounds in, barks furiously, and, catching hold of her dress, attempts to draw her back again towards the door. She stoops to pat him, his shaggy coat is covered with dew, but it is not dew that leaves those dark footprints on the floor; and what mark is that he leaves on her hand as he licks it? Ah! horror! it is blood! gracious heavens! what has happened? Overpowered with emotion, she sinks into a chair, but the horror of the night is not yet passed, her cup of misery is not yet filled. The dog runs again to the door; with the dull stony look of despair, she sees him re-enter, but who or what is it that accompanies him? A ghastly object, crawling slowly and painfully on hands and knees, bedabbled with blood, with dishevelled hair hanging over the deathly face. Can this be her Ian? the stalwart cheery man she parted with a few hours before. Spell-bound with terror, she stands motionless, while slowly, painfully, the figure draws nearer her, with sad, sorrowful eyes, over which the film of death is rapidly drawing; it gazes on her and essays to speak, but no sound comes from the parched lips. With a great effort it seizes her hand in its cold clammy palm, and at the touch the spell is broken. Jessie realizes that this is indeed her husband, and, with a terrible cry, she falls senseless to the ground.

Day was dawning before she recovered from her swoon, and

oh! what a terrible awakening it was. As she slowly opened her eyes the first object that met her gaze was the staring eyes of a corpse, and as consciousness returned, she found her hand still clasped by the cold stiff fingers of her murdered husband.

When she collected her scattered senses, so rudely shaken by this awful event, and began to realise her great loss, she gave way to the most extravagant grief, wringing her hands, tearing her hair, and beating her breast, while uttering the most piercing cries, at one time apostrophising her beloved one with every endearing term, while she bathed his cold face with torrents of tears. Anon, with dry eyes and outstretched hand, she would call down curses on the head of the perpetrator of the cruel deed, and cry aloud for vengeance ; then again she would melt into lamentations. "Oh Ian ! my love ! my love ! will you never speak to me more, shall I never again see the love-light in your eye, or feel the warm pressure of your lips, never, never, your eyes are fixed and your lips are cold in death, and I am alive to see it ; oh! would that I were dead, how shall I live without you ? my husband, my first and only love."

The wailing cries of the neglected infant now recalled her attention to it. "Cry on, poor babe," she exclaimed, "you little know the loss you have sustained, never will you feel the watchful love and care of a father. Ochan ! ochan ! I will cherish you that you may live to revenge his untimely death ; see this dirk I draw from the gaping wound, see it covered with the life blood of your father. May you live my child, and one day sheath it in the black heart of his murderer."

As she became calmer she began to think what was best for her to do. There was no dwelling within several miles, and besides, being in perfect ignorance from whom or for what cause her husband had met his death, she was afraid to go to strangers for help ; but at last she concluded to go to her father's house, where she would be sure of assistance.

Having, with many tears and choking sobs, performed the last sad duties to the dead, she left the faithful dog in charge of his beloved master, and taking her infant in her arms, set out on her long and lonely journey.

Wearily she plodded on. Weak from her recent illness, and borne down with grief, she felt at times as though she must give

up the attempt and lie down and die, but then the thought of her dead husband lying in the desolate cottage would nerve her to make still another effort to obtain assistance, and have his remains properly interred. At length she reached her father's house, and told her sad tale, which was listened to with the greatest horror of the deed, and sympathy for herself. Her father and some friends at once started to fetch the body of poor Mactavish, and a sad, sad sight it was for the young widow to see the funeral cortege return. First came, with solemn tread, the piper, the mournful wailing notes of the lament announcing the approach of the funeral party long before they came in sight ; then came four strong young men bearing on their broad shoulders the coffin which contained the mortal remains of their murdered friend. Behind followed Jessie's father and a large party of friends and relatives, all armed with dirk and broadsword ; for in those wild, unsettled times they were never sure but they might be interrupted even on such a melancholy and peaceful errand as they were now engaged in.

The broken-hearted Jessie could not bear the idea of returning to her cottage, where every object would constantly remind her of her bereavement. She therefore decided to remain with her father, and after the furniture and plenishing had been removed, the cottage, which had been built and furnished with such loving care and bright hopes of happy years to be spent in it, was left to ruin and decay, a striking monument of the uncertainty of man's life and enjoyment.

Jessie called her boy Ian, after his father, and when he grew old enough to understand her, she would talk to him by the hour together, of his dead father, praising his virtues and deploring his untimely end. This sort of conversation made a great impression upon the child's mind, ending, as it usually did, by the dirk being shown to him encrusted with the blood of his father.

Thus his mother fired his imagination and incited his young mind to thoughts of revenge and retaliation. The dirk being the only clue they had to the murderer, she gave it to young Ian when he was old enough to wear it, and told him to have it always ready until he should find the man, and then sheath it in his heart. As he grew up, and his disposition and temper became more developed, it was seen that he was in temperament

the very reverse of his father. Bold and courageous, he rather courted than shrunk from danger. Restless and daring, he looked with disdain upon the simple life of a husbandman. His ardent nature made him burn to distinguish himself in deeds of warlike skill and dauntless courage. These qualities, combined with a hardy, robust frame and very handsome features, made him conspicuous among his companions, and attracted the attention of the Laird of Gorthlick, who was so taken with his appearance and manner that he determined to save him from the drudgery of a farmer's life, and give him a chance of pushing his fortune in a more congenial sphere. Ian was, accordingly, much to his own delight and to the satisfaction of his mother, admitted an inmate of the castle, as a sort of confidential attendant or page to its master.

Here several years passed swiftly and happily, young Mactavish daily growing in the favour of his patron, who, having no son of his own, gradually came to treat Ian as one, and took a great pride in seeing his protege acquit himself so bravely in the frequent skirmishes they had with the aliens, a large number of whom still held possession of the upper part of Stratherrick and were continually making raids on the neighbouring territories. Evan Dubh, their captain, was a bold unscrupulous man, somewhat advanced in years, but still full of energy and enterprise. When our young hero was about eighteen, his patron was called away, with the best part of his followers, to attend a grand meeting of the Clans, held at some distance, but before leaving home he called young Mactavish and told him that he should leave him in charge during his absence. Young as he was he had every confidence in his courage and prudence, and not only left him in command of the men who remained behind, but also entrusted to him the safe keeping of the castle, and, most precious of all, the charge and safety of his only daughter, the lovely Catharine, then just blooming into womanhood.

Ian's heart beat high at the great honour paid to him by this signal proof of his Chief's confidence, but especially at being considered worthy of being constituted the guardian and protector of the beautiful and fascinating Catharine, whom he had long worshipped at a distance as if she were a superior being belonging to another world. Now he was actually her guardian, and on

him depended her safety and well-being until the return of her father. His brain was in a whirl with ecstasy and his heart thrilled with emotion as a vision of possible future bliss rose in his agitated breast. "If her father deems me worthy of being her protector for a time, is it not just possible, if I do my duty and deserve her, that I may be yet considered worthy of her for life. Little need had he to urge me to watch over her carefully. I would lay down my life at any moment to do her service."

For a few days after the Chief had left, everything was quiet and secure, and Ian began secretly to wish that some danger might arise to afford him an opportunity of showing his devotion to the fair Catharine. On the evening of the fifth day, however, the alarm was given at the castle that a large party of the aliens, headed by their renowned captain, Evan Dubh himself, were driving the cattle from their pasture, molesting the men in charge of them, and threatening to attack the castle. Hastily summoning his men, and bidding Catharine to keep close indoors and have no fear, Mactavish, with his trusty band, rushed out to meet and chastise the intruders. Evan Dubh, fully acquainted with the Chief's absence from the castle, had expected an easy victory, and was considerably taken aback by the sudden and impetuous onslaught of Ian, but noting the smallness of the defending body, he determined to give fight, and, recalling the men engaged in driving off the cattle, a regular pitched battle ensued. The aliens largely outnumbered the defending party, and for a time Ian seemed to be getting the worst of it, when Mactavish, singling out the alien leader, worked his way to where he stood, hewing down every man who came in his way. A fearful hand-to-hand combat took place between them. Evan Dubh was a strong built man, somewhat under the middle height, whose life had been spent in such warfare. With iron sinews, eagle eye, and a ready hand, which constant practice had rendered perfect in the use of his weapon, he was a formidable opponent to the youthful hero, who, however, never flinched. What Ian lacked in weight, he made up by extra agility, and his want of experience was compensated by his impetuosity and daring. His eye was as quick, and his courage as high as that of his enemy. Evan Dubh first looked with disdain at the youthful appearance of his antagonist, and contemptuously exclaimed—"Fall back, thou presumptuous stripling, ere I kill

thee at one blow. Wait till thy beard has grown before thou cross swords with me." Ian's only answer to this was a furious blow at Evan's head, which the alien parried with difficulty, and he soon found that he had a foeman worthy of his steel, boy though he was. The struggle was severe and the ultimate result seemed doubtful, but the fiery energy and quick movements of Ian began to tell on the old warrior, who, with labouring breath, gathered himself together for a final blow, which he hurled with all his remaining strength at the devoted youth. The stroke descended with lightning-like rapidity, but our hero quickly parried it, and, with a sudden thrust, wounded Evan, who dropped on his knees, his broadsword falling from his nerveless grasp. Dropping his sword, young Ian drew his dirk, and springing upon his opponent, bore him to the earth, and, holding the dirk before the eyes of his prostrate foe, demanded if he would now submit himself as a prisoner to save his life. Instead of replying, the wounded alien glared with glazed eyes and horror-stricken look upon the blood-stained dirk which Ian held before him.

"Do you yield?" shouted Ian.

Still Evan Dubh answered not, but keeping his eyes fixed on the dirk, muttered incoherently, "It is, it is, the same, my own. Many a year has passed since last I used it!"

Mactavish, losing patience, and fearing he should lose his advantage, in the excitement of the moment buried his dirk in the breast of his opponent. The blow did not prove immediately fatal, and, as Ian drew it back from the dying man's breast, Evan seized his arm, and, in faltering tones, exclaimed—"Where got ye that dirk? Well do I know it, long have I carried it, and many a brave enemy has felt its point, and now it has done for myself at last? Ah, poor Ian Mactavish, I left it embedded in thy side, by the bank of bonnie Loch Ruthven, which I am now doomed to see no more." "What," cried young Ian, in terrible excitement and rage, "what did you say? Was it your hand that shed the innocent blood of my father? Speak! speak! you shall not die until you tell me;" and in his eagerness and passion, he violently shook the expiring alien, who faintly replied, "Your father! was that your father? Ah, I see him. I remember him. Look! he is pleading with our captain. Ah, ha! he might as well have asked mercy from the wolf! I see him now raise his arm

to strike—fool, your father. I soon gave him his answer. And yet I wish I had not killed him in that way. It was not a fair fight—raise me up, I am choking; keep off, Mactavish! Why do you glare on me so? Give me back my dirk! I did not mean to kill him—keep off! away! away! Oh! I did ——." The feeble voice was choked, and, with a deep groan, Evan Dubh, who had hitherto never yielded to mortal man, succumbed to the King of Terrors, and, with one last convulsive struggle, his guilty spirit took its flight.

It would be difficult to analyse Ian's feelings as he saw the murderer of his father expire, killed by himself. Detestation of the man became mingled with gratified revenge, and awe at the presence of death in such a fearful form was mixed with a grim satisfaction that he had been able, though unwittingly, to avenge the fate of his father.

The aliens, seeing their leader fall, became disheartened, and were soon put to flight, followed by Mactavish and his men, who made most of them kiss the sod with their leader.

Catharine met her youthful and brave champion at the door of the castle with a veritable April face, smiles and tears struggling for the mastery. She tried hard to command her feelings, and welcome him with a proper dignity of demeanour, but her emotion on seeing him wounded overcame all ceremony, and seizing his hand, she exclaimed with fervour, "Thank heaven! you have returned. I feared you would have been killed and then what would have become of me." Then, as if fearing she had said too much, she turned and flew to her apartment, sending a parting glance from under her fringed eyelashes that thrilled through and through the susceptible heart of Mactavish, and raised him to the seventh heaven of enchantment.

When Ian related to his mother the strange manner in which he had discovered the man for whom he had been looking all his life, and showed her the dirk, now stained with the blood of the murderer, as well as that of his beloved father, the widow was satisfied that at long last her beloved husband was avenged, and that by the hand of her son; and both were still more pleased that Evan Dubh had met his death in fair fight, and that Ian's conscience was clear from bloodguiltiness.

On Fraser's return home, he was extremely pleased at the bold

manner in which Mactavish had met and defeated the raiders; and when his daughter, in glowing and eloquent terms, dwelt on the devotion and heroism of young Ian, the old man soon guessed the secret which she vainly thought was as yet safely locked in her own bosom; and being well pleased that her choice should be such a worthy one, on being approached by Ian, he cheerfully agreed to the proposed alliance, and left him to plead his own cause with the maiden, which he, rendered eloquent by love, did to such good purpose that the marriage-day was soon fixed; and, amid the congratulations of friends, and the blessings of Ian's widowed mother, the lovely Catharine was led to the altar, a blushing bride, by the young and gallant Ian Bàn Mactavish.

DONALD BAN'S FATE:

A LEGEND OF ARGYLE.

On a dark tempestuous night, about the middle of last century, an anxious group gathered on the seashore of a small village on the west coast of the county of Argyle. In spite of the howling wind, and pelting rain they stood, straining their eyes seaward to watch through the gloom the struggles of a gallant ship which, with her devoted crew, seemed doomed to destruction. The vessel was evidently disabled, and totally unmanageable, and the villagers listened with deep emotion and ejaculations of horror and distress to the deep booming of the minute gun and the hoarse cries of the sailors imploring the assistance of those on shore, who were powerless to assist them. Nearer and nearer the ill-fated ship was driven to the deadly rocks, until at length the end came; with a fearful crash she struck; one moment she was lifted high by the cruel waves; the next saw her dashed to pieces like a toy in the hands of a giant, her crew battling for life in the raging sea.

Now the brave landsmen do their utmost to help. With encouraging shouts they rush through the boiling surf, and throw ropes to the drowning men, but alas! few indeed can they save. The women are not idle; they have blankets to throw around the senseless forms and restoratives to hold to the pallid lips of the half-drowned men. Among the most active is a widow, who, with her two daughters, is busily engaged in assisting a fine stalwart young sailor who has just been rescued from the waves, whether dead or alive can be at first scarcely decided. The widow's cottage being near, they conveyed him there, and by their united efforts have at length the pleasure of seeing him revive and able to thank them for their kindness.

When recovered sufficiently to give an account of his ship and her disastrous voyage, it came out that he belonged to the next village, although he had been absent at sea for several years.

They knew his mother well, and great was the joy of all when, on the morrow, they accompanied him to her house, and related the story of the wreck and of his happy deliverance.

Donald Bàn (for such was his name) finding his father was dead, and his mother getting frail and requiring help on her small croft, decided to give up a seafaring life and settle for the rest of his life at home. Naturally enough he often paid a visit to the widow's cottage where he had met with such kindness; but it would be difficult to prove that his visits would have been quite so frequent or prolonged had it not been for the attraction of the widow's two daughters, Mary and Barbara. Mary, the eldest, was a quiet, kind-hearted, sensible girl with a homely face, only rendered attractive by good nature and robust health. Her one point of beauty lay in her magnificent fair hair, which, when released from its fastenings, fell in luxuriant masses down to her waist. Her sister, five years her junior, was a great contrast, both in appearance and disposition. Very beautiful in person, lively in manner, she captivated all who came within her power. All the young men for miles round were her devoted admirers, but Barbara was a coquette, and no one knew whom she favoured most. An acute observer might notice that her eyes, bright and beautiful as they were, had a cold hard look, and that her cherry lips, at times, would grow thin and white, and wreath into a cruel smile anything but pleasant to see.

Donald Bàn, like the rest, was dazzled by her beauty and attractive manner. At the same time the best part of his nature made him feel that Mary was superior in every true womanly quality to her more fascinating sister. Still he wavered, fluttering like a moth round the light that would destroy him at last. His mother, now getting very infirm, wished him to marry, and, having known Mary from childhood, was most anxious that he should choose her for his wife. Donald, returning home one evening, after a more than usually prolonged visit to the widow's cottage, was alarmed to find his mother lying back in her chair, in a swoon. Blaming himself severely for his neglect in leaving her so long alone, he did his utmost to restore her to consciousness. After a little, she somewhat revived, but was evidently very much shaken and ill. Feeling near her end, she spoke very seriously to her son about his choice of a wife, and assured him that while lying apparently

unconscious, she had a vision and saw, through the medium of the second sight, a forecast of the future of the two sisters. "I saw," she continued, "Mary a happy wife and mother, a blessing and a comfort to her husband ; but Barbara's future was dark and sinful. Her lover will be driven by her into the commission of a terrible crime, and both will perish in a sudden and terrible manner. The form of Mary's husband, as also that of Barbara's lover, was hidden from me. But remember this warning. Shun Barbara as you would a beautiful but deadly serpent. Promise me that as soon as I am dead, and the days of your mourning are past, you will marry Mary, and be a true and faithful husband to her." Donald, much affected by his mother's earnest appeal, promised faithfully to carry out her last wishes.

The old woman shortly after died, and in course of time Donald prepared to fulfil his promise. He proposed to Mary and was accepted, her mother being well pleased to have Donald for a son-in-law. Whatever Barbara's feelings were on the subject, she kept them in her own bosom, merely excusing herself for the extraordinary proceeding of a sister in those districts of being absent from the wedding on the ground that she was going to pay a long visit to a relative in a neighbouring town.

Donald and Mary were in due time married and lived quietly and happily for nearly three years. In due time they had two children, a boy and a girl. Mary's mother dying about this time, and Barbara being still unmarried, the latter came to live with them. She was if possible more beautiful than ever—still in the first bloom of womanhood ; and Donald soon found himself as much under her influence as ever. Manfully he struggled, for a time, to subdue his fatal passion, but in a short time he was as helpless as a fly in a spider's web. His infatuation was complete, and it made him oblivious to the sacred claims of a husband and a father. It is doubtful whether Barbara really felt any affection for him, but she took a delight in exercising her power of bewitching him, though withal she used such tact that the true-hearted sister or the unfaithful Donald never suspected her.

It was a lovely summer day. Donald was working on his croft in sight of his cottage, the door of which stood open exposing a scene of homely comfort. The room was scrupulously clean. Mary, with a happy contented look lighting up and beautifying

her homely face, was busily employed preparing oatcake, the appetising smell of which seemed to tickle the olfactory nerves of a fine collie, basking in the sun outside the door, who, lifting his head occasionally, would give a satisfactory sniff, but was too well bred to shew any impatience. The eldest child, a sturdy boy of two years, was on the floor, playing with a kitten as frolicsome as himself;—the baby girl was sleeping in her cradle. Barbara was sitting quietly, knitting. The humming of the bees as they flitted from flower to flower, the twittering of the birds, and the soothing sound of the sea waves, breaking gently against the neighbouring rocks, completed this picture of peaceful happiness, from which discord and trouble seemed far removed. After finishing her culinary operations, Mary proposed to go to the rocks to gather dulse, of which Donald was very fond; the boy clamoured to go along with her, but his mother quieted him by promising to take him out on her return.

Anxious to obtain the best dulse, Mary scrambled on to a rock jutting out into the sea, always covered at high water. Having filled her basket, she sat down to rest, and, the day being very hot, she soon fell asleep.

The duties and simple pleasures of domestic life had no attraction for Barbara. She tired of being alone, and giving the sagacious dog charge of the children went to look for Mary, and soon discovered her, still peacefully sleeping on the fatal rock. The tide was just returning, but instead of awakening her sister, Barbara stood and stared, and as she looked, an evil flash came in her eye, a cruel smile crept on her lips, and from a beautiful woman she seemed suddenly as if transformed into a she-demon. At length she turned, and going to Donald, prevailed upon him to accompany her back to the beach, saying she wished to show him something remarkable. Arriving at the rock, she pointed out the still slumbering Mary, and, without a word, fixed her flashing eyes on Donald. Spell-bound, he gazed at her until the same dreadful idea also possessed him. The water was now within a yard of the peacefully sleeping woman; in a few minutes she would be totally surrounded by the tide, and, if not awakened instantly, her life was gone; yet still they stood silent and inactive. At last Barbara muttered, or rather hissed through her close-set teeth, "We must not let this chance escape, we must make sure work of it. Come,

Donald, help me to plait her hair with the sea weeds." So saying he led the infatuated man in the direction of his devoted wife. With eager fingers they quickly unwound poor Mary's long tresses and plaited and knotted them with the weeds growing on the rock. Then, retiring to a point of safety, they waited the result. By this time the tide had completely surrounded their victim, who, as it touched her, awoke with a start. Donald's heart now failed him. Although he wished her dead, he could not bear to see her so cruelly murdered. With a groan he turned and fled, stopping his ears for fear of hearing the death agonies of his wife. Barbara looked at him, with a scornful smile on her lips, and muttered a curse on his cowardice. She had no intention of losing sight of her victim. When Mary awoke she strove to rise and escape, but, to her horror, found herself tied to the rock. Startled and confused by her sudden awakening she for an instant imagined that she was dreaming or under the influence of a dreadful nightmare; but the cold waves now breaking over her soon convinced her of her true position. With frantic hands she tore at her hair, crying loudly for help; then catching sight of her sister, a gleam of hope came, but to her indescribable horror and despair her cries for assistance were met with a low mocking laugh. It was only then that the fearful conviction was forced upon her that she was being foully murdered, and that at the hands of her own sister. With heartrending cries she called on her husband to succour her, but the only answer came from Barbara, telling her how he also had even helped to bind her to the fatal rock. Surprise and horror for a moment closed poor Mary's lips; she then thought of her children—her handsome boy, her first-born—and her sweet babe, who was even then crying for its natural food. The mere thought was unutterable distraction. Again she tried to move the stony heart of her unnatural sister by pitiable appeals for dear life, imploring her by every tie, human and divine, to save her; by the memory of their dead mother; by their sisterhood; for the sake of the children; for the sake of her own soul, not to commit the foul deed. But as well might she attempt to stay the tide now washing over her as move the heartless she-fiend who sat gloating over her victim's suffering's, like a tiger over the struggles of his prey.

Inch by inch the water rises, now it reaches her neck, the

next wave drowns her voice, there is a gasp and a gurgle. Another wave—the fair head is covered, and poor Mary is in eternal rest.

By Mary's death an obstacle was removed from the path of the guilty pair, but yet they were not happy. Nothing prospered with Donald—his harvest was bad, his potatoes diseased, his sheep died, his cows sickened. However hard he might work, everything went wrong—he got no sympathy nor help from his neighbours, who all shunned him since the death of his wife; he grew gloomy and morose; tortured with remorse, he dragged out a miserable existence. Barbara was also changed; she was never fitted for home duties, and having now no object in trying to captivate Donald, she grew careless and neglectful, and the guilty pair passed most of their time in mutual accusations and bitter recriminations.

The first anniversary of Mary's death arrived. It was a heavy oppressive day, and Donald felt more than usually depressed and miserable; his crime weighed heavily upon his conscience, and his mother's prophetic warning rang continually in his ears. His day's work over, he entered his cottage for the night, but how changed it had become—no comfort, no happiness. Instead of a true-hearted loving wife to welcome him there was this woman, beautiful indeed, but she seemed possessed by a mocking devil. Totally heartless herself, she laughed him to scorn whenever he ventured to express regret for his past crimes or hint at amendment in future. As night drew near, the air became still more oppressive; the clouds, heavy with electricity, hung low down; the distant mutterings of thunder were heard, and the forked lightning flashed over the dark and troubled sea.

Donald and Barbara retired to rest, but he at least could not sleep; he felt a presentiment of coming evil. As the storm grew nearer and increased in intensity, he literally quaked with terror. Just at midnight, a terrific thunder-clap burst over the house, and as the lurid flash lighted up the room, he saw with unspeakable horror the figure of his murdered wife standing by his bedside. With a severe yet sorrowful look and voice, she seemed to say, "Your hour has come, retribution has overtaken you and your partner in guilt at last. I go to protect my beloved offspring." The figure then slowly glided into the next room, in which slept

her innocent children. Again the thunder pealed loud and long —again the lightning flashed—a blinding sheet of flame appeared to envelope the cottage for a moment; the storm ceased almost suddenly, dying away in distant rumblings of thunder, echoed from the surrounding rocks.

Next morning was calm and clear. The people of the township were astir by break of day to find out what mischief the unusually severe storm had done amongst them. Arrived at Donald's cottage, they stood struck with astonishment which, on further investigation, was turned into a feeling of terror. One end of it had been struck by the lightning and was a total ruin. Under the scorched rafters lay two blackened and repulsive bodies, which on closer investigation were recognised as the disfigured remains of Donald and his guilty paramour. The other half of the cottage was unscathed, and upon entering it, the neighbours found Mary's two lovely children, locked in each other's arms, breathing the breath of innocence, calmly sleeping, with the angelic smile and beautiful expression, always present on the face of slumbering infancy. Thus was Mary's murder avenged.

THE LEGEND OF THE MILKY DELL.

WINDING through the valleys, ascending the hills, scaling height after height, like a huge snake creeping its sinuous way along, appears the old military road made by the celebrated General Wade. It was once the only highway from the south to the wild regions of Badenoch, but it is now seldom used, except by an occasional tourist, whose curiosity may induce him to explore the old road and the varied scenery it passes through. It is in some places little better than a narrow track, and as it extends further into the Highlands and crawls up the side of Corryarraick it gets rougher and more broken. The traveller finds the air getting colder and colder as he advances higher up the mountain. Probably snow lies in the sheltered hollows of the rocks. Here and there he may notice rude cairns of stone hurriedly thrown together to mark the last resting place of some poor unfortunate wanderers who have from time to time been overcome by fatigue and the severity of the weather, and have sunk down in that fatal sleep from which there is no awakening.

Just as the road reaches the last long ascent, it sweeps round a green hill and enters Lagan a' Bhainne, when bursts on the vision of the delighted tourist a scene of fertility and beauty he little expected to meet with. This lovely glen is sheltered from the rude north wind, while it lies open to the rays of the sun. A clear stream meanders through the bottom of the valley. The mountain ash, the trembling aspen, and the beautiful birch adorn this favoured spot; under foot is a soft carpet of blooming purple heather; around, the air is laden with the sweet scent of wild flowers; above it is melodious with the songs of birds, who feed on the cranberries growing so plentifully on every hand, while the musical humming of bees falls ploasantly on the ear. Though this beautiful glen is now desolate, and all its loveliness and fertility monopolized by grouse and wild animals, yet there was a time when it presented a very different appearance. When the road-

making General first saw Lagan a' Bhainne it was thickly populated by a kindly, industrious people. The strath yielded excellent corn, and the higher ground produced the rich pasture on which the cows throve whose wonderful milk-giving qualities gave the place its name, which in Gaelic is the equivalent for Milky Dell. This was the primary cause of the prosperity of its inhabitants. In other districts the people might be equally industrious, the spinning wheel might revolve as quickly, the clacking noise of the shuttle might be as often heard, the churn might be as often used and as dexterously handled, yet still in no other part of the Highlands was there such plenty. Nowhere else was there such delicious milk, such thick cream, such sweet butter, such rich cheese. There was a charm about the place; none of the milky mothers ever fell sick, and no matter how poor or out of condition a cow might be when bought, as soon as she arrived in Lagan a' Bhainne she got sleek, fat, and productive.

And all these advantages were secured to this favoured spot by the courage and presence of mind of one of its natives. Centuries ago, when the brave Sir William Wallace was fighting for his country's freedom, there came, all at once, a great scarcity of milk—and, as a necessary consequence, of butter and cheese—all over the districts of Glengarry and Badenoch. And the strange thing was that this dearth could not be accounted for on any known principle. The pasture was as green and plentiful, and the cows in as good condition as usual; still they did not give milk. The witches seemed to have been at work, but it altogether baffled the wise folk of the Glen to discover the authors of the mischief. Charm after charm and spell after spell were used in vain by the distressed people. Prayers were said and penances done, pilgrimages were made to holy shrines, and the help of the good Bishop at Elgin Cathedral was implored. He sent a monk, who tried his best with bell, book, and candle to remove the spell, and curse the culprit whether fairy or warlock, witch or kelpie. Whatever it was, it resisted all their efforts, and for a whole year the milk famine continued. The people grew careworn and desponding; the poor children, who were the greatest sufferers, instead of being plump, rosy-cheeked, and hearty, became thin, listless, and hollow-eyed.

This total stoppage of the milk supply was a far more serious

calamity to the primitive people of the district than it would be at the present day ; for the variety of food within their reach was much more limited than it is even with people of the same class in the Highlands now. They had no tea or coffee, no sugar or potatoes, and very few other vegetables ; and now they had no milk to moisten or sweeten their porridge and no butter or cheese to accompany the dry oatcake or barley scones. Among the sufferers was a worthy man named Alastair Bàn. He had a large family, and it went to his heart to see his little ones daily losing flesh and pining away for the want of suitable nourishment. Late one summer evening he left his humble cot to escape from their complaining cries and wandered, in a contemplative mood, a good distance from home. When at last he roused himself from his sorrowful reverie, he found he had nearly reached the top of the hill which overlooked his native valley. As he stood looking down on the peaceful glen he was astonished to see a figure advancing towards him. He wondered who, besides himself, was out so late, and proceeding from home too. There was something strange about the figure which he could not understand. As it drew nearer Alastair perceived that it was a stranger —a little, old man, who walked slowly and laboriously up the hill, as though carrying a heavy burden. As he approached closer, Alastair was more puzzled than ever to make out who or what he was. He certainly seemed a very odd, little *bodach*, whose bent back, slow gait, and wrinkled face exhibited signs of old age which were strangely belied by a plentiful crop of light brown hair and bright blue eyes. His dress was as strange as his appearance ; neither kilt, bonnet, nor plaid had he, but a long loose green coat, silk stockings, and curious looking shoes with long pointed toes. A tall peaked hat was on his head, and over his shoulder he carried a long slender hawthorn switch, bent as with a great weight suspended to the end of it, like a fishing-rod with a heavy fish attached. Yet Alastair saw nothing which accounted for this apparent weight, and his curiosity began to turn to a feeling very near akin to fear as the uncanny figure drew nearer and nearer to him. The little old *bodach* took no notice of anything or anybody, but went straight on, bending under the weight of his invisible burden.

Just as the figure got abreast of the wondering man, a sudden

impulse moved Alastair; he drew his dirk, and with one swift well-delivered blow severed the long switch in twain. The *bodach* did not seem conscious of what had happened, and continued toiling on until he was lost to sight over the brow of the hill. Then all at once there came a rushing, bubbling sound, and to Alastair's intense astonishment he saw pouring from the severed wand, a copious stream of rich, new milk. He rubbed his eyes and looked again; yes, there was no mistake. Faster and faster the milk was escaping, still gathering force, until it rolled down the hill-side like a mountain torrent after rain. He stayed no longer, but flew down to the valley to tell his friends the wonderful news; yet fast as he went the milk was there before him. It spread out over the whole district, and swelled the modest burn until it became a rapid river. Thus it continued for hours, until every drop of milk that had been stolen from Badenoch and Glengarry was restored by the courageous action of Alastair Bàn, and now became concentrated in his native valley, which was ever after noted for its fertility.

The cows now gave their milk to the rightful owners, but nowhere, throughout the wide district affected, to the same extent or in the same quality as in the Milky Dell. Nowhere was the grass so nourishing, the kine so yielding, the inhabitants so happy and prosperous; and though, alas! in later times the people have been driven away, and the beautiful glen turned into breeding ground for game, it still keeps its old descriptive name of Lagan a' Bhainne.

THE TRAGEDY OF INNES.

In the spring of 1580, a cold blustering March day was drawing to a close ; the high wind, which during the day had been blowing round the walls of Cromy House—tearing off pieces of the roof, throwing down chimneys, and every weak bit of masonry, then, as if in despair of doing further damage to the massive building, rushing with a mighty noise through the surrounding woods, where the broken branches and torn up roots of some of the noblest trees, bore witness to its violence—now only blew in fitful gusts, its sullen roar dying away in melancholy soughings, like an angry child sobbing itself to sleep. The inside of the mansion afforded a bright contrast to the gloom without. The day's work was done, and the numerous domestics and retainers, then considered essential to the proper dignity of a gentleman of wealth and position, were gathered in the hall, where the evening meal was served with the liberality and open hospitality characteristic of the times. In another apartment sat the lady of the house, a tall, stately woman of about forty. Her only companion was her husband's nephew, a young lad of fifteen, whose frank, handsome face was flushed with enthusiasm as the lady recounted some of the doughty deeds of his forefathers. This lad, Alexander Innes, had been left an orphan, and had been adopted by his uncle the Laird of Innes. The Lady of Cromy had but one son, who was now about sixteen, and studying at the College of Aberdeen. It had been a great disappointment to the high-spirited lady that her only son should not have inherited more of the warlike propensities of his ancestors ; but the young laird was not of a very robust constitution ; which circumstance unfitted him for the rough training and violent exercises of his companions. As he grew up, however, he showed great aptitude for study, and the heart of his fond mother was cheered by the thought, that if her son was not destined to shine as a brave soldier like his grandfather James, who fell fighting gallantly in defence of the liberties of his country at the battle of Pinkie in

1547, at least he would be a great and learned scholar, and in this way worthily sustain the honour of the family. To this end the lad was carefully educated, and at this time was pursuing his studies at Aberdeen.

"Your uncle tarries late; I hope no mischance hath befallen him," remarked the lady to her young companion, as the rain, rattling against the casement, caused her attention to be drawn to the cheerless weather, and the growing darkness of the evening. "Call for lights, boy, and then run out and see if your uncle is yet in sight."

Alexander executed his aunt's orders with alacrity, and soon returned, saying that his uncle was not yet in sight, but would doubtless soon be. "Why," he added, "are you so anxious to-night about my uncle? He has often been out in far worse weather than this."

"'Tis not the weather, boy, I fear," rejoined the lady; "but he had an appointment to meet his cousin, Robert Innes of Innermarky, to-day, and as you well know, there is a bitter feud between them, and Robert Innes is an unscrupulous man, whom I fear almost as much as I mistrust and dislike."

"Never fear, aunt," laughingly said the lad, "my uncle is more than a match for his cousin Robert any day; besides, did you not tell me that Laird John was also to be present, and surely he would keep peace between them."

"Yes," answered his aunt, "he is to be with them; but Laird John is a weak-minded man, with no will of his own, and is easily led by the flattering tongue of Innermarky."

The clattering of horse's hoofs in the court-yard and the cheery sound of her husband's voice now relieved the lady from all anxiety on his account. The laird was soon seated by the welcome fire, recounting to his attentive and sympathising wife the events of the day, which, to judge by the stern brow of Innes, and the indignant looks of his lady, did not seem to have been of a very pleasant nature.

"And did he indeed dare to threaten you?" exclaimed the lady, "the false-hearted villain that he is; but surely you can defy his insolent claims to the lairdship of Innes."

"Yes, yes, I have the bond of tailzie and other papers all right; yet still he can give me a lot of trouble, and it will be

necessary for me to go to Aberdeen to consult with my lawyer. Fetch me the box of papers to look over them again." The box was brought, and husband and wife were soon busy poring over the deeds and papers it contained.

"Now, Isabel," said Innes, when at length their inspection of the documents was over, "mind to be careful over this box, and never give it up to any one without special orders from me. These papers are most important, and Innermarky would give much to get possession of them."

The next day Alexander Innes set out for Aberdeen, mounted on his favourite black horse, and accompanied by some half-dozen of his retainers. As he bade adieu to his wife, and received the last loving messages for their son, he noticed an unusual wistful look in her face and a half-sad tenderness in her manner which somewhat surprised him.

"Why, how now! wife, what ails you to be so dull this morning? one would think I was going to London instead of Aberdeen."

"I know not what it is," rejoined the lady, "but I do not like the idea of this journey at all; take care of yourself, I dreamed last night——."

"Tut, tut," exclaimed the hearty laird, as he laughingly kissed his wife's anxious face, "never fash me with your dreams; I shall be back in a week's time at least with a present of a braw new gown for you, so cheer up," and with a cheerful smile and a parting wave of the hand, he cantered down the avenue, his handsome figure, and erect easy seat on the noble animal he rode, forming a pleasant sight to his wife, who watched his retreating form with pardonable pride.

The laird, however, did not return so soon as he expected; his business took him longer than he anticipated, and then his son Robert got sick with a low fever, brought on by over study, so Innes removed him from College for a time, and took him to his own lodging, a house in the suburbs, or the New Town, as it was called, Aberdeen proper being designated the Old Town. From this house he sent his servants to and fro with frequent messages to his wife regarding the health of their son; consequently the fact of his detention in Aberdeen and his place of residence there, became commonly known to Cromy and the neighbourhood, and it thus soon reached the ears of Robert Innes of Innermarky, who

bore a most inveterate enmity towards his kinsman Alexander, to explain the cause of which it will be necessary to give a few particulars.

About three years previously, on the 15th of March, 1577, John, Laird of Innes and head of that family, who married Elizabeth, daughter of Alexander, sixth Lord Saltoun, finding he was not likely to have any children, entered into a mutual bond of tailzie with his cousin and nearest heir-male, Alexander Innes of Cromy, to the effect that whosoever should die first, without leaving any heir male, the other should succeed to their whole estate. This bond of tailzie gave great offence to the other members of the family, more particularly to Robert Innes of Innermarky, who disputed the claim of Alexander Innes of Cromy to be the nearest heir-male to John, Laird of Innes. This feeling of annoyance and injury was greatly increased by the subsequent conduct of Cromy, who, presuming on the fact of the laird not having children, began to act as head of the family, taking upon himself the title of Innes of that Ilk, which title he had no right to assume until after the death of his cousin John, Laird of Innes. Innermarky appears to have been a bold, unscrupulous man, who would let no obstacle stand in the way of his ambition. John, Laird of Innes, on the other hand, was of much weaker mind and was easily led by the crafty insinuations of Innermarky to look upon Cromy with displeasure and jealousy and to regret having entered into the bond of tailzie with him from which he could not now withdraw. Seeing he could gain his purpose by no other means, Innermarky allowed his mind to dwell on the terrible thought of taking the life of his kinsman, Innes of Cromy.

He was far too cautious a man to do such a deed rashly, and waited patiently until he could effect his fell purpose with the least danger to himself. And now fortune herself seemed to favour his designs. Here was Cromy away from his house and friends, in lodgings in a strange town, with only a few servants and a sick son. What more easy than to surprise him in the night, and thus at one blow get rid of Cromy and his heir? After some trouble he prevailed upon the facile laird, John Innes, to join him in the conspiracy, and assembling a number of his friends and followers, and accompanied by Laird John, Innermarky he started for Aberdeen.

With customary caution, he delayed entering the town until after nightfall, and it was nearly midnight before he and his party reached the house in which his unsuspecting victim lay sleeping in fancied security. The house was situated in a close, the gate of which stood unlocked, and so they easily gained admittance. But they found the doors of the house securely fastened, and, not wishing to force them, for fear of creating alarm among the neighbours, Innermarky bethought him of a stratagem to lure out his prey. Well knowing Cromy to be an eager partisan of the house of Gordon—between whom and the Forbeses there was at that time an open feud—Innermarky ordered his party to clash their swords and call out the gathering words of the Gordons. Innes of Cromy awaking out of his sleep by the noise in the close, and hearing the well-known cry of "A Gordon! A Gordon! to the rescue!" instantly leaped out of bed, and seizing his sword, rushed, all undressed as he was, down the steps leading to the close, calling out to know what was wrong. Directly Innermarky heard his voice he raised his gun, and the white shirt poor Cromy wore offering a good mark in the darkness, he was instantly shot down by his unnatural kinsman. The rest of the party, to make sure work of him, hacked at his lifeless body with their swords and dirks—all but Laird John, who, terrified at the dreadful deed, stood irresolute and inactive, until Innermarky, with a fearful oath, seized him, and with terrible threats compelled him also to plunge his dagger into the disfigured corpse, so that he might share the blame of the cowardly act with the rest of the assassins. The next step was to secure Cromy's son Robert, who had been sleeping in the same bed as his father, but who, fortunately, was able, by the assistance of the occupants of the house, to make good his escape by a back door, and find safety in a neighbouring house. Cromy's servants were all secured prisoners before they were able to strike a blow, and, taking them and their horses along with them, Innermarky and his party departed as suddenly as they came, without anyone daring to interrupt them, Innermarky first taking the precaution of drawing from the finger of the murdered man his signet ring, to use for a special purpose.

After getting clear away from Aberdeen, the party separated, and Innermarky picking out one of Cromy's servants prevailed

upon him, partly by threats and partly by promises of reward, to mount his dead master's horse, and, taking his signet ring, to go back to Cromy and ask for the box containing the family papers, as though he had been a messenger from Cromy himself. Innermarky and the laird, the latter helpless as a child in the hands of his strong-willed cousin, did not return at once to their own houses, thinking it safer for the present to seek shelter and protection from Lord Saltoun, whose son-in-law the laird was. They accordingly went to Rothiemay, where his lordship then resided. Whether Lord Saltoun was cognisant beforehand or not of their designs is not certain ; he, however, gave them his countenance and afforded them protection until he found the law too strong for even his influence to shield them from the just retribution which their crime so truly merited.

It is the forenoon of a lovely May day, and the lady of Cromy House sits at the open casement enjoying the freshness and sweetness peculiar to the early summer-time. She is looking more cheerful than when we last parted with her. Ever and anon a smile flits across her still handsome face, while her fingers are busy with her tambour work. She is thinking of her husband and of her son. Only two days ago she received a message, telling her to expect them both at home very soon, Robert's health having so much improved that he would soon be able to travel. While she is thus cogitating, the distant tramp, tramp of an approaching horseman is heard, and, with a heightened colour and quickened pulse, she leans out to catch the first view of the rider, as he enters the long avenue leading to the house ; for perhaps it may be her husband returning this very day, and riding in advance of the others as he often did. And surely that splendid black horse can be no other than Bruce, her husband's favourite charger, but a second glance shows that it is not her husband's well-known figure that rides him.

Wondering that anyone other than he should be allowed to mount Bruce, the lady hurries to the door to meet the horseman, who she finds to be one of the servants who attended her husband to Aberdeen. And, as he drew up, she eagerly exclaimed, "What news, Duncan, what news? Is your master coming, or have you only a message from him? Be quick, man, give me your news," she added impatiently, as the man seemed to have

some difficulty in speaking, and kept his eyes carefully averted from her searching gaze. At length, he managed to say that his master was still detained in Aberdeen for a few days, and had sent him for a box of papers which he had left in her charge; that his master had no time to write, but had sent his signet ring to convince her that all was right, and had also told him to ride Bruce as being the fleetest horse he had, the documents being required immediately.

The lady listened in astonishment, mingled with doubt. It was so unlike her husband to send such an important message except in writing. What if it should be a ruse of the crafty Innermarky to gain possession of the family papers? But then there was her husband's ring, his servant, and his horse. There could scarcely be any mistake, and she turned to enter the house, when she remembered her husband's particular injunctions not to let the box out of her possession; she again cross-questioned the man, but could elicit nothing from him but his former story, that his orders were peremptory to get the box and return to his master without a moment's delay, adding, "You may be sure, my lady, that Cromy was in great need of the papers before he would let me ride Bruce." This argument could no longer be refuted, the lady got the box and delivered it to Duncan, who immediately prepared to depart.

Young Alexander Innes, the nephew of Cromy, who was very anxious to go to Aberdeen to see his cousin Robert, to whom he was much attached, thinking this was a good opportunity, begged Duncan to allow him to get up behind him, as Bruce was quite strong enough to carry them both; and the more the man objected the more urgent did the lad become to gain his purpose. He was suspicious, too, of the man's truthfulness; for he found him prevaricating, sometimes saying he was only going as far as Kinnardy—which indeed was the fact, as it was there Innermarky was awaiting him — and in the next sentence that he must return at once to Aberdeen. Finding him so stubborn, young Innes desisted from further importuning him, but more determined than ever to attain his object, he ran on before the man on horseback to the end of the avenue where there was a gate. This he closed, and then concealed himself among the trees. As Duncan rode up, slackening his headlong speed to bend forward

and open the gate, the lad with one bound sprang on to the saddle, and, firmly clasping the rider from behind, swore he should take him whithersoever he was bound, whether it might be to Aberdeen or anywhere else. In vain Duncan tried to throw the lad off. At last, losing his temper, he drew his dirk and threatened young Innes with a taste of cold steel if he did not at once take himself off and leave him alone.

Now more than ever firmly convinced from Duncan's manner that something was wrong, the brave lad wrenched the weapon from the traitor's hand and the next moment buried it in his heart; then, securing the box, he galloped back to the house to acquaint his aunt with what had occurred. The recital threw the lady into great perturbation of mind. She did not know whether to blame or praise the daring deed of the youth.

While still discussing the strange affair, another horseman was seen rapidly approaching; his mud-stained, disordered dress, his terrified looks, his horse covered with sweat and flecked with foam, proclaimed at once that he was the bearer of some fearful news. All too soon were the terrible tidings made known to the horror-stricken household. Long and loud arose the wails of the women. Loud and deep were the curses of the men upon the murderers, and eager their cries for vengeance. The blow fell with overwhelming force upon the widow, who was stunned at the suddenness of the calamity. The thought of her son first recalled her to herself, and having been assured by the messenger that Robert was in safety, she nerved herself to make some effort to avenge her husband's untimely and cruel death. She now realised the value of the service young Innes had performed in regaining possession of the papers. Taking the box with her, and accompanied by her nephew, she fled for protection to her friends, the Forbeses of Balfour, who immediately assisted her in bringing her cause before the King and in demanding that justice should be dealt out to her enemies. Meanwhile the Earl of Huntly, who was connected by ties of kinship to the murdered man, took special charge of his son Robert, whom he took to Edinburgh and placed for safety in the house of Lord Elphinstone, at that time Lord High Treasurer of Scotland.

Young Robert of Cromy remained safely in Edinburgh for fully two years under the powerful protection of Lord Elphin-

stone, who not only warmly espoused his cause, but became so attached to him personally as to promise him his daughter in marriage. In the meantime, John, Laird of Innes, still instigated by Robert of Innermarky, took possession of the murdered man's estate; and but five weeks had elapsed since the slaughter of poor Cromy when his arch-enemy Innermarky obtained from his facile tool, Laird John, a new disposition of the estate, and for two years he kept possession, strengthening himself all he could by making friends and allies of his neighbours, backed up as he was by the countenance of Laird John and Lord Saltoun.

The widowed lady of Cromy was, however, not idle during this time. By persistent and well sustained effort she at length obtained judgment against her adversaries, who were pronounced outlaws, and her son Robert—now a fine young man, whom the tragic fate of his father and his own trials had changed from a dreaming student into a determined, energetic man—obtained a commission against Innermarky, Laird John, and all the others implicated in the murder. Accompanied by his cousin Alexander Innes—the same who killed the servant and regained the box of deeds—and who was always devoted to him, he marched to the north with a large party to regain his estate and punish his guilty kinsmen. The weak, timorous John, Laird of Innes, did not wait for the attack, but fled in abject terror and hid himself for a time in the south. He was, however, quickly discovered and taken prisoner by some of the friends of Lord Elphinstone, who at once sent him back to Robert of Cromy. Young Innes spared his life, rightly conjecturing that he was only a cat's-paw in the hands of Innermarky, but bound him down to various restitutions, compelling him to revoke all he had done in favour of Innermarky and to confirm the bond of tailzie which he had before granted to his father. Innermarky stood his ground as long as he could, but at last, deserted by Laird John and his other friends, he fled to the hills, hotly pursued by Robert and his followers. Driven from place to place, yet still managing to escape the clutches of his infuriated kinsmen, he at last shut himself up in Edinglassy House, which he made as strong as he could, and then fairly stood at bay.

His career was, however, now nearly over. Young Innes, accompanied by his cousin Alexander and their friends, found out

his retreat, and one night in September, 1584, they suddenly surrounded the house, and requested him to surrender; but Innermarky declaring they should never take him prisoner, they broke open the door, and Alexander Innes—with the same reckless courage which had animated him on previous occasions—rushed in first, boldly attacked Innermarky, and, after a brief struggle, succeeded in killing him. Innermarky being a strong man, in the prime of life, noted as a skilful swordsman, and being moreover rendered desperate, it was considered such a daring deed for a mere youth like Alexander to thus "beard the lion in his den" that he ever after bore the sobriquet of "Craigg in peirill."

Innermarky's body was decapitated, and his head carried in triumph to the widowed lady of Cromy, who, receiving the ghastly trophy with fierce pleasure, at once hurried to Edinburgh with it, and, gaining an audience of the king, cast it at his feet; an act, though quite in accordance with the barbarous customs of the age, was still, to use the words of the old chronicler, "a thing too masculine to be commended in a woman."

Robert Innes was reinstated in his father's property, but there was continued strife and opposition between him and the family of Innermarky, until, by the interference of mutual friends, the Laird of Mackintosh, Sir George Ogilvie of Dunlugus, and others, all their old differences were arranged, and the parties reconciled in terms of a mutual contract, dated 1587; by which "Robert Innes and his posterity enjoyed the estate and dignities of the house of Innes ever after." He married Elizabeth, daughter of Robert, third Lord Elphinstone, and had a family of two sons and three daughters. His eldest son, Robert Innes of that Ilk, was created a baronet by Charles I. in 1625.

ALLAN DUBH CAMERON.

SOME two centuries ago there lived a laird of Culloden, who, on account of his sagacity and prudence, was called "An tighearna glic," or the wise laird. Being a peacefully disposed man, he never engaged in any of the frequent feuds of the neighbouring clans, but lived quietly with his family, and devoted his time to the breeding and rearing of an extensive stock of superior cattle. Many a time and oft had covetous looks been cast on the fine herd by different reivers, but Culloden was so inoffensive that he never gave any one excuse to molest him, and he was careful to take every precaution to prevent his cattle from being "lifted," so that he had as yet escaped scathless. It happened on a certain occasion that an acquaintance of the laird, Cameron of Lochiel, and some of his people were returning from Falkirk market, and spent a night at Culloden House. In the course of conversation the laird expressed a fear that he should not be able to keep all his cattle for want of sufficient pasturage, and thought he should be obliged to sell some of them, though sorry to have to do so. This remark set the wily Cameron a-thinking, and he rapidly evolved a scheme for getting possession of a portion of the much-to-be-coveted herd, but was careful not to exhibit any sign of his feelings, merely saying that he was sorry the present state of his finances would not permit of his purchasing the cattle, as he should very much like to do, but suggested that as he had plenty of good pasture in Lochaber, Culloden should send part of his stock there, and he would take care of and provide them with provender for a fair consideration, adding that as he and his men were now on their way home, they could drive the cattle along with them and so save the laird the trouble of sending any of his own people to Lochaber. To this Culloden agreed, and arrangements were soon concluded.

Next morning saw Lochiel and his party depart, driving before them about a score of fine young heifers.

Having got possession of such a prize, Cameron had no intention of giving the cattle up again, so after a few months had

passed, he sent his cousin Allan Dubh, a fine, handsome young man, who acted as his lieutenant, to Culloden with a specious story to the effect that a party of wild Macraes from Kintail had come in the night and "lifted" all Lochiel's herds, including those belonging to Culloden; that they had given chase to the reivers but had failed to overtake them; that Lochiel was deeply grieved at his friend's loss, but still more for his own, with various other excuses of the same kind. At first the laird listened in blank dismay to this most unwelcome news, but not feeling quite sure of Lochiel's ingenuousness, he questioned Allan further as to the details, and noticing a slight hesitation in some of his answers, and also that Allan, though a frank open-faced looking man, seemed to avoid the direct glance of his eye, he began to think that all was not right and above board. Culloden was, however, too prudent to hint at his suspicions to Allan, but after expressing regret at the mutual misfortune which had befallen himself and Lochiel, invited the young man to partake of his hospitality, and introduced him to his family, who, having received a hint from Culloden, vied with each other as to who should pay the most attention to their guest. The next day proving stormy, the laird insisted on Allan staying with them for another day or two. This was no hardship to the Lochaber man, who was delighted with his new friends, particularly with the eldest daughter, Jessie, a blooming girl of eighteen, whose merry smile and bright blue eyes had already captivated the susceptible heart of the stalwart Highlander.

The storm continued and raged for two or three days, during which time Allan remained, nothing loth, a guest at Culloden. During the day he lent his aid to the laird, and assisted him in the manifold duties which Culloden took upon himself, knowing, wise man that he was, "that if you want a thing done well you must do it yourself." The Highlander was much struck with the shrewd commonsense, foresight, and kindliness of disposition of his host, and listened with pleasure to his homely yet wise and thoughtful conversation. When the day's work was over, the whole family met, and spent the evening right merrily. Culloden produced his fiddle, on which he played reels and Strathspeys, while the young folks danced and capered. Allan was a capital dancer, and always choosing Jessie for his partner, he had an

opportunity of giving her many a loving glance, and many a squeeze of the hand, which he would not otherwise have had. With all this Allan was ill at ease; he could not forget the injury done to this worthy family, to which he was accessory, and it was with very mixed feelings that he bid them all adieu. Culloden accompanied him for a mile or two on his homeward journey, and charged him with the most friendly messages to Lochiel, expressing a hope that Allan would soon pay them another visit, and adding in a sort of half soliloquy, "I am vexed about the loss of the beasties too, especially as I had meant them for a tocher for Jessie, but now I shall not be able to give her anything, and I expect she will have to marry Bailie Cuthbert, the rich merchant in Inverness, who has long been seeking her for his wife. I aye thought him too old, but I expect now no suitable young gentleman will take her without a tocher."

Having taken leave of the laird, Allan pursued his way very thoughtfully, pondering over what he had heard, his unspoken thoughts running in this strain—"What a fine fellow Culloden is, and so wise too. How bonnie Jessie is! I wonder what she thought of me? It would be a shame to let her marry an old man, a merchant, living in a town! Faugh! but then the chief is my kinsman; I must do his bidding. They are fine beasties to be sure, but Jessie is a real handsome lass." Suddenly he appeared to have made up his mind to some definite object, and exclaiming aloud, "Yes, I'll do it," he cleared his brow and walked briskly forward.

Lochiel was waiting with considerable impatience the return of his messenger, whose first words on his arrival did not a little astonish the chief—"Lochiel, those cattle must be sent back to Culloden." "Sent back! must be! this to my face!" exclaimed the irate chief, "what do you mean?" Allan related the hospitable manner in which he had been received and treated by Culloden and his family, and vowed he would be no party to injure such an excellent man. Lochiel would not hear of his proposal, and was indignant at the presumption of the other in making it. But Allan was firm; the cattle should be sent back, or he would expose the whole transaction; on the other hand, if Lochiel would give them up he would undertake to return them to Culloden without any reflection on his character. To these

arguments Lochiel at last gave way, though not with the best of grace.

In a few weeks Allan again appeared at Culloden House, driving before him all the cattle in splendid condition, and related a long story of how Lochiel had traced them, how he and his men had attacked and defeated the Macraes, and rescued the whole of the creach. To all this Culloden listened with commendable gravity, though his eyes twinkled with suppressed amusement.

Once more Allan found himself a welcome guest at the hospitable house of Culloden, and his mind being now free from self-reproach, he gave way to his natural vivacity of temperament, and became a greater favourite than ever.

He was not long in impressing upon Jessie how much more desirable it would be to marry a young man and a Highland gentleman—like himself for instance—than an old man, a common trader! and a Saxon too, forsooth.

The blushing Jessie listened and smiled while her eager lover urged his suit, and at last coyly whispered that "he might speak to father."

Culloden was not a little surprised at being asked for his daughter's hand by one of whom he knew so little, and he asked the young man what were his prospects, and how he was to keep a wife. Allan answered frankly enough that it was true he was poor, but he was a gentleman, a near kinsman of Lochiel. He possessed some little land, and had a few cows, but truth to say, he had never looked much after his property, having been principally engaged in fighting the battles of his chief.

The laird gravely replied that he should require something more than good birth and a ready sword in his daughter's husband; but noticing the gloom on Allan's face, he continued in a kinder tone, "You are both young and can afford to wait. Go back to Lochaber, leave off fighting and quarreling, settle down on your bit land, see after your herd, and if at the end of two years you can show me a hundred prime cattle, I will give you another hundred as Jessie's tocher."

Allan admitted the prudence of the proposal, and promised to do his best to fulfil his part. The two years would soon pass, and Jessie would even then be only twenty, so after pledging

vows of undying attachment, he bade adieu to his betrothed, returned home, and set manfully to work to render himself worthy of her.

Fortune soon favoured him, for long before the two years expired, a wealthy relative died, and leaving no son of his own, Allan succeeded to the property as next heir.

It was a proud day for Jessie when her lover—no poor gentleman now, but the wealthy proprietor of a fine estate—came to lay his new honours at her feet. There was now no reason for delay, and the marriage took place on a scale of profusion and attended by such numbers of friends that the like was never before seen in the district, showing the high respect in which the "tighearna" was deservedly held. Most of the articles required for the wedding were purchased from Bailie Cuthbert, and the worthy trader solaced himself for the loss of his wished-for bride by the contemplation of the large order and long bill of charges it had brought him.

Allan never forgot the experience he had gained by following the advice of Culloden. He exerted himself to improve the breed of cattle on his estates, and encouraged his tenants and dependants to pay more attention to the subject than they had ever done before. The beneficial effects of this policy soon became apparent, and the whole country side had reason to bless the benign influence exerted in connection with this happy union by the wise Laird of Culloden.

THE KING'S SON:

A LEGEND OF LOCH MAREE.

Of all the many beautiful lakes in Scotland, none can surpass Loch Maree, so called from the incidents related in the following story:—More than six hundred years ago there lived near the loch an old woman and her son. Her husband and three elder sons had been slain, their humble home burnt, and their cattle driven off during one of the fierce clan feuds which were only too common in those days. The poor woman had fled with her youngest son to this secluded spot, where they found shelter, and after a time lived comfortably enough; for Kenneth grew up a fine active lad and a keen sportsman, and with his bow and arrow and fishing-rod supplied plenty of food. They soon found themselves possessed of a small herd of goats, which rambled at will among the mountains surrounding the loch, returning regularly to the widow's cottage at milking-time. Among them was a very beautiful dun coloured pet, which always gave more milk than any of the others. This, together with her docile habits, made her a great favourite with the widow.

Kenneth returning home one evening laden with the spoils of the chase, met his mother at the cottage door. The good woman carrying the milk she had just taken from the goats, wore a very dissatisfied look on her usually placid countenance. On her son asking what was the matter, she tartly replied, "Matter enough; see the small quantity of milk I have got to-night; the dun goat, who used to give more than any of the others, hardly gave a spoonful, and it has been the same with her the last two nights. I can't make out what ails the creature." Kenneth, tired after a long day's sport, answered lightly that perhaps the goat was ill, or that she had not received food enough. His mother made no reply; she gave the goat a double allowance of food that night, and saw that she took it well; but next evening not a drop of milk did she give—indeed, it was evident she had been newly

milked. The woman was at her wit's end; and directly her son came in, she began to complain loudly.

"We must do something about the dun goat, Kenneth; not a drop of milk did she give again to-night; I am sure the fairies suck her, and if we don't stop it, I shan't be able to make a single cheese to put by for the winter. You really must help me to find out all about it."

Kenneth, who began to miss his usual allowance of milk at supper-time, professed his willingness to assist his mother. "But," said he, "what can I do to prevent it? Would it not be better to tie the goat up?"

"No, no, that would never do," replied his mother, "she has never been tethered, and would not stand it. The best thing for you to do will be to follow her to-morrow, and see where she goes."

To this proposal Kenneth agreed, and early next morning he started off after the dun goat, who soon separated herself from the rest of the herd, and made straight for a pass between two rocks, bleating as she went.

"Oh, oh!" said Kenneth to himself, "I shouldn't wonder if she has picked up some motherless fawn which she suckles, for I have heard of such things before, and that is more likely than the fairies that mother talks about."

He found it, however, no easy matter to keep the goat in sight, and her colour being so peculiar, it was nearly impossible to see her at any distance. But Kenneth persevered manfully, springing from rock to rock almost as nimbly as the goat herself; at last a sudden turn hid her for a minute from his sight, and try as he would he could not again get sight of her. So he had to own himself beaten; he, however, determined to wait until the usual time for milking, thinking he would be sure to see where she came from, so he waited patiently, but to no purpose. Not a glimpse did he get of her until he arrived at home, and found her taking her food among the others. His mother was anything but pleased at his non-success, more especially as she again failed to get a spoonful of milk from her. Terribly chagrined, Kenneth vowed he would solve the mystery if it took him a week to do so. Rising with the sun next morning, and taking some provisions and his bow and arrows along

with him, he started off in the same direction in which the goat had led him the day before. When he came to the place at which he lost sight of her, he carefully concealed himself and waited for further development of the mystery. Very soon he saw her pass, and he immediately followed her, but the sagacious animal seemed to know that she was being traced, and she redoubled her speed; so that in spite of Kenneth's utmost exertions, he again lost sight of her.

Heated and vexed, he threw himself on the ground, and exclaimed, "Confound the beast, I believe mother is right after all in saying the fairies have something to do with her. I'll give her up for this day." Having rested a while and taken some food, he strung his bow, for, said he, "'Twill never do to go home empty-handed the second time." He spent the day among the hills with fair success, and was turning homewards when, in endeavouring to recover a bird he had shot, he scrambled on to a small grass-covered platform in front of a natural cave in the rock, and much was his astonishment to find the lost goat standing at the entrance to the cave. He called her and held out his hand, but instead of running to him and licking his hand as usual, she stamped with her feet, and, lowering her head, placed herself in a state of defence. Convinced there was something inside the cave, Kenneth tried to enter it, but the goat stood firm, giving him some hard knocks with her horns. Finding her so resolute, and not wishing to hurt her, he desisted for the present, but marked the place well so as to find it easily again. The goat was home before him, but again not a drop of milk did she give.

His mother was pleased he had discovered so much, and said, "To-morrow I will go with you, and surely between us we shall manage to get a sight of the inside of the cave." Next morning they both started, carrying a rope with them to secure the goat if she should prove unmanageable. When they arrived at the cave, she was standing at the entrance, evidently angry, and determined to oppose them. In vain the widow called her pet names, and held out sweet herbs; the stubborn creature would not budge an inch for all their entreaties or threats. "Well," said Kenneth, "it's no use standing here all day; I'll throw the rope over her, and drag her from the cave, and you shall go in, mother, and see what she is hiding inside." No sooner said than done, and the poor goat

was struggling on the ground, bleating loudly. As if in answer to her piteous cries, there issued from the cave, crawling on all fours, a beautiful boy about a year old, who scrambled at once towards her, and putting his little arms round the animal's neck laid his face against her shaggy coat. She appeared delighted at the caress, and licked the hands and face of the child with evident affection.

At this unexpected sight, Kenneth and his mother were lost in astonishment and admiration. He at once satisfied himself, from the fairness and beauty of the child, and its being dressed in green, that it was indeed a veritable fairy, and his admiration for the goat was somewhat damped by a feeling of superstitious awe at being brought in such close proximity to one of "the good people." But the warm, motherly heart of the widow at once opened to the helpless infant, and, forgetting her natural fear of the supernatural, as well as her annoyance at the loss of her milk supply, she rushed forward, and, catching the child in her arms, covered it with kisses, mingled with blessings on its beauty and pity for its forlorn condition, vowing she would take it home and cherish it as her own.

Kenneth did not altogether approve of this proceeding, and exclaimed with some heat, "Mother, mother, what are you saying; don't you see it is a fairy? put it down, put it down, or perhaps you will get bewitched yourself and changed into some animal or other. How could a child like that, unless it was a fairy, live alone among these wild mountains, with no one to see after it? And where did it come from? No, no! mother; it is nothing but a fairy, and we had better leave it alone, and the goat too, for she is also, no doubt, bewitched, and we shall only get ourselves into mischief by meddling with her; or, if you must have the goat, just hold the rope, while I throw the fairy creature down the face of the rock, out of her sight."

Before, however, Kenneth could lay hold of the child he was arrested and startled by a voice from the interior of the cave, exclaiming, "Touch him if you dare; he is no fairy, but far better flesh and blood than you are." And the next instant there rushed from the cave a young woman, scarcely out of her girlhood, fair enough, but with privation and melancholy written in every feature of her face, while her torn dress and dishevelled

hair told a tale of exposure and want. Withal, there was a certain dignity about her that made Kenneth and his mother give way when she approached to take possession of the child, who clung to her with every mark of affection.

With an air of respect, mingled with astonishment, the widow asked who she was and how she came there?

The stranger explained how she had been menaced with great danger in her own country, and had fled with the child for concealment to this secluded spot, where she would have perished from absolute want had it not been for the good-natured goat, which she had succeeded in enticing to the cave, and on whose milk she and the child had subsisted for several days.

The kind-hearted widow at once offered both of them shelter and protection at her humble cottage, adding that she knew from sad experience what it was to be hunted from her own country like a wild animal.

Strange to say, Kenneth offered not the slightest objection to his mother's kind invitation. His dread of the fairies seemed to evaporate at the sight of a good-looking girl. He now offered no objection to the exercise of his mother's hospitality. Flora gladly accepted, and they all wended their way to the widow's cottage, followed by the sagacious goat, which appeared as if she perfectly understood how matters now stood.

Here they, for a time, lived happily and safely, and the widow found her visitors no encumbrance; for Kenneth exerted himself with such goodwill both in hunting and fishing, that he supplied more than sufficient for them all. The boy grew up a strong, sturdy fellow; and Flora by good nourishment and mind at ease as to the safety of herself and her charge, expanded into a most lovely woman, as amiable as she was beautiful, and assisted the widow in all her household duties, though it was very evident she belonged to a far higher class than that of her protectors.

Kenneth was now the only one of the small circle who was not perfectly at ease. He who used to be one of the most happy and careless of mortals, with no higher ambition than to be a good sportsman, became dissatisfied with himself and discontented with his lot. When out on the hills alone he would fall into moods of abstraction, building castles in the air, wishing he was a soldier—ah! if so, what wonderful feats of valour would he

not perform; he would surpass all his comrades in courage and dexterity; he would be rewarded with knighthood; and then he would have the right to mingle with the best and noblest of the land; and then there would flash across his mind a vision of a brave knight fighting to assert the lawful claims of a fair lady, of his being successful, of his being rewarded by the hand and heart of the beautiful heroine; and then poor Kenneth would find his fine castle crumbling away, and standing alone with empty game-bag. So, with a sigh, he would wake to the commonplace world, and hasten to redeem the idle time already wasted; and besides, did not Flora prefer one sort of game, which he must get, and did she also not admire a wild flower he had taken home yesterday, and he must scale the highest rocks to find more for her to-day. On his return home, he would present the flowers shyly, blushing and stammering at the graceful thanks he received for them. He would scarcely taste his food, but sit quietly, following with his eyes every movement of the bewitching Flora, until little MacGobhar—for so they had named the boy—would come and challenge him to a game of romps.

One day, when alone with his mother, Kenneth suddenly asked her "if she thought Flora was really the mother of the boy?" "Foolish boy," answered she, "do you think I have lived all these years and not know a maid from a wife? No, no; Flora is no more his mother than I am. And, son Kenneth, I wish to give you some advice: don't you go and fall in love with Flora, you might as well fall in love with the moon or the stars. Don't you see, she is some great lady, perhaps a princess, although now obliged to live in concealment. I expect little MacGobhar is her brother, and heir to some great lord. What we must do is to treat her with respect and kindness, and perhaps some day, if she gets her rights, you may be her servant, if she will accept your services. Though she never told me who she was, she showed me a very handsome sword and a beautiful scarlet velvet mantle trimmed with fur, which she said belonged to the boy's father, and she was keeping them to prove his birth some day."

This sensible though unpalatable advice fell like lead upon Kenneth's heart, but still, thought he, "it will be something to be even her servant, I shall at least see her and hear her voice."

Matters went on thus at the cottage for some time, until one

day Kenneth came home hastily with the news that the Lord of Castle Donain, the chief of that part of the country, was coming on a grand hunting expedition to the neighbourhood, and would probably call at the cottage, as he had done on former occasions. For themselves Kenneth had no fear, for, although they did not belong to the chief's clan, he knew of their living on his estate, and had never offered any objection. It was only on Flora's account that he had hastened with the news. She, poor girl, seemed dreadfully agitated, and said, "that Lord Castle Donain was one of the last men she wished to know of her whereabouts," and suggested that she and MacGobhar should again take refuge in the cave until the danger was past; but, alas, it was too late. Already some of the foremost clansmen were in sight. In another minute the chief himself appeared, calling out to Kenneth to accompany them as their guide, as he knew the ground so well. Kenneth hurried out, closing the door of the cottage after him. This Lord Castle Donain noticed, as also the uneasiness of his manner. "How now, Kenneth," he exclaimed, eyeing him suspiciously, "what have you in hiding there? where is your mother? and why do you not ask me to take a drink of milk as you used to do?" Kenneth confusedly muttered something about his mother not being well, and offered to fetch some milk for his lordship. The chief was now convinced that there was a secret, and he determined to find it out. Entering the cottage without ceremony, he exclaimed angrily, "What is the meaning of this, woman? Do you not know that you are only living on my estate on sufferance, and if you don't render me proper respect I will soon pack you and your son off again." Then perceiving Flora, and struck with her exceeding loveliness, he involuntarily altered his tone, and continued in a more gentle voice, "Ah! I now see the cause; you have a stranger with you. Who is she, Kenneth?"

This was a very puzzling question for poor Kenneth to answer, as he did not know himself, and he was fearful of saying anything that might injure Flora. However, he answered as boldly as he could, that she was his wife. "Your wife, Kenneth?" said the chief, "impossible, where did you get her from? I am sure she does not belong to this part of the country, or I should have seen her before; however, I must claim the privileges of a chief,

and give her a salute." But when he approached Flora, she waved him off with conscious dignity, saying "he must excuse her, as it was not the custom in her part of the country to kiss strangers." Her voice and manner, so different from what he expected from one in her seeming position, more than ever convinced him there was a mystery in the case, and when, in answer to his inquiries, she said her name was Flora, he exclaimed, "Kenneth, I am sure you are deceiving me, she is not your wife; her voice, her manner, and, above all, her name, convince me that she is of high birth, and most probably of some hostile clan, consequently she must come with me to Castle Donain, until I fathom the mystery surrounding her, and in the meantime you may think yourself lucky that I do not order you to be strung up on the nearest tree as a traitor."

This speech threw them all into the greatest consternation. In vain Flora pleaded to be left alone and allowed to remain with her husband and child; in vain the widow and Kenneth asserted their innocence of wishing any harm to the chief, but he remained inexorable. To Castle Donain she must and should go. The widow, in the extremity of her grief, caught up the child, to whom she was greatly attached, and exclaimed, "Oh! little MacGobhar, what will become of you?"

On hearing this, Lord Castle Donain started as if an adder had stung him, and, with agitated voice, cried out, "MacGobhar! whence got he that name, for it is a fatal one to my family. Hundreds of years ago it was prophesied that—

> The son of the goat shall triumphantly bear
> The mountain in flames; and the horns of the deer—
> From forest of Loyne to the hill of Ben-Croshen—
> From mountain to vale, and from ocean to ocean.

So, little blue-eyed MacGobhar, you must come with me too, for I am sure you are a prize worth having."

Again poor Flora pleaded hard to be allowed to remain in her present humble home; urging what a disgrace it would be for him to tear her and her child away from her husband and home; but all in vain. The chief refused to believe the story of her being the wife of Kenneth, and insisted in no measured terms on her at once accompanying him to the Castle of Islandonain.

Finding her appeals and supplications in vain Flora became desperate. Drawing the child to her, she faced the chief with a look as haughty as his own, and producing a small richly-ornamented dirk, which she had concealed about her dress, vowed she would kill herself and the boy too sooner than they should be taken prisoners.

Her bold mien and determined speech somewhat confused the chief, as he was far from wishing to offer violence to one whom he was fully convinced was of high birth. It was consequently in a gentler voice and more respectful manner that he now addressed her—"I do not wish to use any force towards you, and will therefore waive the question of your leaving your seclusion at present, but as I am convinced that there is a mystery about you, I will, as a precaution for my own safety, require to know more of your future movements." He accordingly directed one of his clansmen, Hector Dubh Mackenzie, to remain meantime as her guard; and then, to the great relief of all the inmates, he retired from the cottage.

Though left unmolested for a time, Flora knew well that she was in the power of the Lord of Castle Donain, and her distress and perplexity of mind was extreme. She had the wit, however, to hide it from Hector, who was now a constant and unwelcome visitor at the cottage, and chatted and laughed with him and Kenneth when they came home in the evening, as though she was quite careless and contented. But hers was not a nature to sit down quietly under danger. The greater the danger the higher her courage seemed to rise, and she now determined to effect her escape. She promptly arranged with the widow that they should pack up a few necessaries, take the boy and the goat, and again have recourse to the cave for a temporary refuge. Unfortunately, however, she could find no opportunity to confide her plans to Kenneth, for the vigilance of Hector was so great that neither she nor his mother had a chance of speaking to him alone even for a moment. She was anxious to give him a clue, however slight, as to their intended movements, so on the morning of the day they had fixed upon for the attempt, before the men went out, she carelessly said to him, "Kenneth, I wish you would try to get me some more of these flowers, they are so beautiful," at the same time exhibiting a bit of a plant which Kenneth and

herself well knew only grew in the neighbourhood of the cave, "but," she continued, "you need not trouble about it to-day, as you are going out to fish; to-morrow, when you go to the hills, will be quite soon enough." These simple words, so frankly spoken, caused no suspicion to cross the mind of Hector, but to Kenneth, accompanied by a quick expressive glance of her beautiful eyes, they were fraught with meaning, and he felt assured that she wished him to go to the neighbourhood of the cave on the morrow, though for what reason he could not surmise. As he promised to do his best to procure the flowers, he gave her a look, intelligent as her own, which at once convinced her that he readily understood some plot was hatching.

That evening, when Kenneth and Hector returned from their day's fishing, they found no fire on the hearth, no supper ready, no voice to welcome them. Kenneth, from the hint he had received, was somewhat prepared for this unusual state of affairs, but at the same time, while he echoed his companion's exclamations of astonishment, he tried to account for it to the satisfaction of his companion by suggesting that the women were out milking the goats, but, as if to contradict him, they at that moment heard a bleating outside the cottage, and, going out to ascertain the cause, they found that the goats, tired of waiting, had actually come to the door themselves to be relieved of their milky treasure. Kenneth said nothing, but his quick eye at once detected the absence of the dun-coloured favourite which had nursed the boy.

Hector, terribly chagrined and annoyed at finding himself thus outwitted, questioned and cross-questioned Kenneth until they both lost their temper, but he failed to obtain any satisfaction. They both passed a sleepless night, and at dawn of day Hector started, accompanied by Kenneth, in pursuit of the fugitives, feeling sure they could not have gone far in such a wild and rocky country. He kept a strict watch on his companion, who, notwithstanding, managed in the course of the day to get near the cave, and, unseen by Hector, gave a signal which he was delighted to find answered. He now knew that his friends were safely hidden and had no fear of their discovery, but how to communicate with them he could not imagine, for Hector kept the most jealous eye on his slightest movement.

The day was nearly spent; the men, fagged and wearied with

their long and toilsome search among the mountains, lay down on the heather. Hector, sulky and deeply mortified at the trick so cleverly played upon him, lay thinking of what excuse he could make to his chief, and how that high-spirited gentleman was likely to receive the news of Flora's escape. One thing was certain. He must at once acquaint his lord with all the circumstances, whatever the consequences might be to himself; but the difficulty was, how to do so. He first thought of securing Kenneth, and carrying him a prisoner along with him, but, glancing at the well-knit, hardy figure and determined eye of the young Highlander, he came to the conclusion that it would be no easy task to secure him single-handed; and Hector, who, though brave, was also prudent, saw no advantage likely to accrue from a combat between himself and Kenneth, which would probably end in the death of one, perhaps of both. At last he resolved that the best plan for him would be to go off quickly and quietly, give information to his chief, and return with a sufficient number of followers to trace and secure Kenneth and the runaways. The idea was no sooner conceived than executed. Seeing that Kenneth lay with his face covered, buried in thought, Hector rose and ran over the hills with the fleetness of a deer.

Kenneth lay for some time, mentally revolving scheme after scheme, when, wondering at his companion's unwonted silence, he raised his head, and was astonished to find him gone. He jumped to his feet and eagerly looked around; at last he espied his late companion at a distance, running as if for his life. This somewhat puzzled him, and for a moment he was tempted to send an arrow after him, but, recollecting that he was now too far away, he dismissed the idea from his mind, and began to reflect how best to turn Hector's absence to the advantage of his hidden friends. He first hastened to the cave and informed its inmates of the strange and abrupt departure. Flora, with her usual intelligence, soon divined the reason, and a consultation was at once held as to what they had better do in the perplexing situation in which they now found themselves.

They could not stay in the cave for any length of time for want of provisions; the small stock they had brought with them would soon be exhausted; the goat's milk would not be sufficient even for little MacGobhar himself, and it would be unsafe for

Kenneth to venture out to procure food for fear his retreat might be discovered; and they dreaded this might be the case even as it was, for if their enemies brought their slot hounds with them they would soon be tracked. Under these circumstances, in about a week they decided upon going down to the seashore, trusting fortune might favour them by sending a boat or vessel that way, in which they could make good their escape. This they did, taking the goat (which would not part from the boy) and their baggage along with them. As if in answer to their wishes, they no sooner arrived at the shore than they saw a large ship sailing towards them, and casting anchor at Poolewe. Shortly afterwards they observed one of the ship's boats, with five or six men, rowing in their direction. Kenneth and Flora hastened to hail it, to see if the men would take them on board. In their eagerness, they were nearly at the water's edge before they discovered that the principal figure in the boat was none other than Hector Dubh himself. With a scream of terror, the affrighted Flora turned and fled, followed by Kenneth, towards the child, for whose safety she had undergone so many hardships; but alas, she was destined not to reach him, for in her haste she stumbled and fell. Kenneth stopped to raise her; but the next moment they were surrounded, taken prisoners, and hurried to the boat.

Flora's anguish of mind on being thus cruelly separated from her charge was painful to witness. She prayed and entreated the men to return for him, promising that she would go quietly along with them if she only had the boy. But all in vain; the men turned a deaf ear to all her vehement and impressive appeals, Hector saying, "No, no, my pretty madame, you have cheated me once already; I'll take care you shan't do it again. We can easily return for the boy if our lord desires us to do so, but we will make sure of you and Kenneth, in the meantime." So, in spite of Flora's tears and sobs, and the more violent expressions of Kenneth's anger (who was deeply grieved at having to part with his mother in such a critical situation), the boat speedily bore them from the shore, and soon afterwards Hector had the satisfaction of handing them over to the custody of his chief.

The Lord of Castle Donain was very much put out at losing the boy, whose fate he felt more and more every day was strangely

interwoven with his own, and in proportion to his dread of what that fate might be was his anxiety to gain possession of young MacGobhar. Many a long and fruitless search did he cause to be made for him, many a sleepless night did he pass in endeavouring to unravel the mystic meaning of the prophecy, and many an hour he spent in consulting his aged bard, who possessed the second sight; but no satisfactory conclusion could be arrived at, except that MacGobhar certainly would in the end become the possessor of the vast estates of Castle Donain, but how it was to be accomplished, whether by victory in war or by more peaceful means, whether in the lifetime of the present lord, or in that of his successors, was at present hidden from their vision.

Flora, who was kept in a kind of honourable captivity, would not afford him the slightest clue to her own identity, or the parentage of the child, for whose loss she never ceased to grieve. On being perfectly satisfied that Kenneth was as ignorant as himself regarding Flora's antecedents, and being assured by her of Kenneth's absolute innocence of any design against him, the chief allowed him to go free.

Kenneth, however, was too devoted to the fair Flora to leave the district, while she was unwillingly detained there. He accordingly lingered about at a safe distance until a favourable opportunity might occur which would enable him to effect her escape, and of safely conducting her to another part of the country, out of the reach of the Lord of Castle Donain. Flora, finding herself alone and desolate, afraid of returning to her own country, and being deeply touched by Kenneth's unfailing devotion, at length consented to become his wife, a decision she never had cause to rue, but realised more every day the fact that

> The rank is but the guinea stamp,
> The man's the gold for a' that.

After this they wandered about in many places, where it is unnecessary to follow them, searching for Kenneth's mother and the boy; but at length gave up their efforts as hopeless. They then went south, and Kenneth joined the army, in which he speedily found favour, rose step by step, until the summit of his youthful ambition was attained, by being knighted by the King for his distinguished gallantry on the battlefield.

Let us now return to the widow and her charge. When she saw her son and Flora so suddenly torn from her side, and herself and the child left desolate on the shore, she knew not what to do, nor where to turn for shelter. It was no use returning to the cave, for how could they subsist there? Her cottage was no better now that Kenneth was gone. She, alone, would be totally unable to provide a livelihood. One supreme idea only remained to her, that of discovering and, if possible, rejoining her beloved and only son.

The kind and hospitable people of Poolewe willingly supported her and her charge for several days, till at last they succeeded in securing a passage for her on board a ship, the crew of which promised to take her to Castle Donain. The widow, like most old women, was rather garrulous; she told the captain all her troubles, and the strange story of the boy she found among the rocks of Loch Maree sucking her favourite goat, showing him at the same time, to corroborate her statements, the velvet mantle and sword of state which belonged to little MacGobhar's father. The captain, interested in the touching narrative, listened patiently, and condoled with the woman in her misfortunes; but, at the same time, feeling sure that the boy belonged to some family of note, he determined, instead of carrying his passengers to the desired destination, to take them to his own chief, Colin Gillespick, or Colin Mor, as he was generally called, a noted, brave, but rather unscrupulous Highlander.

Gillespick, on hearing the captain's story, was very glad to obtain possession of the boy, and decided upon taking MacGobhar into his own family and bringing him up as one of his own sons. He also provided the widow with a small cottage near his castle, and allowed her enough to live upon very comfortably. She had liberty to see MacGobhar as often as she wished, and as she was very much attached to him, she would have been quite happy but for her grief at the loss of her own son, which almost obliterated every other feeling. The boy was never tired of listening to her while she told and retold him all the incidents of his discovery in the cave with Flora, and of their subsequent happy days at the cottage, and of their sad and sudden termination. As MacGobhar grew up, he became intensely anxious respecting his parentage, and many a pleasant converse he had with the old

widow, who always maintained and taught him to believe that he came of noble ancestry. He would gaze on the mantle and sword by the hour together, trying to imagine what his father had been. The time thus spent was not altogether wasted, for these reveries made him feel that, if he was well born, it was necessary for him to conduct himself like a nobleman, which he accordingly strove to do, and soon excelled all his companions as much by his skill and dexterity in the warlike games and many accomplishments of the times, as in his fine, athletic figure, handsome features and dignified bearing.

When MacGobhar was about eighteen, his adopted father told him that he would now give him an opportunity of showing his prowess on the battlefield, as he had resolved to gather all his clan and retainers and make a grand raid into a neighbouring territory, of which the inhabitants were at the time in a state of anarchy and confusion; which circumstances he had no doubt would greatly aid him in his intended project of subjugation. This was welcome news to the fiery youth, longing "to flesh his maiden sword," and he exerted himself with right good will in making the necessary preparations for the forthcoming foray.

When Flora married Kenneth, she, like a true wife, concealed no secret from him, but told him all her history—a strange and romantic one. She was of high birth, but, being an orphan, lived with her only sister, who had married and become the queen of the chief or king of a powerful neighbouring kingdom. Her sister had an only child, a boy, named Ewen, to whom Flora became devotedly attached, being his companion and nurse by day and by night. When the child was about a year old, a revolt broke out in his father's domains, led by a natural brother of the king, who, being the elder, thought he had a better right to rule. The rebels seized and murdered Ewen's father, their lawful sovereign or chief, and took his queen prisoner.

Kenneth's blood ran cold as his wife continued, in graphic terms, to relate the horrors of that period; how the rebels, not satisfied with the death of their king, plotted to murder herself and the young heir during the night. But even in this trying emergency she did not lose her presence of mind, but courageously determined to defeat their wicked purpose by a counter-plot. She accordingly, as she told her husband, concealed her agitation

during the day, and on some pretext persuaded the wife and child of one of the conspirators to change bedrooms with her; the latter was slain while she made good her escape with her darling Ewen, but in such haste that she could make no preparations for her flight beyond carrying away the sword and mantle of the murdered king, as evidence, if ever opportunity should occur, to prove Ewen's high lineage and birth. After days of painful travel, she at last reached Loch Maree, where she was happily found in the cave, and succoured by the goat, by Kenneth and his devoted mother.

After Kenneth had been made a knight, and attained to a high position at Court, his wife accidentally heard from a wandering minstrel that great changes had taken place in her native country. The usurper was dead, leaving no successor, and the people were divided and in a state of discord, some wishing to have the queen of the late rightful king restored, while others wished for a male ruler. Flora, on hearing this, at once expressed a desire to visit her sister, of whom she had heard nothing for so many years, and suggested to her husband that he might possibly help the queen to resume her rightful position. Sir Kenneth, ever ready for adventure, consented, provided he could get his own king's consent for a time to withdraw from active service.

The kingdom being now at peace, the king readily gave him leave of absence, and also granted him permission to take his immediate retainers along with him. They all started in high spirits, and arrived at their journey's end in safety, when Flora was overjoyed to find her sister still alive and well. The queen, on meeting her, was no less delighted to find her long lost sister, and to hear of the wonderful preservation of her beloved son, though their joy was damped by the uncertainty of his fate since Flora was separated from him. By the assistance of Sir Kenneth and his brave men-at-arms, the queen was soon reinstated in her rightful position. But no sooner was this accomplished than she was threatened with an immediate attack from the formidable and dreaded Colin Mor. Her subjects, however, rallied round her, and, forgetting their mutual quarrels, stood well together, and led on by the brave Sir Kenneth, they rushed to meet the advancing foe with irresistible force, and gained a complete

victory over him, taking several important prisoners, among whom were three of Gillespick's sons, and his adopted son Ewen MacGobhar.

Colin Mor's raid being so unjust, for there was no reason for it but a characteristic desire for plunder, it was decided that his punishment should be severe, consequently all the prisoners of rank were ordered the morning after the battle to be publicly executed, beginning with the youngest, who happened to be Ewen MacGobhar, and the brave youth determined to meet his fate without flinching and as befitted his birth, which he always believed to be of noble origin. He accordingly dressed himself with care, threw over all his other clothing the scarlet velvet mantle he had preserved for so many years, and girded on the sword, with a sigh to think that he should never know the secret of his birth.

At the hour appointed, the prisoners, according to the barbarous custom of the time, were brought out for execution before the queen and her court. MacGobhar walked at their head with a stately step, his fine figure as erect, his fair head held as lofty, and his bright blue eyes as fearless as if he were a conqueror instead of a captive. As he approached nearer to where the queen sat, surrounded by her ladies, her sister Flora started violently, and seizing her husband by the arm, exclaimed, "Oh, Kenneth, see! see! that mantle, that sword, look at his fair hair, his blue eye, it must, it must be he;" then rushing towards Ewen, she cried out, "Your name, your name, noble youth; where did you get that sword and mantle; speak, speak, I adjure you by all you hold sacred to tell the truth." Ewen, much surprised by this impassioned appeal, drew himself up, and answered firmly and respectfully, "Madam, these articles belonged to my father, whom I never knew, and the name I am known by is Ewen MacGobhar, but I know not whether it is my correct name or not." This answer, far from allaying the lady's agitation, only served to increase it, and with an hysterical laugh she screamed out, "MacGobhar! yes, yes, I was sure of it. Sister! husband! see, see, our lost darling, my own dear MacGobhar;" then, in the excess of her emotion, she threw her arms around him, and swooned away.

All was now confusion and perplexity. Sir Kenneth hastened

to his wife's assistance. The queen rose and stood with an agitated face and outstretched hands, looking earnestly at Ewen. The older chiefs, who remembered his father, remarked the extraordinary likeness he bore to the late king; clansmen caught up the excitement and shouted, "A MacCoinnich Mor! A MacCoinnich Mor!"

After a pause, when the Lady Flora had regained consciousness, and some degree of order was restored, the queen closely questioned her sister as to the identity of Ewen; "for," she sagely remarked, "although that mantle and sword did indeed belong to my husband, that does not prove its present possessor to be his heir; and, further, although I admit a great resemblance in that young man to the late king, yet he might have been his son without being mine, and until I am persuaded that he is indeed my own lawful son, I will not yield this honoured seat to him." This spirited speech was received with approval by all the nobles, but still the common people continued to shout "A MacCoinnich Mor! A MacCoinnich Mor!"

"But stay, stay," exclaimed Kenneth, "I think I can decide if he is indeed MacGobhar; do you remember, Flora, that day when little Ewen was playing with my hunting knife and inflicted a severe cut on his arm; now, if this youth has the mark of that wound, it may be held conclusive. Approach then, and bare your left arm, MacGobhar."

Ewen stood forward, and amid the anxious, breathless attention of all, bared his muscular arm. There it was, plainly marked upon it, a large cicatrice, of many years standing.

All doubt was now removed; the queen embraced Ewen and owned him her son. The chiefs all crowded round to offer their congratulations, and the clansmen shouted loud and long.

MacGobhar bore himself throughout this strange and exciting scene with a dignity and composure which greatly raised him in the estimation of his new found friends. His first act was to beg the lives and liberty of his fellow prisoners, which was readily granted him; and when he had explained to his mother how indebted he was to Gillespick for his kindness in bringing him up, and had also told Sir Kenneth how well treated his mother had been, their indignant feelings towards Gillespick gave way to more kindly emotions, and a firm and lasting peace was concluded be-

tween the two clans. Sir Kenneth hastened to bring his mother, whose joy at being thus reunited to her son, after so many years' separation and anxiety, was almost overpowering. Sir Kenneth took up his abode in his wife's native country, and by his wise and sagacious council greatly assisted Ewen in the management of his kingdom, the queen having resigned all authority in her son's favour. Ewen ruled his people firmly and well, and by his courage in the field and wisdom in the council he so raised the strength and increased the dimensions of his kingdom that it became the most prosperous and powerful in the Highlands. He married the only daughter of the Lord of Castle Donain, and by her inherited all that vast estate, in this way fulfilling the old prophecy which had caused so much uneasiness for years to that proud and haughty chief.

THE JILTED HARPER.

THERE is a proverb still current in the Island of Mull, although the circumstances which gave rise to it occurred centuries ago, to this effect:—"'S mairg a loisgeadh mo thiompan rithe" (What a folly to burn my harp for her), usually applied to a case in which one has done a good turn for another and has only met with gross ingratitude in return.

At the time of our story there stood in a pleasant strath in the finest situation in this island, facing the sun, and sheltered from the rough winds by the high hills at its back, the dwelling or stronghold of the chief family on the island, the only representative of which at the time was a lad of eighteen. Niel Maclean was the young laird, the only son of his widowed mother, and a dutiful and affectionate son he had always been; but now that he was grown to man's estate he longed to see more of the world than was comprised within the narrow limits of his island home, so, after repeated solicitations, he obtained his mother's consent to go to France for a year or two before settling down at home at the head of his clan; it being the usual practice at that time for Highland gentlemen to send their sons to complete their education in that country. His departure took place amid the tears and blessings of all his people, who were fondly attached to him; but by none was his absence felt and regretted so much as by his nurse and foster mother, old Catrina, and her pretty granddaughter Barabel, who lived together in a cosy, little cottage within a stone's throw of the castle. Niel and Barabel had been companions since they could remember; as children they had roamed about hand in hand, gathering wild flowers or picking up shells on the seashore. They were greatly attached to each other, and their affection

> "Grew with their growth and strengthened
> with their strength"

to an extent unknown even to themselves, until they now came

to part. Many promises of fidelity and vows of constancy were interchanged between them before they took their last fond farewells in the usual fashion of love-sick swains and lasses.

Within the few months of Niel's departure old Catrina died, and Barabel had to go back to her father's house, which was quite at the other end of the island, a good distance away.

This was a sad change for poor Barabel, for she had lived happily with her grandmother since her mother died and left her a helpless infant. She had only seen her father at rare intervals during that period, so that it was like going among strangers for her to return to her native place, especially as her father had married again, and her step-mother looked with no very favourable eye upon his daughter. Her growing beauty soon attracted all the youths of the place ; but she cared not for their attentions. Their homely manners and uncouth attempts at gallantry only offended her, so different were they to the more refined manners of her beloved Niel.

Not the least of her trials was that she now had no opportunity of learning anything about him. Of course, hearing from him direct was out of the question. Those were not the days of letter writing, and even if he had a chance of sending a letter to her she could not read it ; but if she had remained in her old home near the castle she would have been able to hear of him occasionally ; now even this consolation was denied to her.

Thus some five or six years passed, and although, strictly speaking, Barabel had not forgotten Niel, yet she had come to think of him as one does of a dear friend who is dead ; for she had never heard a word of him nor of his doings since the day they parted.

She was now in the full zenith of her beauty, a strikingly handsome woman, still unmarried ; but betrothed to a very worthy man, a celebrated harper, who had long wooed her. He was considerably her senior ; but she had first been attached to him by his rare musical ability, which, combined with a gentle manner and great poetical genius, made him more acceptable to her than any of her younger suitors ; and, at last, touched by his devotedness to her, she consented to become his wife.

A few days before the time fixed for their marriage, they had occasion to go to a village some distance across the hills, to make

arrangements respecting their future home. While returning towards the evening they were overtaken by a severe snowstorm, which soon obliterated the path and caused them to lose their way. This was no joke to poor Barabel already quite fatigued with a long day's walking, and, after stumbling along over the broken and uneven ground for a little while, she was at last quite overcome, sank down exhausted, and so benumbed with the cold that she became insensible.

The harper was in despair; no help was near, no house visible, nothing but the blinding snow, whirled by the howling wind round and round the unfortunate couple, forming treacherous drifts and wreaths that made walking next to impossible. Catching the inanimate form of his adored Barabel in his arms, the harper struggled to gain the partial shelter afforded by some high overhanging rocks. Here, laying down his lovely burden and covering her with his own plaid, he strove to restore vitality by chafing her hands and face, all the while frantically bewailing his misery, and bestowing every term of endearment on his betrothed. Seeing that in spite of all his attentions Barabel still continued in a state of stupor, he hastily tried to collect materials for a fire. He got together a few sticks, which he set alight with his tinder box, and soon had the comfort of seeing the heat, slight as it was, somewhat reviving Barabel, who opened her eyes, and looked wonderingly around, but had not strength enough to speak. As the harper was congratulating himself on the success of his efforts, the little fire began to wane, and gradually for want of fuel grew less and less. He saw with dismay that unless he could replenish it by some means or other, all his pains in lighting it would be "love's labour lost."

In vain he looked around; not another stick could he see; then suddenly a thought struck him which brought a sudden glow to his face, only to leave it paler than before. There was his harp, his beloved companion for many years, slung as usual on his back. The woodwork of it was dry, and would make a capital fire! With a quick nervous gesture he unslung it, and held it towards the fast expiring embers. Could he destroy it? the work of his own hands, his peerless harp, which had brought him so much fame, and had been his solace in all the trials of his life! He wavered, but only for a moment; one glance at the white face

and closed eyes of his beloved, and he hesitated no longer. What would a thousand harps be in comparison with her welfare, perhaps her life? In a moment the harp was broken in pieces, and laid on the smouldering fire, which leaped and crackled over it in seeming derision of the harper's sacrifice. He, however, did not regret his loss, as he saw Barabel reviving under the influence of the grateful heat. In a little she was able to sit up, when suddenly they heard, to their great joy, the sound of a horn blown at no great distance, and soon saw approaching a young man followed by two dogs. He soon joined them, and explained that he was out hunting when the storm came on; that, seeing the smoke of their fire, he made towards it, and sounded his horn to call their attention to him. Fortunately, he had a well-filled flask, which he immediately offered to share with his newly-made acquaintances. As he approached to hand it to the woman, he suddenly stopped and gazed earnestly in her face. In the meantime Barabel was looking at him in the same curious manner, when all at once she gasped out the name "Niel!" and fell back again unconscious. The harper, who had been bending over the fire, turned quickly on hearing his betrothed's cry, but did not catch what she had said, and he hastened to restore her by pouring some of the generous fluid between her pallid lips, in which he was assisted by the stranger, who anxiously inquired what the lady's name was, and in what relation she stood to the harper? Under their united attentions the fair sufferer soon recovered, and was able, in faltering accents, to thank the gentleman for his timely aid. In a short time the strange air of embarassment with which they addressed each other wore off; they grew less reserved as they sat by the fire chatting merrily, heedless of the storm and their recent danger. Indeed, if the harper had been of a suspicious nature he might have felt some uneasiness in seeing how intimate his betrothed seemed to get with the stranger. They talked and smiled, while rapid glances, even more expressive than words, passed between them, and the tell-tale blush which banished the paleness from the fair cheek of Barabel indicated that she felt little displeasure at the stranger's familiarity.

The storm having now abated, they again started on their homeward journey, accompanied by the gentleman, who said his

boat was waiting him on the shore, not far off; and who, under the excuse that he was the younger and stronger man, made Barabel, who still seemed weak and strangly agitated, lean on his arm, while the harper walked in front to make out the path.

During this walk the stranger continued very marked attentions to Barabel, speaking in such a gentle, earnest tone that the harper began to feel uncomfortable. He, however, did not think it worth while to show his annoyance, as they would so soon be parting, and he could not forget the benefit the stranger had conferred upon both by so generously sharing with them the contents of his flask.

In a little they came in sight of the sea, and saw the boat awaiting its owner. Just at this moment Barabel complained of thirst, and begged the harper to fetch her a drink from a spring which issued in a clear rippling stream from a rock a few hundred yards from where they stood. Her unsuspecting lover hastened to comply, ran to the spring, got the water, and turned to retrace his steps, when, transfixed with astonishment, he observed the faithless Barabel in full flight with the treacherous stranger towards the shore. With a fearful misgiving, yet hardly comprehending what had happened, the harper rushed, shouting after the fugitives. They had, however, too good a start for him to overtake them, and with despair, mingled with just indignation, he watched them until they reached the boat, got into it, and rowed swiftly across to the other side.

Then the full force of his sad position burst on his half-frozen mind. He saw himself robbed, insulted, and mocked. How he had loved this woman! How long had he been a very slave to her slightest wishes! His genius had tried to the utmost in composing sonnets and serenades in her honour! His heart, with its wealth of love and devotion, had been poured at her feet! And this was his return! Utterly broken down, he bowed his head on his hands and groaned out in all the bitterness of his outraged feelings—

'S mairg a loisgeadh mo thiompan rithe.

He never saw Barabel again; but he received a message from her, begging his forgiveness, and explaining that in the stranger

she had recognised Niel Maclean, the lover of her youth ; that at the sight of him, and hearing from his lips that he was still devoted to her, every other consideration gave way to her old affection for him ; that she was easily persuaded to fly with him ; that she was now married, and only wanted the forgiveness of her injured betrothed to complete her entire felicity. At the same time she begged his acceptance of a fine new harp, which she had sent him in place of the one he had destroyed on her account.

The harper sent back the proffered present, saying he should never play on any instrument again ; that his heart was broken as well as his harp ; but that he freely forgave her for the grievous wrong she had done him. He kept his word ; he never sang or played again ; his gentle spirit had received too cruel a blow ever to recover ; he lived a solitary, listless life for a few months, and then died a broken-hearted man.

ALICE GRAHAM.

Among the many beautiful and high-born ladies of the Scottish Court, at the time of our story, few could vie in point of beauty with the youthful Alice Graham. Left an orphan at an early age, and before she was old enough to realise her loss, she was brought up by her grandmother, old Lady Graham. Petted and indulged by her fond relative, flattered and spoiled by the indiscriminate praises of her nurses and maids, fair Alice at seventeen, when she accompanied Lady Graham to Court, was as giddy, vain, and empty-headed as she was lovely. The admiration she excited and the attentions paid to her by the gallants of the Court only made the haughty beauty more imperious and capricious.

She had many eligible offers of marriage, but none of her suitors pleased her fastidious taste until she met with Sir Hugh Campbell, when everyone was astonished to see her not only smile on his suit and encourage his attentions, but, after a little, actually promising to marry him, for Sir Hugh was not at all the man one would suppose to attract a lively young lady like Miss Alice. He was a reserved haughty man, a widower past the prime of life, an ambitious intriguing politician, with a son older than his intended bride. Lady Graham highly disapproved of the proposed alliance, and sought in vain to persuade her granddaughter from such an unsuitable marriage, rightly conjecturing that Sir Hugh thought more of her handsome dowry and the influence he would gain through his marriage with her than he did of herself. But whether her pride was flattered at having such "a grave and reverend signior" at her feet, or whether through mere caprice, Sir Hugh she would have and no one else. And as the spoilt beauty had always hitherto had her own way, so she had it now, and the marriage was solemnised with all due pomp and ceremony, the king himself giving the beautiful bride away.

Castle Gruamach, the residence of Sir Hugh, was not a cheerful place—a dark gloomy pile, evidently built more for strength and defence than with any regard for the picturesque or even

comfort—situated far from any other habitation, on a lonely rock jutting out in the sea, the wild waves of the Atlantic ever dashing and foaming round its base, leaping and breaking in angry waves against the massive walls, as if eager to swallow in its huge billows the frowning fortress and its inmates. The light heart of fair Alice grew sad and heavy, as she surveyed her new home for the first time, and, as she passed through its gloomy portals she shudderingly compared it to a prison. Yet youth and beauty will enliven any place however dull, and the castle, under the direction of its new mistress soon assumed a different aspect; a constant stream of visitors, with their servants and followers, caused plenty of bustle and excitement; each day brought some new pleasure. Hawking, hunting, riding, games of skill, and contests of strength and agility occupied the day, while the evening was devoted to music, dancing, feasting, and flirting. All this revelry little suited Sir Hugh's sombre temperament. Long past the age of enjoying these gaities himself, he looked with disfavour on what he considered the frivolous and extravagant amusements of his wife and her guests, and soon gave expression to his disapproval. Lady Campbell, however, was enjoying with all the zest of a child her novel position as hostess, and had no idea of giving up the delightful though somewhat dangerous position she held as the centre of admiration, for at her shrine was daily offered up the most extravagant flattery, of whose beauty minstrels sang, for whose smile gallant youths and valiant men strove in the tilting-yard, or risked life and limb in the stately tournament.

Each day saw Sir Hugh getting more and more annoyed at the continued extravagance of his wife. In vain he showed coolness, amounting almost to incivility, to his numerous and unwelcome guests, who either did not or would not take any notice of his hints and innuendos. Equally in vain were his frequent remonstrances with Lady Campbell. At first she treated his complaints with her usual light-hearted levity, but as he got more decided and firm in insisting upon her maintaining a quieter establishment, she got angry, pouted and sulked, declaring he was a hard-hearted wretch to expect her to live in that horrible, dull, gloomy place without any company.

Unfortunately for her ladyship, she had already succeeded in

making a most bitter enemy in the person of her husband's son, Nigel, who at first had been much annoyed at his father's marriage; but when he saw the bride, he became so charmed with her brilliant wit and glowing beauty, that his resentment faded away, and he was as ready to be her servant as the rest of the gallants in her train. His awkward, ungraceful figure, rugged features, and unpolished address were, however, fatal to his finding favour in the eyes of the fastidious lady, who took a malicious pleasure in making him the butt for the shafts of her wit, and amused her guests at his expense by making him invariably appear ridiculous

Nigel in consequence soon withdrew with disgust from the brilliant and thoughtless circle, breathing curses "not loud but deep" against the fair author of his discomfiture. In the solitude of his own chamber, he meditated with knitted brow and close-set teeth how best to humble the pride and destroy the happiness of his father's bride. His first move was to increase by artfully concocted tales and half-expressed hints his father's dissatisfaction with the conduct of Lady Campbell. With the skill of an Iago, he distilled drops of deadly poison into the ears of Sir Hugh, thus daily estranging his affections from and exciting his displeasure against the thoughtless Alice, who, sooth to say, often played into her enemy's hands; for, while perfectly well aware of his hostility, she despised and underrated his power; and strong in her consciousness of innocence, she took a foolish delight in giving him still greater hold over her by her frivolous conduct and self-willed opposition to her husband's wishes.

Gradually the guests, who could no longer affect ignorance of the unhappy domestic relations of their host and hostess, dropped off, until only one remained. Allan Graham was a cousin of Lady Campbell; they had been brought up together as children, and Alice regarded him in the light of a brother. Sir Hugh had however taken a great dislike to this young man, and this feeling was worked upon by his son, who never failed by indirect means to call his attention to the familiarity which Lady Campbell allowed her cousin, and the evident partiality with which she regarded him. On finding that Allan remained after the other guests had gone, Sir Hugh threw off all self-control, and in a violent scene with his wife, coarsely expressed his suspicions, and commanded her with fierce threats to send her lover away and never hold the

slightest communication with him again at her peril. Now, indeed, Lady Campbell realised the folly of playing with edged tools, for to her vehemently indignant refutations of the base accusations of her husband, she was confronted with instances in which her conduct, as exhibited in the light of Nigel's deadly animosity appeared, to say the least, suspicious.

Outraged, bewildered, her pride wounded, her haughty spirit crushed under the humiliation, her ladyship sat like one in a stupor, until her overcharged feelings found relief in a passionate burst of tears. Thus Allan found her, and in answer to his eager entreaties, she told him of her trouble and begged him to leave her at once. Deeply resenting the indignity offered to his cousin and himself, the hot-spirited youth drew his sword, vowing that he would steep it in the life-blood of the caitiff, Nigel; but his cousin restrained him, showing the utter futility of attempting such against Nigel in his father's house and surrounded by his own people. Allan reluctantly gave way; but begged of her to send word to him if at any time she found herself in want of a trusty friend to champion her cause or to redress her wrongs.

"Alas!" said the broken-hearted lady, while her eyes streamed with hot and bitter tears, "alas, Allan, that may not be, I must never see you more nor hold any communication with you. Go, leave me to my miserable fate; but do me the last kindness I shall ever ask of you, conceal from my dear granddame and my friends the wretched state in which you leave me. For them to know my present position would be humiliation indeed."

"Is it so, fair Alice? Is Sir Hugh indeed such a tyrant? Well, at least I will leave you my glove; see here, take it, and whenever you need my assistance, send it back to me. I shall need no other message. When I see this glove, I will come at once whatever I am doing or wherever I may be. Will you promise to send it when you need me."

Lady Campbell gave a tearful assent, and with deep regret the cousins parted; and Allan, mounting his horse and calling his attendants, rode sorrowfully away.

Nigel, with stealthy footsteps retreated from his hiding-place, in which he had overheard the parting conversation between the cousins, and with a sinister smile on his ill-favoured countenance, he slipped out of the gate a little before Allan passed through it.

Thus it happened that they met a little way from the castle, and seeing Nigel on neutral ground, as it were, Allan could restrain his feelings no longer. Flinging himself from his steed, and desiring his attendants not to interfere, he rushed forward and striking Nigel with his sheathed sword called upon him to draw and defend himself. Nothing loth, his opponent's steel flashed out instantly, and the contest began. Both were good swordsmen, and for a few moments the victory seemed uncertain; but Allan's passion made him reckless, while Nigel stood immovable, the working of his face only showing the concentrated hate that consumed him. Soon, the sword of Allan was sent spinning out of his hand and he stood defenceless before his relentless foe. For a moment Nigel seemed inclined to bury his blade in the breast of the brave Allan, who stood unmoved before him, disdaining to ask for quarter; but remembering himself, he stayed his hand, exclaiming as he turned away, "To kill you now would be but a poor avenging of all the insults I have borne at your hands. No, your jibes and sneers shall have a better return. I bide my time, and will take my revenge in my own way."

Allan stood looking at his retreating foe with bitter feelings, shame for his defeat, mingled with a sense of dread at the inexorable hate and malignity depicted on the face of Nigel as he uttered his parting words. Then moodily picking up his sword, he slowly remounted and pursued his way.

Time now passed heavily with the beautiful Alice. Not a visitor approached the castle, and she was not allowed to go out of the grounds immediately surrounding it. Even her maid was dismissed and another belonging to the neighbourhood substituted. Sir Hugh and Nigel were often from home. They had a small boat in which they came and went in a secret unostentatious manner. When at home, Sir Hugh treated his wife with cold civility, while the very presence of Nigel was most hateful to her. Having no mental resources to fall back upon to wear away the tedious hours, Lady Campbell became dispirited and unhappy—the only thing that now had any interest for her was to try to discover the reason of her husband's frequent absence from home. She was filled with an insatiable curiosity to find out his projects and the object he had in maintaining so much secrecy

about his actions. She had attempted once or twice to question him, but met with such a surly rebuff that she found the attempt to gain any information from him quite useless. The more she thought over it, the more she became convinced that they were involved in State intrigues, probably of treason. Brought up as she had been under the very shadow of the Court and honoured by the notice of Royalty, she regarded treason with peculiar horror, and the suspicion that she should be in any way mixed up with the enemies of the king filled her with dismay. She determined to watch them carefully, and, if possible, do something to frustrate their schemes. But she was no match for the subtle Nigel, who soon penetrated her motives, and, while laughing in his sleeve at her futile efforts, he did not fail to direct his father's attention to this new and dangerous freak of his wife. Lady Campbell was, in consequence, treated with greater harshness and kept more like a prisoner than ever. The climax was reached, when one day Sir Hugh and his son, arriving unexpectedly, found Lady Campbell examining with breathless interest some papers to which she had gained access, and which only too clearly demonstrated the treasonable plots in which they were engaged. So absorbed was she, that she did not hear the splash of their oars under her window, nor the grating of the boat against the steps, green and slimy with sea-weeds, that led down to the water. The first sound she heard was the fierce oath that escaped from Sir Hugh the moment he discovered how she was engaged. The first thing she felt was his heavy hand bruising her delicate arm with its rude clasp. The first sight she saw as she raised her startled eyes, was the sneering look of triumph on the hateful face of Nigel, as he stood looking with malicious pleasure at her confusion. That insolent look stung her into madness. Rising superior to her fear, she, with flashing eyes and scornful voice, denounced them for a couple of traitors, and, forgetting in her passion her helpless condition, vowed she would defeat their schemes and make known their treachery. Nigel listened with a sinister smile still on his cruel face. As a cat takes delight in the dying agonies of the poor mouse, so Nigel found pleasure in witnessing the unavailing passion of his victim.

But there was an ominous frown on the face of Sir Hugh, as

he growled rather than said, "Oh! oh! my pretty bird, do you sing so loud? We must find a cage for you before you fly away altogether." Then gathering up the papers, he left the room, followed by Nigel.

Left to herself, Lady Campbell underwent a revulsion of feeling—the burning indignation which had hitherto supported her gave way under the reaction. She felt a cold sinking at heart, as she thought of her utter helplessness, and overcome by fear, she threw herself weeping on a couch.

Her situation was indeed pitiable. She was now kept a strict prisoner in her apartments, the only person she saw being the woman who waited on her. Devoid of all means of communication with her friends, she was perfectly at the mercy of Sir Hugh, whom she never did love, and upon whom she now looked with abhorrence.

Surely now Nigel has had his revenge on the proud beauty who had made sport of his devotion; but no, he must slake his tiger-like thirst for blood. By the assistance of the woman who acted as the attendant and jailer of Lady Campbell he got possession of the glove that Allan had given to his cousin at parting, and immediately sent it off to him by a trusty messenger, to whom he gave full instructions how to proceed.

Days, weeks, wore away, the unhappy lady still remained a close prisoner, pining in solitude without hope of release. Towards the close of a warm summer day she sat at the open window of her room, looking out on the sea. The cool evening breeze was grateful to her fevered brow, but her face, still beautiful in outline, had lost the freshness of health—it was white and careworn—the fair forehead already wrinkled with lines of sorrow and suffering. She gazed at the sea, but she noted not how beautiful it looked with the rays of the setting sun reflected in every wave with ever-changing hues. Her thoughts were far away with her loving grandmother, the only parent she ever knew. She recalled her merry life as a girl, her troops of friends, her ardent admirers, the brilliant Court, the Royal pair who had been so gracious and kind; then her thoughts lingered on the memory of her cousin, the brave, the joyous, kind-hearted Allan—what would she not give to be able to call him to her aid; when her thoughts were abruptly recalled to her present unhappy condition by an unusual

commotion in the castle, voices in loud expostulation, then a firm step on the stone staircase, the clank of a spurred heel, a halt at her chamber door, the voice of her attendant in controversy with another voice which caused the blood to rush to her heart with a sudden throb, and her pulse to beat with excitement; a moment more and the door is dashed open; Allan Graham enters with a hasty step; another moment and she is clinging to him and sobbing on his breast. Quick eager questions and answers succeed each other, till Lady Campbell asked in a tone of wonder, "But how was it Allan that you arrived so opportunely. What brought you back to this hateful place?"

"What brought me?" exclaimed Allan, "why, your message, of course. Did I not tell you I would come at any time on receipt of my glove?"

"Your glove," faltered his cousin. "I never sent it, because I could not, there must be some mistake," she continued, hastening across the room to a cabinet, where she had hidden the glove. She saw that it was gone, and turning to her cousin with a frightened look, she exclaimed, "Oh, Allan! what does it mean? I fear me much there is some plot against you, to lure you here to your destruction." "Fear not, dear Alice, what matters it who sent me the token, as long as I am come. Some unknown friend perchance hath done this good turn." "Alas! alas! I have no friends here; but hist! what is that? do you not hear the sound of oars, and voices too? Heavens! it is Sir Hugh and Nigel. Fly! fly! Allan; if they find you here you are doomed." Her warning came too late; Sir Hugh dashed into the room with his sword drawn, demanding in a voice of thunder, what had brought Allan there; then, without waiting for a reply, he made a lunge and attempted to run him through; but Allan was on his guard, and quickly parried the stroke. Lady Campbell, with a piercing shriek, threw herself between them and tried to shield her cousin from the fury of her husband. Nigel, who had followed his father into the room, drew his dirk and passed round to the back of Allan. Lady Campbell caught sight of the cruel face of her relentless enemy, lighted up with fiendish exultation, saw the keen blade flash as it descended with unerring aim, and buried itself in the heart of her cousin. She heard the harsh voice of Nigel exclaim, "Thus I take my revenge." She felt the warm blood

of her kinsman gush over her neck and breast, then merciful oblivion seized her overtaxed brain and she fell insensible to the floor. The unfortunate Allan never spoke, the stroke was so sudden and deadly. His still warm body was dragged to the window, and ruthlessly thrown out to the hungry waves below. "What shall we do to her," said Sir Hugh, pointing to the insensible figure of his wife, "the traitress deserves the same fate as her lover, but yet——"

"Nay, father," interposed Nigel, "I have a better plan than that, listen;" he eagerly whispered his scheme, which his father agreed to, and raising the poor lady in their arms, they made their way down the steps to their boat, leaving the castle as secretly as they came.

When Lady Campbell recovered consciousness, she found herself lying at the bottom of a boat, covered with a cloak; the keen night wind chilled her through and through, and the cold spray dashed over her as the boat cut through the heaving billows, but her bodily discomfort was nothing compared to the agony of her mind. One look at the stern, unrelenting face of her husband and the malignant expression on Nigel's countenance, convinced her that any appeal for mercy would be useless.

Hour after hour they kept on their way, the night wore away, the stars disappeared, and the clear moon paled before the advancing orb of day; but the rising sun brought no comfort to the unhappy Alice. Stupified by grief, she seemed as though she was under the influence of a frightful nightmare. She understood what was going on without the slightest power of speech or resistance. She knew they were approaching land, for she could see the rugged outline of high rocks in the distance. Soon the boat was under the shadow of the same rocks, then the keel grated harshly on the shingle, as it was run ashore, when she felt herself lifted out and placed on dry ground. She gazed around with wondering eyes. What dreary place was this? Had they brought her here to murder her where no eye could see them? No, they re-enter the boat and seat themselves. Sir Hugh does not turn his head; but Nigel cannot resist the promptings of gratified revenge. He gloats over the despair of his victim with the malevolence of a demon, as the boat again puts off. Lady Campbell sees the rapidly receding boat, and the full horror of her situation bursts

upon her appalled mind. Throwing up her arms with a gesture of despair, she uttered screams of horror, mingled with the most incoherent supplications so long as they were in sight, when she again relapsed into insensibility.

Slowly did the miserable lady recover from her death-like swoon. But youth and a strong constitution carried her through the severe trial. When she was able to look about, her heart sank as she saw the barren rocks, rising dark, gloomy, and seemingly inacessible on every hand. Not a living creature could she see, except myriads of birds and wild fowls of the air flying high up among the rocks. The noise was extraordinary—the harsh cry of the gull alternated with the quack, quack of numberless ducks, the hissing sounds made by the immense numbers of solan geese, and the various notes of pigeons, kittiewakes, puffins, anks, guillemots, and smaller birds—the sea was covered with them, the ground was white with their feathers, while the sky was darkened by the swarms of winged creatures.

Turning her despairing looks on every side, Lady Campbell's attention was directed to a particular rock by observing something unusual moving down the face of it. She could not at first make out what it was; but, after a while, she saw that it was a boy hanging on a rope, descending the almost perpendicular cliff. She guessed he was searching for eggs from the commotion his presence caused among the feathered tribe, as fluttering their wings and uttering their shrill cries they flew hither and thither, now swooping down and hovering over their ravaged nests, anon rising and circling far overhead.

The sight of the boy raised the desponding heart of poor Alice. It cheered her by showing she was not, as she had supposed, on an uninhabited shore. Whoever or whatever the people might be, they could not be more cruel than those who had condemned and left her to such a fate. But how could she attract his attention? She called out in her shrillest tones, but her voice was lost in the screaming of wild birds. She waved her handkerchief wildly. Alas! he saw not the tiny signal. Almost despairing she tore off the silken scarf that covered her shoulders, and clambering on to a rock, stood holding it aloft, till her arms ached. The ruse was successful; the rays of the sun glanced on the coloured silk as it floated on the breeze, and its glittering sheen caught the quick

eye of the fowler; but his astonishment was so great at the apparition of a lady alone on the rocks, that he nearly lost the nerve so essential to his dangerous avocation. He, however, managed to signal to his companions to haul him up, when he related with bated breath the vision he had seen. They at first laughed at him and his story; but, on his persisting in the reality of what he had seen, and declaring his intention of going down to the shore to get a nearer view of the figure, his companions did their best to dissuade him from his purpose, saying it must have been a fairy or perhaps a mermaid he had seen, and who knew what dire penalties he might have to pay if he had the temerity to venture within her reach? Curiosity, however, proved stronger than his fear of the supernatural, and the bold lad left his comrades and made his way by circuitous paths to the place where he had seen the apparition. As he again caught sight of her, he stopped involuntarily, absorbed in admiration, for truly never before had the half-civilised youth seen anything human so beautiful as the graceful loveliness of the unhappy Alice as she stood helplessly on the bleak seashore. Her fair face, troubled and tear-stained, her long tresses blowing about in the cold breeze, and her rich dress wet and soiled by the salt water; her evident distress touched a tender chord in the chivalrous nature of the lad, and he advanced towards her without a particle of fear. On perceiving him, the miserable lady held out her delicate hands, and implored his help to guide her to some place of refuge. The dulcet tones of her voice fell on his ears like the rippling strain of sweet music; but, alas! he could not understand a word. He guessed her meaning, however, and while speaking to her in Gaelic he took her hand and pointed towards his home. His frank sunburnt face, lighted up with a pair of bright truthful-looking eyes, won her confidence at once, and she surrendered herself to his guidance without a scruple. It would be impossible to adequately describe the intense astonishment and curiosity caused by the appearance of Lady Campbell and her young guide, among the primitive inhabitants of the island, whose rough appearance, uncouth language, and wild gestures alarmed the delicately-nurtured lady; and made her cling closer to her young protector, who, rebuking their ill manners, led the way to his own cottage, in which he lived with his widowed

mother. The old woman was as much surprised at the appearance of her son's companion as her neighbours, but she possessed far more common sense. When she saw the exhausted condition of the unfortunate stranger, she hastened to provide nourishment and dry clothing for her ; and not until her visitor was cared for and was lying down taking the repose which she so sorely needed did the kindly old dame indulge her very natural curiosity by questioning her son and eliciting all he knew about the mysterious arrival of their guest. Such an unheard-of circumstance had never happened before in the memory of the "oldest inhabitant" of the island. Many and strange were the conjectures and theories broached by the simple people as they gathered together to discuss the startling event. Some suggested that there had been a ship wrecked on the rocks, and that the lady was the only survivor ; but others soon reminded them that there had been no storm for days, and, moreover, there was not a sign to be seen of any wreckage. The majority inclined to the belief that there was something uncanny about the circumstance altogether ; but they differed as to the class of supernatural beings to which the lady belonged. They all agreed that whether fairy, witch, water-sprite, or mermaid, her appearance boded no good, and they earnestly counselled the widow to have nothing more to do with such an unearthly creature. "No, no, neighbours," replied the woman firmly, "she is neither witch nor fairy. I gave her food, and she ate both bread and salt ; that shows she is human for no fairy or sprite can touch salt. Besides, I knew a stranger was to land on our shore to-day, for just at daybreak my nose burst out bleeding—a sure sign of a stranger's arrival. I will give her a share of my cottage as long as she likes to stay, and will not allow any of you to annoy or injure her."

These sentiments were echoed by her son, who warmly espoused the cause of the fair unknown, whom he looked upon as his own especial charge, and with youthful ardour he proclaimed himself her champion.

Though the neighbours were not convinced, they decided to let the matter rest for the present, contenting themselves with prognosticating all kinds of evil consequences to the self-willed widow and her daring son.

Days, weeks, months, dragged their weary length over the head of the unfortunate lady. She still remained an inmate of the widow's cottage, treated with great kindness and respect; but what an existence for the high-born beauty—a miserable hovel in place of a stately castle, food of the coarsest description, roughly cooked, in lieu of the dainties to which she had ever been accustomed; for company, in place of courtiers, nobles, and ladies, with troops of obsequious attendants, she was surrounded by unsophisticated islanders whose language she did not understand and whose uncouth but well meant attentions filled her with astonishment. No wonder that the poor creature pined away, wasting her strength in unavailing regrets for the past. She saw now, when alas it was too late, the folly of her life. She remembered with bitter anguish how her kind grandmother had warned her against her ill-fated marriage; how self-willed she had been in opposing her husband's wishes; how infatuated she had had been to make such an implacable enemy of Nigel whom she might have secured for a friend. Then would come the worst thought of all—that she had been the cause of the sad fate of her cousin, the brave, the gallant young Allan—the whole scene of his murder would rise before her mental vision—again she saw her stern husband with his gleaming sword; again she saw the fiendish look of malice on the cruel face of the hated Nigel as he plunged his dagger in the heart of her kinsman; then she saw the loved face of her cousin turn grey with the ghastly hue of death, until, overwhelmed with the agony of the terrible remembrance, she would cry aloud and fall into a fit of hysterical weeping. The only thing that relieved the tedium of her existence was the companionship of the widow's son, Alastair. In spite of her misery, she could not help being touched by the devotion of the brave, kind-hearted youth. From the hour in which he found her on the rocks, he seemed to have but one motive in life—to wait upon and serve the forlorn lady. Never in the days of her highest prosperity had she a more ardent admirer, a stauncher friend, or a more willing page than she had now in the bare-footed and bare-headed Alastair. On warm sunny days, when he could coax her to take a walk, he would guide her to the fairest spots, assisting her over the broken ground, and removing every obstacle in her path with the chivalrous care and delicate attention of a

high-born cavalier. He would wade neck-deep in the seething waves to secure for her the prettiest sea-weed and shells; he would climb the highest rocks to pluck rare flowers, or descend the cliffs, hanging to a rope made of strips of raw cow-hide, strongly twisted together, and covered with sheep skin to protect it from friction with the rocks, to procure the choicest eggs and the most beautiful feathers. Lady Campbell took pains to teach her young companion some English, so that she could hold a little intercourse with him, and could relate to him her sad history. There was much in it that he could not understand, but he gathered that she had been grievously wronged, and he burned with indignation at the thought, and longed to be able to avenge her.

As time worn on, the fair exile lost the faint hope she at first had of the chance, poor as it was, of her husband relenting and returning for her, or of the possibility that her friends might discover her condition. Still she could not bear the idea of dying with her tragic fate unknown and unavenged. But she began to feel that her end was near. The cruel usage she had been subjected to, aggravated by the intense anguish of mind which she endured, had undermined her constitution, and consumption—that fell destroyer of the young and beautiful—had marked her for its victim. Alastair had solemnly promised that if he ever got a chance of leaving the island, he would do his utmost to reach her friends and acquaint them with her story; but she felt what a poor chance there was of his ever being in a condition to fulfil his promise. She had no writing materials, or she would have written a narrative of her wrongs; but she thought of a project which she hastened to put into execution. Like all the ladies of her time, she was well skilled in fancy needlework, and she conceived the idea of embroidering her history in brief on her muslin apron. She found a needle stuck in her dress, but what could she do for thread or silk? For a time she was disheartened, when an idea struck her. Why, had she not her long tresses? Yes! she would use them for her proposed work. So she commenced; hair by hair she pulled out of her poor weary head; stitch by stitch, letter by letter, word by word, she patiently worked on. Too weak now to go out, she spent all her time on her self-imposed task, while daily, hourly, the hacking cough grew

worse, the hectic flush burned brighter on the wasted cheek, and the thin white hands tired the sooner. Still she persevered, until at last the work was completed—the apron was filled from end to end with the record of her sorrows. Surely never was a sadder tale told in stranger form. Alastair was in despair at the rapid change for the worse in the unfortunate lady. He used to watch her sew, sew away, until he felt a lump rising in his throat that seemed to choke him, and scalding tears would blind his eyes; then would he rush away to hide his emotion, and while invoking curses on the authors of her misery would renew his vows of retribution.

The end came at last. The beautiful and unfortunate Alice lay dying, tended by the good old widow, while Alastair knelt by the bedside, striving to stifle his sobs as the poor lady gave him her last injunctions, and instructed him how to find out her friends, if ever he should have the chance. The sorrowing lad received the apron with all the reverence of a knight receiving a holy relic, and in a voice tremulous with heart-felt grief swore to make it the object of his life to carry out her wishes, and never to part with the apron until he found some kinsman of hers to avenge her untimely fate. "Thanks, thanks, dear Alastair," murmured the dying Alice, "I know you will do your best; give me your hand—'tis growing very dark—kiss me Alastair, you have been a good friend to me, good-bye." The faint voice grew fainter, then ceased; and so, supported by the widow, and holding Alastair's hand, the weary spirit winged its flight.

The simple-minded islanders, who had long ago ceased to suspect her as a supernatural being, paid every attention to the remains of their visitor, laid her to rest in a lovely secluded spot, and raised a cairn to mark the place.

Years rolled on. The widow was dead, and Alastair, now a grave, thoughtful man, still wore his sacred relic next his heart, chafing and fretting at his inability to perform his vow. At last the long wished-for opportunity arrived. A ship driven by storms far out of her course, came near the island, when, without a moment's hesitation, Alastair swam out, clambered on board, and offered his services for a passage to the mainland. To this the captain agreed, but being short of hands for his long voyage across the seas, and seeing Alastair was a strong young man, in-

stead of putting him ashore on the mainland, as promised, he bore on his way to a far-distant land. This was a terrible disappointment to poor Alastair, but he consoled himself by thinking that he could soon get another ship to bring him back. He had only to wait a little longer. But, alas! it was not to be; the ship was attacked and taken by pirates, and Alastair, with many others, was carried away and sold into slavery.

Long, long years of captivity and misery dragged their weary length along. Alastair, no longer young and strong, but haggard and gaunt with want, and weakened with overwork, was sometimes ready to give up all hope. Then would the picture of the fair form he had loved so devotedly rise before him; he would feel again the pressure of her hand, and hear the pleading tones of her voice; the memory of that kiss, the first and last, would revive his drooping spirits, and pressing his precious charge closer to his heart, he would take fresh hope and battle with renewed energy against his adverse destiny.

At last he managed to procure his escape, and after many perils and hardships, reached a seaport, and secured a berth in a homeward bound ship. In due course he landed at a southern port, many, many miles from his native land. He did not, however, despair; he had regained his freedom, and resolved that if life was spared to him he would make his way north.

. . . . . .

A stormy winter's day was drawing to a close; the rain poured in torrents, while the wind howled and shrieked around the turrets and towers of a massive building. The warden was in the act of closing the great outer gate, when he was accosted by a poor man, ragged, travel-worn and bowed down by age or weakness, who begged, in a faint voice, to be allowed speech with the master of the castle. The warden looked at the stranger with undisguised astonishment. "And what should an old scarecrow like you have to say to my master? I' faith he is better employed with his company to-night than to talk with an old beggar; but come in man, you will get food and shelter, but as to an interview with Sir John Graham that is quite another matter."

Alastair, for it was he, gladly embraced the proffered hospitality, and meekly followed the warden into the great hall,

where, around the blazing wood-fire, he mingled with many another poor wanderer. It was not long before he managed to get an audience of Sir John, to whom he related his wonderful story, to corroborate which he produced the muslin apron which he had preserved with so much care through every danger. Sir John examined the relic with deep emotion, and read the true solution of the mystery which for so many years had hung over the fate of his younger brother, Allan, and his lovely cousin Alice. Nor did he neglect to acknowledge the deep debt of gratitude he and his family owed to Alastair for his life-long devotion. He treated him like a brother, and, as soon as he was strong enough to travel, Sir John took him before the king, and demanded justice against the murderers. The king readily granted his request. Sir Hugh Campbell had, meanwhile, however, gone to answer for his crimes before a higher tribunal; but Nigel, being still alive, was quickly seized, tried, and executed, and all his possessions confiscated. This act of justice done, Sir John determined, regardless of the expense and difficulties in the way, to visit the last resting-place of his unfortunate relative, to get the ground consecrated by the Church, and have a monument erected. Alastair, whose health was rapidly getting worse, accompanied him and his party. They reached the little far away island in safety, and, amid the wondering looks of the inhabitants, the bishop and attendant priests consecrated the burial-place with all the pomp and ceremony of the Church, while the workmen brought for the purpose erected a costly monument by the side of the rude cairn of uncut stones raised many years before by the kindly people of the island, and which Sir John Graham would not allow to be disturbed. When all was finished, and the last touches given, the workmen and onlookers departed, all, except one—a tall, thin man, in the last stages of weakness, who waited until all had left the hallowed spot. With a deep-drawn sigh he threw himself on the ground and embraced the cold marble. Long, long, he remained there; the sun set in a sky made glorious with his many-coloured rays, the stars peeped out one by one, and the fair moon rose bright and clear—her cold light shone on the glittering white tomb and on the prostrate figure at its base, and thus the night wore on. Early next morning, before setting sail, Sir John and his companions went to take

a farewell look at his cousin's monument, and there they found the lifeless body of Alastair, his poor stiff arms still encircling the cold marble.

With reverent care they laid him in the ground whereon he died, and carved his name beneath that of the fair being whom he had loved so truly, and served so well, and under his name they placed the appropriate words—"Faithful unto death."

COLONEL SINCLAIR'S FATE.

About the year 1612 Lord Maxwell of Nithsdale had a quarrel with a neighbouring Border chief, Sir James Johnstone, and, happening to meet him one day, the dispute was renewed, until from words they came to blows, when Maxwell ran Sir James through the body and killed him on the spot. Horror-stricken at the tragic result of the quarrel, and fearing the vengeance of the murdered man's relatives, Maxwell took to flight, and made his escape to France. He soon, however, returned, and concealed himself for a considerable time in the wilds of Caithness, trusting to the well-known generosity of the natives not to betray him. A price was set on his head, but he was safe enough so far as the common people were concerned, who scorned to betray even a stranger who trusted himself to them. These fine sentiments were not, however, held by their leader, Colonel George Sinclair, who, on hearing of the fugitive lord, determined to curry favour with the Government by giving his lordship up. Accordingly, Sinclair pursued him, at length secured him near the boundary of the county, and at once sent him to Edinburgh, where the unfortunate fugitive was executed.

Tradition states that when Lord Maxwell was taken prisoner by Colonel Sinclair he upbraided him in no measured tones for his treachery, telling him that he would never prosper after such a deed, and that he would soon meet with a violent death himself. The Colonel laughed at this prophecy; but he soon had cause to remember it, for, finding that his neighbours, and even his clansmen, resented his violation of the rules of hospitality, he determined to leave Caithness for a time, and enter the service of Gustavus Adolphus, King of Sweden, to assist him in his wars against Denmark and Norway.

Having raised a body of 900 men, Sinclair embarked, accompanied by his young and beautiful wife, who could not bear to be left behind, and who, to avoid publicity, dressed herself in man's clothes and went as her husband's page. Colonel Sinclair

found he could not land at Stockholm, as the Baltic was in possession of a strong Danish fleet. He therefore determined to go to Norway, and fight his way at the head of his men across the country until he could reach Sweden and join the king's army. He accordingly began his march, laying waste the country and ill-treating the peasantry in a most cruel manner. This brutality at last so aroused the people that they were nerved to make some attempt at retaliation.

The "budstick" (answering to the Fiery Cross of the Highlands) was sent round. The people assembled, armed with muskets and axes, to the number of 500, and placed themselves under the leadership of one of their number, Berdon Seilstad, who, seeing he could not compete with the invaders in numbers, had recourse to stratagem. Sinclair's movements were carefully watched by spies, until he arrived at a place considered favourable for attack. This was a narrow defile between a precipitous rock on one side and a deep and rapid stream on the other. While Sinclair was deliberating whether to pass through this dangerous gorge or try to find another road, he espied a young countryman, whom he at once took prisoner, and by threats and promises compelled him to act as his guide. The lad seemed very simple and stupid, but agreed to accompany them if they undertook not to hurt him. Obtaining a promise to this effect, he led them farther through the difficult pass, until, at a certain spot he suddenly stopped, and firing a pistol which he had hitherto kept concealed, leaped among the rocks, and at once disappeared. Before the report of the pistol shot had died away, Sinclair's party heard the blowing of a horn, and in a moment the rocks which overhung the narrow path were alive with the enraged natives, who poured a terrific volley on the devoted heads of the entrapped Caithness-men. Those of the peasants who had no firearms hurled down fragments of rock and large stones, which proved as destructive as the muskets of the others. The erstwhile guide was among the foremost of the enemy, with all his assumed stupidity thrown off, and was seen to be pointing out Colonel Sinclair to Berdon Seilstad, the leader of the Norwegians, who, having heard that Sinclair bore a charmed life not to be injured by ordinary shot, pulled off one of the silver buttons of his coat, and, biting it into shape, loaded his musket with it, and, taking deadly aim, shot

Colonel Sinclair over the left eye, killing him instantaneously. The carnage was dreadful, and the Scots were killed wholesale, without being able either to defend themselves or attack their enemies. Numbers of the wounded fell into the roaring waters of the torrent below, while about sixty were taken prisoners, and of the whole 900 who entered that fatal pass only three escaped and succeeded in making their way back to Caithness. One was the wife of the Colonel, the other two being gentlemen who knew the supposed page was the Colonel's wife and did their best to defend her.

There is a pathetic incident mentioned in connection with this unfortunate affair. The day before the slaughter of the Caithness men, a young Norwegian was sitting with his betrothed in earnest conversation. He wished to join his countrymen in their proposed attack, and she was trying to dissuade him from doing so; but on hearing that one of her own sex was supposed to be among the invaders, she wished her lover to go to their camp privately that night and protect the lady from the fate which they well knew awaited the rest. He consented, and in the twilight made his way unseen to where the Scots lay encamped for the night; but, in endeavouring to get near enough to Mrs Sinclair to give her warning, he was perceived by her, and, not awaiting to hear what he wanted, she shot at and killed him. Tradition records that it was the bereaved and grief-stricken bride, who, disguised as a lad, led the Scots to their doom, and revenged her lover's death by pointing out Colonel Sinclair to the Norwegian Captain. The sixty men who were taken prisoners were a few days afterwards marched to a field and there brutally put to death in cold blood by the natives, who had got tired of providing food and lodging for them. Their comrades who fell at the time were left as they lay for the birds of the air and beasts of prey to devour; but the body of Colonel Sinclair was decently buried, and a wooden cross erected over his grave with the following inscription:—

"Here lies Colonel George Sinclair, who, with 900 Scotsmen, were dashed to pieces, like so many earthen pots, by the peasants of Lessoe, Vaage, and Froem. Berdon Seilstad of Ringeboe was their leader."

Robert Chambers, who visited Norway in 1849, and went to

the scene of the tragedy, says—"In a peasant's house near by were shown to me a few relics of the Caithness men, a matchlock or two, a broadsword, a couple of powder-flasks, and the wooden part of a drum."

And thus ended one of the most fatal and inglorious military adventures in which Scotsmen were ever engaged.

RICHARD CRAVEN IN SUTHERLAND.

In the second decade of this century the people of Sutherlandshire were thrown into a state of agitation, alarm, and distress, by the wholesale and cruel evictions then taking place amongst them, through the arbitrary will and short-sighted policy of the titled proprietor. Honest, hard-working crofters, who had been born and bred, married, and brought up children, and had hoped to have died in the same spot in which their forefathers had lived and died for generations, were now in their old age turned adrift, their crofts laid waste, and their cottages given to the flames.

Such an oppressive use, or rather abuse, of the landlord's power was happily rare even in that county, and its present exercise called forth indignant surprise, not only in Sutherlandshire but throughout the Highlands generally. The actual sufferers "wore their rue with a difference." Some, utterly broken down, with all hope and joy crushed out of them, went with sad faces and still sadder hearts to find in a strange land that home and that freedom denied them in their own country; many of them carefully taking with them, as a great treasure, a few handfuls of earth from the home they loved so well, to be sprinkled on their coffins when at length their weary pilgrimage would cease and they should be laid to their long rest in the distant and as yet unknown country. Others, with tempers soured by adversity, and roused by oppression to feelings of vindictive anger, remained, and sought employment in the Lowlands; but a bitter sense of injury and injustice rankled in their breasts, and many a curse, "not loud, but deep," was muttered against their lordly and imperious proprietor and his southern satellites—factors, agents, lawyers were all looked askance upon as the tools employed to work this most grievous wrong. Such was the unsettled state of Sutherlandshire when our story opens.

In the warm, cosy breakfast room of a good substantial

house, situated in the best part of Edinburgh, sat, one cold, frosty morning, Mr Richard Craven, the senior partner of the well-known and highly-respectable firm of Craven & Mackay, W.S. A man of from fifty to sixty years of age, tall and thin, with quick, nervous gestures and rather irritable manners, Mr Craven was a bachelor, and to use the homely but expressive remark of his housekeeper, was also "a gey pernickity man." On this particular morning he seemed more than usually fidgetty. He was reading his letters and eating his breakfast at the same time, and if the savoury viands of the latter were calculated to give him bodily comfort, the contents of the former seemed to cause him great mental distress, for as he read he gave utterance to sundry "phews" and "pshaws," and at last exclaimed in a querulous tone, as he threw down the obnoxious epistle, "How provoking! how very provoking, that Mackay should be away just now."

"Hallo, Craven! can I come in?" exclaimed a loud hearty voice at the door, and his friend and neighbour, Major Munro, entered as he spoke. Noticing the gloom depicted on Mr Craven's countenance, he continued—"Why, what's the matter man? Is the firm of Craven & Mackay in the *Gazette* that you look so glum this morning, or are you sued for a breach of promise? Or, perhaps, you have proposed to some fair maid and have been rejected, is that it? eh! old fellow," and chuckling at his own conceit the jolly old Major shook the snowflakes from his coat, and drew a chair to the fire.

"No, no, not quite so bad as that, Munro," said Mr Craven, brightening up at his friend's raillery, "but I'll tell you all about it. My partner, Mackay, is, as you are aware, away on his marriage trip, foolish fellow that he is—and will not be back for some weeks. Well, this morning a letter comes from an old and valued client of ours, Sutherland of Scourie, in Sutherlandshire, desiring the immediate attendance of either Mackay or me on important business, and to take to him some most valuable deeds and papers of his in our possession. Now, if Mackay were at home there would be no difficulty in the matter, as he is young and likes travelling, and would think no more of going to the wildest place in the Highlands than of going to Glasgow; but now I shall have to go—I, who hate travelling, especially in winter, and to have to

go to Sutherland too of all places in the world where there is so much ill-feeling just now. I confess I don't half like the idea."

"Phew," softly whistled the Major, pulling as long a face as his genial rubicund countenance would permit, while his eyes were brimful of fun. "No wonder you are put out, but as there is no help for it, the best way is to show a bold front, and I trust we may yet get you back in safety; but you must take every precaution, make your will and set your house in order, and be careful to see your firearms are in good condition."

"Firearms," echoed Craven, in an anxious tone of voice, "why, I never fired a pistol in my life. Surely I shall not require such things at all."

"Pooh, pooh!" answered the Major, "you will soon learn to take aim, and I assure you it is absolutely necessary to go well armed, and when you have to speak to any of the wild Highlanders, remember to speak in a loud rough voice, and order them about sharply; in extreme cases you can even try a cut or two with your cane. I don't think you will have to do it more than once," he continued, while a sly twinkle played in the corner of his eye. "Remember I was quartered in the Highlands for years, and know the ways of the people. Mind what you are about when you get into the wilds of Sutherland, or they'll rob and perhaps murder you before you come back," and the Major, who dearly loved a joke, continued telling such frightful tales of the perils to be encountered and overcome, perils of mountains, storms, and bad roads, but worse perils of assault and robbery to be expected from the natives, who, according to his lively version, were only a species of half-tamed savages who looked upon Lowlanders as fit and proper prey, until he had the satisfaction of seeing his friend's face get blanker and still more blank at the uninviting prospect before him.

Mr Richard Craven made elaborate preparations for his journey, not forgetting to purchase a brace of first-rate pistols. He even took a few private lessons in loading and firing, but as he always involuntarily shut his eyes when he fired, justice compels the statement that he did not make much advance as a marksman. Major Munro having given the hint to severed mutual friends, Mr Craven was assailed on all sides with commiseration for the dangerous journey he was about to undertake, with suggestions

for his guidance and good wishes for his safe return, until the poor man was reduced to a pitiable state of nervousness.

On the morning of his departure the Major and a few other boon companions escorted him to the coach-office, and bade him adieu with much impressment.

For the first day or two our traveller got on very well; the weather was fine though frosty; but as he was well wrapped up he felt little or no inconvenience from the cold, and the exhilarating sensation of being rapidly whirled along a good road behind four fine horses through ever-changing scenery, the bustle and excitement attending the arrival at and departure from each successive stage, the lively conversation of his fellow-passengers, and the stock jokes of the coachman all tended to amuse and cheer him, so that he began to think after all the journey was not such a formidable one as his fears had anticipated. As he travelled onwards and began to get into the Highlands he did not find it quite so pleasant. The roads grew worse, the snow deeper, the pace slower, and the passengers fewer and more taciturn. At length they reached the last stage to which the coach went. Beyond that point he had to hire and go across country. It was only now that his troubles really began. His progress was slow, the roads execrable, the ferries dangerous and difficult to cross; the driver was one of the dreaded Highlanders, and, worse than all, he was now alone, no companion cheered him with merry conversation, and the weary hours dragged themselves slowly along. The weather, too, had changed; it was bitterly cold, with frequent and heavy falls of snow. Not a single ray of sunshine relieved the dull lead-coloured sky or brightened the desolate and gloomy scenery. He was now passing through a district where cruel evictions had recently taken place, and sad indeed was it to see the wide-spread ruin and misery caused by these ruthless proceedings. What a short time before had been a smiling landscape, full of happy homes and cultivated land, was now a dreary desert. Instead of comfortable homesteads, there was now the blackened rafters of the burnt cottages, showing ghastly through the drifting snow. Instead of the cheerful voice and merry song of busy workers, and the prattle and laughter of innocent childhood, there now brooded over all the silence of the grave—nay, worse, for the grave gives one an idea of rest and peace, whereas the silence

which reigned in this wretched place was the silence of despairing and broken hearts, of ruined homes, of scattered families, of lonely exile, all caused by "man's inhumanity to man."

Mr Craven grew more nervous and desponding every hour, and when he halted for the night at a small clachan, and put up at its very indifferent inn, his fears for his safety were not at all assuaged by the company he met there. First he was both astonished and alarmed to see a detachment of soldiers—the 21st Regiment from Fort-George—with artillery and cartloads of ammunition all complete, just as if in a hostile country. On enquiry he was told that they were marching to Dunrobin Castle to protect the strong against the weak, the oppressor against the oppressed.

Hanging about the inn door were a number of people, who viewed the military with ill-concealed dislike, as was evinced by the frowning brows and muttered curses of the men, and the shriller voices of the women, who, presuming on the soldiers' ignorance of Gaelic, did not scruple to express their opinion pretty freely about them, their errand, and their employers. Mr Craven came in for a share of their—by no means flattering —attentions. He was at once set down as one of the hated Sassenachs who had done so much to bring about the present unhappy state of the country, and was accordingly glared at with most unfriendly eyes and saluted with the most uncomplimentary epithets. Fortunately Mr Craven could not understand the full force of the kind wishes and polite sentiments so liberally bestowed upon him ; but there was no mistaking the expression depicted on every countenance.

Remembering the Major's advice to show a bold front, Mr Craven swaggered about with a lofty and disdainful air, issuing his orders in a loud peremptory voice, and returning with interest the looks of dislike he met on every side. On the departure of the soldiers, the crowd dispersed, and our traveller passed the evening in the company of the only other guest in the inn, a large sheep farmer from the south, who had come to Sutherland with the intention of taking a good portion of the cleared territory as a sheep run ; but who was so dismayed at the unsettled state of the district that he was now returning without completing his business. Naturally his conversation did not tend towards

making our traveller any more at ease, and Mr Craven passed a restless and miserable night. The next day he resumed his journey, hoping to reach his client's house before evening set in. As he issued from the door of the inn his nerves received a shock on seeing his driver in close and earnest coversation with a powerfully-built Highlander. The driver held in his hand the tin box containing the deeds and papers belonging to the lawyer, and to crown Mr Craven's suspicious fears he saw the other man take the box, look at it carefully, and weigh it in his rough muscular hand. Mr Craven at once jumped to the conclusion that the men thought the box contained money or valuables, and that they were secretly plotting a robbery. This idea was strengthened by seeing the driver, on catching sight of him, hastily snatching the box from his companion and placing it in the vehicle with a confused look, while the other Highlander, with a farewell scowl of bitter enmity, moved away. Still determined to show a bold front, although his heart was in his mouth, he called out roughly to the driver, asking him what he was about? abusing him for a lazy, good-for-nothing fellow, declaring that he was not going to put up with any nonsense, and to emphasise such valorous sentiments he proceeded with great ostentation to examine his pistols. The driver, honest lad, meanwhile looked on at the stranger's vapouring with astonishment, thinking he had never before met with such a disagreeable traveller.

At length they started, and during the tedious drive Mr Craven had ample opportunity of indulging his nervous apprehensions. As they penetrated farther and farther into the country his spirits fell below zero, and as the scenery became wilder and more desolate—miles intervening between any signs of human habitation—his courage sank in a proportionate ratio. It was bitterly cold and the keen frosty wind chilled the unaccustomed traveller through and through. His teeth chattered, partly with cold and partly with fear, as he looked around and soliloquized thus:—"What a fearful looking place we are passing through now, a narrow defile between frowning mountains, no house or living creature to be seen. Suppose we should be attacked now by a party of wild Highlanders, how could I defend myself? This is just a likely place for them to choose. Or suppose that rascal of a driver should take it into his head to rob me. How

easily he could do it! Ay, and murder me too without fear or opposition. Bless me! I should have no chance with him. I really don't feel at all sure of him. He was certainly looking very earnestly at my luggage this morning when I discovered him talking to that horrid cut-throat looking savage. Dear me, I wonder if I could fire a pistol straight enough to disable him if he did attack me. Why! what's this! I declare he has stopped the horses, and is getting down, good gracious! What shall I do! The Major said I was to overawe the natives, but I am afraid I can't do it." Then raising his voice he shouted out as well as his trembling lips would permit him, "Hi! you rascal, why are you stopping? Drive on this instant, you lazy rogue, or I will soon make you. I am well armed, and will stand no nonsense." Flourishing his pistol, as he spoke, in the face of the amazed driver, who, naturally annoyed at being addressed in so uncivil a manner, replied in a grumbling tone, "Fat ta deevil is ta matter wi' ta man, can't she spoke ceevil, her nainsel pe only looking at ta peastie's feets." And having taken a small stone from one of the horse's hoofs, he clambered on to his seat, and again advanced on his journey.

The snow was now falling so fast that the driver could hardly see a yard before him. This necessitated going so slowly that it soon became evident it would be impossible to reach his destination that night.

Poor Mr Craven was really to be pitied. His physical sufferings from cold and hunger were bad enough, but nothing to be compared with the condition of his nerves. He firmly believed that his driver had of *malice prepense* taken him out of the beaten route for the purpose of either doing for himself or leading him into an ambuscade, to be murdered by others.

He now found it utterly impossible to show a bold front. He was in a state of total collapse, and, huddled together in a corner of the vehicle, he resigned himself to any fate that might befall him.

After slowly proceeding another mile or so the driver had to pull up, it being now so dark with the thick fast-falling snow and the gathering gloom of the twilight that it was impossible to make out the road. The Highlander made Mr Craven understand with some little difficulty the fix they were in and

proposed, as the best thing to be done under the circumstances, to make straight for a light which could be dimly seen at a little distance, and which the driver informed him proceeded from a small inn or, more properly speaking, shebeen which he knew was situated somewhere about there, and where they would at least obtain shelter during the night from the ever-increasing storm.

Mr Craven at last complied with this reasonable proposal, and after some time and with no little trouble they succeeded in reaching the light, and found, as the driver expected, that it proceeded from the small change-house. The door was fastened, but after repeated knocking was opened by the landlord. A brief dialogue in Gaelic took place between him and the driver. He then came forward and assisted Mr Craven into the house; for the poor man was so cramped with cold and in such a deplorable state of nervous trepidation that he was nearly helpless. However, a good peat fire, with a pretty stiff dram of real mountain dew that had never troubled the gauger, soon put a little vitality into him; but as he sat by the fire and tried to pierce through the peat reek to see what sort of place he was in, his mind was as far from being comfortable as ever. In truth his surroundings were rough enough. The building was little better than a hovel, with just a "but and ben." The apartment in which he now was served the purpose of bar, kitchen, and sitting-room, as well as a sleeping-room, which the bed in the corner indicated. Its other occupants, besides himself and the driver, were the landlord and his mother, an old withered woman, with bleared eyes and puckered yellow skin, who sat on the opposite side of the fire spinning, and as she furtively glanced now and again at the stranger she shook her head in an ominous manner. The host was a tall raw-boned fellow, with coarse unkempt red hair and a shaggy beard of the same fiery hue, a squint eye, with an ugly blue scar across his left cheek, which certainly did not impart any attractiveness to his otherwise plain features, and poor Mr Craven thought he had never before seen such a sinister ill-favoured countenance. The landlord and the driver conversed in Gaelic, with an occasional glance towards the traveller, plainly indicating to that gentleman that he was the subject of their discourse. This was sufficient to convince Mr

Craven, in his present abnormal state of mind, that they were meditating a robbery, if not something worse. Even when a savoury supper of venison steak was with homely courtesy set before him, he could not divest his mind of uneasiness ; nor did he feel more comfortable when, asking to be shown to bed, he was conducted into the next and only other room in the house—a stuffy, close-smelling, low-ceilinged apartment, full of miscellaneous articles, with a box-bedstead in one corner containing a chaff bed and some coarse well-worn-blankets.

His first thought was to secure the door but neither key nor bolt was there for the purpose ; so the only thing he could do was to drag a large box or "kist" against it, on which he for a time sat while surveying his surroundings with not a little disgust, mingled with dismay. In one corner of the room he found stored the winter stock of potatoes—covered with straw and old sacks, to keep the frost from them—which gave forth a most unpleasant odour. Close by stood a barrel of salt herrings, from which issued a most "ancient and fish-like smell," and to crown all and complete the unpleasant atmosphere of this curious apartment, there hung, suspended by a hook close to the head of the bedstead, a haunch of dried venison.

Tired out as he was, he could not endure the idea of undressing and occupying the very uninviting-looking bed. At last exhausted nature could bear up no longer, so laying down without taking off his clothes, he fell into a troubled and broken slumber.

How long he slept he knew not, but his candle being burnt out showed that he must have been asleep some time, when he awoke with a start at hearing voices in the next room, and all his apprehensions of foul play returned with redoubled force as he caught detached sentences of the conversation. He recognised the landlord's voice ; but there were others, strange ones, which struck ominously on his listening ears. One of the voices spoke authoritively, and seemed to be telling the landlord to do something or other.

Mr Craven sat up in bed, every nerve twitching with anxiety, and strained his ears to discover the cause of the midnight commotion—and as he heard one addressed as "Captain," all the tales he had ever heard or read of lonely travellers like himself falling

into the hands of robbers, rushed with terrible significance into his perturbed mind. But hark! the voices are lowered, a stealthy footstep draws near his door, the handle is gently turned, and he hears his host's voice saying in a whisper, "But suppose the poor old fule body wakes up, Captain?" "Tush! man, your knife is sharp, you'll not be a minnit about the job—make haste; if he should happen to wake and see you I'll soon make it all right," answered the Captain in peremptory tones.

At hearing this ominous dialogue Richard Craven threw himself back on the bed with a stifled groan, while a cold perspiration burst from every pore of his trembling frame. There was now no doubt about the matter—he had been entrapped to this lonely place by the treacherous driver, and now the wretches were going to murder him in cold blood. What should he do? What *could* he do? True, he had his pistols, but he was in no fit condition to use them. Indeed, if he did attempt to fire, he was almost as likely to shoot himself as any one else. The poor man lay perfectly helpless with fear; he felt as though he were under the influence of a horrid nightmare, painfully conscious of all that was going on around him, but deprived of all power of exertion, totally unable to resist or even to call out.

In this miserable state he sees the landlord, after a pause at the door—a pause which seems like hours instead of seconds to the unhappy man—slowly push open the door, the kist proving but little protection against the man's weight; he watches him creep noiselessly on his stockinged feet towards the bed, holding a candle in one hand while in the other he carried a large, sharp, murderous-looking knife.

Carefully shading the candle, so as to prevent its light falling on the face of the traveller, and stopping a moment to listen to his heavy breathing, which convinces him that his guest is fast locked in the arms of Morpheus, he again moves on warily towards the bed.

With inexpressible despair Mr Craven sees Rory stand at the bedside, sees him gently put down the light, sees him raise his hand armed with the deadly weapon; and then—then the unnatural tension of the nervous system gives way, and the terror-stricken man gives utterance to a most unearthly yell of affright, followed by loud cries of "Murder! Help! Help!" This unlooked-

for demonstration so startled his supposed assailant that, dropping the knife, he sprang back into the middle of the apartment, gazed for a moment at his guest's terrified face, and then exclaiming, "*An diabhul thu! Gu de so?*" he rushed to the door.

His exit was prevented by the other inmates of the cottage crowding in to learn the cause of the uproar. The driver was there with wide open mouth and wonder-staring eyes, the old woman was there with uplifted hands and shrill-voiced ejaculations, and two others were present, one of whom approached the bed, begging its occupant to compose himself; but as soon as he caught sight of the features of Mr Craven, he started in turn, and exclaimed, 'Bless me! I know that face. Where have I seen it before? Why, surely it is—yet no; still, *can* this indeed be you, Mr Craven? Who would ever expect to meet with you in this out-of-the-way place. But I am afraid you have been alarmed; pray, compose yourself; you are among friends." Then, perceiving that the stranger still appeared dubious, he continued—

"Surely you recollect me—Captain Sutherland. I called on you in Edinburgh some time ago, and I suppose you are now on your way to my father's house, as I know he wanted to see you, though how in the world you managed to land here is more than I can understand."

Mr Craven now began to recover from his fright, and feeling a sense of protection from the presence of the fine manly young soldier, began to collect his scattered ideas. Still convinced, however, that his life had been attempted, he hastily drew young Sutherland aside, and whispered—

"For goodness sake, let us escape. We are in a den of thieves and murderers. Oh, what shall we do? Why?—oh why did I ever come to these dreadful Highlands? I am sure I shall never live to see dear Edinburgh again."

"My dear sir," said the Captain, with difficulty restraining from laughing, "you are labouring under some strange hallucination. You are perfectly safe. No one thought of hurting or annoying you, and——"

"Sir," interrupted Mr Craven, with an injured air, "within the last ten minutes a ruffian stood over me with a gleaming knife, and would assuredly have cut my throat had I not with

great presence of mind given the alarm, and so frightened him from his fell design."

This was too much for the risibility of Captain Sutherland, who burst into a hearty laugh, and exclaimed, "I see it now, ha! ha! pardon my rudeness, Mr Craven, but really ha! ha! Here Rory," he continued, turning to the astonished landlord, "you have nearly frightened this gentleman out of his wits; but I promised you I would take the blame, so you need not look so abashed, my good fellow. Hasten on with my supper while I explain matters to Mr Craven."

Having thus cleared the room of the wondering inmates, Captain Sutherland apologised for his seeming levity, and continued, "Rory is an old acquaintance of mine, and is a very decent fellow; he was one of our gamekeepers when I was a lad; but, being disabled by an accident, of which you see he carries the marks in his face, my father gave him this cottage and a bit of land for a croft, and if he adds to his income by selling a little smuggled whisky, or even makes a little himself sometimes, I don't think it matters to you or me, not being gaugers. I and my gillie were returning home after a long day's walking, when, overtaken by the same snowstorm, which, I suppose, prevented you from getting on, we at once made for Rory's cottage for shelter until morning. We were ravenously hungry, and when Rory told me that a strange gentleman was sleeping in this room, and that unfortunately the only meat he had was the haunch of dried venison hanging at the head of the traveller's bed, I told him to go in quietly and cut off a few slices for our supper, and if the gentleman should awake I would explain matters to him; but I had not the slightest idea, of course, that it was you, or that we should have given you such a fright, and I am heartily sorry for having been the innocent cause of disturbing you."

Mr Craven was much relieved at hearing this explanation, and readily forgave the Captain for his share in the midnight alarm; still, he was not quite convinced of his personal safety, and he relieved his mind by relating all his fears and apprehensions ever since he had parted with the stage-coach. Captain Sutherland listened to the recital with commendable gravity, and seeing how the poor nervous man had been imposed upon by the fanciful tales of the jocular Major Munro, combined with his own hypo-

chondriac temperament, which induced him to see things in a false light and to impute wrong motives and sinister designs to the most innocent people, he attempted to set Mr Craven's mind at rest as to any fears of personal safety. He told him that of all people in the world the Highlanders were the readiest to show courtesy and civility to strangers, and would be the last to offer any violence to his goods or person, always provided that the stranger conducted himself with good-feeling and politeness towards them. "Now, unfortunately," he continued, "you started from home with a totally erroneous idea of the Highlanders, and consequently treated them with a hauteur, a suspiciousness, and an overbearing manner which their pride at once caused them to resent. Hence any inattention or incivility you have met with was—pardon me saying so—entirely due to your own conduct. No doubt the people of Sutherlandshire are at present very much excited and angry, with only too good a reason, I am sorry to say, and possibly taking you for one of the agents of the south country sheep farmers who are over-running the country just now, they may probably have given expression to their sentiments somewhat freely; but as to their offering to rob or molest you, that is quite out of the question." "But, my good sir," urged Mr Craven, not liking to give up all his preconceived ideas without an effort, "you must allow that it looked suspicious this morning when I caught my driver whispering to an ill-looking fellow, and saw them weighing my tin case as though they were trying to guess the value of it; how will you explain that?" "Very easily," said the captain, "our people are very unsophisticated, curiosity is a strong feature in their simple, almost child-like nature, and the man who caused you so much uneasiness by speaking to your driver was merely gratifying his curiosity by talking about you and your luggage, where you were going, and your object for going, with no more thought, I will wager, of appropriating or even injuring your property than an infant. And as to his being ill-favoured—well—I daresay you did not think poor Rory very handsome; but, you see, one must not judge too hastily from appearances, for there's not a better-hearted or more honest fellow—in spite of his peccadillos in the whisky trade—than Rory; and that scar on his face, which no doubt you concluded to be the result of some fearful fight, was

caused by his self-devotion in risking his life to save mine from the effects of a boyish escapade in which gunpowder played a principal part."

Mr Craven frankly owned that he had been mistaken, and heartily thanked Captain Sutherland for putting him right. They then adjourned to the next room, where the venison steaks were smoking on the table and were done good justice to by the hungry Captain and his companions.

When young Sutherland told Rory what Mr Craven had suspected him of doing, he laughed long and loud, in which he was joined by all present. After supper, Mr Craven insisted on standing treat for any quantity of mountain dew, and over the steaming toddy he threw off the trammels of nervousness and suspicions, showing himself what he really was at heart, a very good fellow. Indeed so great was the reaction from his previous miserable state of mind, that he became quite exhilarated, and before he could be prevailed upon to retire for an hour or two's rest, he insisted upon shaking hands repeatedly with every one present, including the old woman, and inviting them all in the most cordial manner to pay him a visit in Edinburgh.

The next morning he started, in company with young Sutherland, in good spirits, though with a bad headache, and in a couple of hours reached his destination, where he received a right hearty Highland welcome from the laird of Scourie and his interesting family.

After a good night's rest, Mr Craven felt none the worse for his long journey and the severe strain to which his nervous system had been subjected. Having discussed an excellent breakfast, he proposed to begin the business for which he had come so far. This suggestion was laughed aside by the hospitable old laird. "What! set to work before you have hardly entered our door! Nonsense! There is plenty of time. Take a few days to look about you, man, for I daresay we and our ways will seem somewhat strange to you at first. You must come with me to the curling match to-day; Angus, my son, is the skip on our side; and to-morrow, if it be fine, we shall ride over to the manse and get the minister to come back to dinner with us; he is a fine fellow; and the next day we'll——"

"Oh, papa," interrupted the youngest Miss Sutherland, a

laughing, merry-eyed girl of sixteen, "that is not fair to monopolise Mr Craven all to yourself. We have not had a strange visitor for weeks to enliven us, so you must leave Mr Craven some little leisure to make our acquaintance. I want to ask him about his journey, and Janet is anxious to have his opinion of her last new song, and Julia is dying to enquire if he has seen any of the friends she made in Edinburgh last winter, especially that charming Captain Graham, and mamma wishes to know all the newest fashions, and——"

How much longer this lively young lady would have rattled on with her list of reasons we cannot say, had not her father, with an amused laugh, put his hand over her pretty little mouth, saying "Well, well, Katie, you shall have a share of Mr Craven's society, if you will promise not to let that unruly member of yours run on at such a terrible rate." And thus it was arranged. The forepart of the short winter day was spent in the open air with the laird and his son, Captain Sutherland, either walking or riding; then, after dinner, came the long pleasant evenings, when worthy Mrs Sutherland and her three fine daughters vied with each other in amusing their guest. Mr Craven was fond of music, and he was delighted to find that Miss Sutherland played the harp to perfection, and the second daughter, Julia, could produce more harmony out of the old spinet than one could suppose the antiquated instrument capable of. The laird played the violin, and Mr Craven was a very fair performer on the flute; while the Captain and the volatile Kate were first-rate vocalists, so altogether they could get up a nice little concert between them. On other evenings, when tired of classical music, they would get big Duncan the piper to play reels and Strathspeys, while the young folks —ay, and Mr Craven, too—"tripped on the light fantastic toe." Again, if neither inclined for music or dancing, they would draw round the cheerful wood fire and enjoy a "crack," or listen to the old laird as he recounted recollections of his boyhood during the stormy periods of the Rising of the 'Forty-five. How, as a boy, he watched, his heart beating high with excitement, his gallant father in the full flush of his vigorous manhood bid adieu to his wife and children, and with a few faithful clansmen, go out to join Prince Charlie. He could not understand then why his mother wept so bitterly as she took the last clinging embrace

of her heroic husband. In his boyish enthusiasm it seemed a glorious thing to go out to fight, and, of course, to win, and then to return loaded with honour and renown. He wished he were old enough to accompany his father; and tears of regret dimmed his eyes as he saw the small but devoted band march to the succour of their beloved Prince, with banners flying and the stirring bagpipes playing a martial tune.

Alas! alas! how soon was the picture changed. The old gentleman's voice would tremble with emotion as he related how, within a short three months, they received the terrible news that the gallant soldier, the beloved husband and father, and the kind master, had met his sad fate with so many hundreds of his countrymen on the fatal field of Culloden. One only of his followers returned to confirm the dreadful tidings, and he, poor fellow, was maimed for life; for horrible and incredible as it might appear, he, after being wounded and while escaping from the dreadful field of carnage was overtaken and captured by a party of dragoons, who, acting under the inhuman orders of the cruel Cumberland, actually cut off the thumb of his right hand so that he might never more be able to wield the trusty claymore.

These mournful reminiscences of the laird's were occasionally relieved by stories of witchcraft, diablerie, or fairy cantrips, related with much solemnity by Mrs Sutherland and listened to with bated breath and fearful glances over their shoulders by the younger portion of the audience.

The gallant Captain would next be spokesman, and tell of

> "Most disastrous chances,
> Of moving accident by flood and field,
> Of hair-breadth 'scapes i' the deadly breach"

which had befallen him while serving under Major-General Wellesley (afterwards the great Duke of Wellington) in India during the first Mahratta War, which was then just concluded.

One evening Captain Sutherland asked Mr Craven to accompany him and he would let him see a real old Highland custom. Turning to his father the young man continued. "It is 'Oidhche nighe nan cas' at Neil Mackay's, and I half promised to go." "Oh, indeed," answered the laird, "so the wedding is to be

to-morrow, is it; by all means let Mr Craven see the whole affair, and tell Neil that I will look in myself to-morrow evening and drink to the health of his pretty daughter and her young husband.

As the Captain and Mr Craven walked to Neil Mackay's cottage, young Sutherland explained that Neil's daughter Annie was considered the best looking lassie in the whole parish, and she was to be married to-morrow to Donald Campbell, a fine young fellow whom the laird had lately made his forrester. To-night was what was called "the feet-washing night," an important ceremony which always took place the night before the wedding.

On arriving at the cottage they were received with much politeness and pleasure by Neil, and ushered into the best room, which was already pretty well filled with the friends of the bride elect.

There was a little restraint perceptible at first among the assembled guests arising from the presence of the *duin-uasals*; but this was soon removed by the affable genial manners of the young laird, who was a great favourite with all the tenants on the estate. The whisky bottle was produced, accompanied with oatcakes and cheese, which was duly handed round. All the visitors having now assembled, the ceremony of the evening began. A large washing tub was brought in and placed in the middle of the floor; it was then three-parts filled with warm water. A piece of soap, a ring, and several pieces of money of different values were thrown in, and a chair placed in front of the tub. These preliminaries over, the blushing Annie was surrounded by her laughing companions and placed on the chair, while a score of eager hands pulled of her shoes and stockings and placed her feet in the water, and then began the fun. All the young people of both sex crowded round the tub striving who should wash the bride's feet and at the same time grope about in the soapy water for the ring and money. Nothing could exceed the excitement attending this performance, for it was an article of firm belief that the finder of the much coveted ring would surely be married within the year, and the finders of the money at longer intervals according to the value of the coins. The laughing and joking, the pushing and struggling, the rubbing and splashing,

the shouts of victory as some one more fortunate than the rest succeeded in finding the ring, and the comic despair depicted on the faces of the unsuccessful seekers, all combined to make a scene of much amusement, with the novelty of which Mr Craven was highly diverted.

Annie was now allowed to dry her feet, which were red and sore with the friction so liberally bestowed upon them. The tub was removed, and the refreshments again handed round. Mr Craven and the young laird now took their departure, after promising to honour the wedding next day with their presence.

Neil Mackay being one of the principal tenants, and the bridegroom also being in a good position, the wedding was on a much larger scale than usual. The whole place was in a stir, and from an early hour in the morning, the strains of the bagpipes and the firing of pistols could be heard on all sides.

Soon after mid-day, young Sutherland and Mr Craven set off to see the fun. On their way they passed groups of young people, dressed in their best, hurrying to the marriage feast.

Arrived at the house, they found a large assembly present, and as the house could not contain the half of the company, a large barn had been cleared out and decorated with evergreens, serving the purpose of banquetting hall and ball-room combined. Here they found Annie, looking very pretty and modest in her bridal array, surrounded by a bevy of good looking lasses in their best attire, waiting for the bridegroom and the minister, whom Neil Mackay had gone to fetch in due state in the only vehicle the village possessed. Mr Craven had barely time to pay his compliments to the blushing and smiling bride before the approach of the bridegroom was announced by the sound of the bagpipes, mingled with the "crack, crack" of innumerable pistols and muskets, the trampling of horses, and the cheers of his companions, ringing loud and clear through the keen frosty air. The hubbub was increased by the male portion of the bride's friends, who rushed out pell-mell to meet the bridegroom; nearly every one possessed a pistol with which a *feu de joie* was fired, their piper blowing his best in friendly rivalry with his brother musician, while the exuberant spirits of the young lads found vent in repeated hurrahs!

The bridegroom and his party having dismounted, joined the

bride and her friends, and, amid hand-shaking, congratulations, laughing, and joking, a slight refreshment of whisky, oatcake, cheese, and scones was partaken of. Then a sudden lull in the rather noisy conversation indicated that the minister had arrived. The worthy man was received with respectful greetings and polite attentions from all, and the assembly began to settle down in proper order for the marriage ceremony.

The exceeding simplicity of the religious forms used somewhat astonished Mr Craven, who was an Episcopalian, and had never before witnessed the Presbyterian marriage service. Accustomed to the far more elaborate ceremonial of the Episcopal Church, he scarcely understood the service had begun before it was concluded and "these twain were made one."

Refreshments were again handed round, and every one drank long life, health, and happiness to the newly-wedded pair. The minister then took his departure escorted as before by the father of the bride. Preparations were soon made for the marriage feast. Scores of willing hands laid the long tables, and quickly covered them with a good substantial dinner, consisting of sheep's-head broth, kail broth, hotch-potch, haggis, beef, mutton, venison, and fowls, washed down with unstinted quantities of real mountain dew, supplied by our old friend Rory, who was among the guests, and who renewed his acquaintance with Mr Craven over a flowing bumper.

Dinner over the tables were quickly cleared away, and the dancing began, Captain Sutherland leading off the first reel with the bride, while Mr Craven followed with the prettiest of the bridesmaids. After an hour or two had passed, a proposal was made that the company should adjourn to the house of the bridegroom, where the rest of the festivities were to take place. Plaids and wraps were soon produced, in which the female portion of the guests quickly enveloped themselves. The horses were brought round, and, after a final dram all round, the company prepared to conduct young Annie in due state to her future home. Donald led the way, and having gallantly placed his bride on his horse, jumped up himself, and set off for his house, under a perfect shower of rice, old shoes, and small lumps of peat. His friends followed, each horse having a double load, while those not fortunate enough to obtain a mount made the best

of their way on foot, marching to the inspiring music of the pipes.

On reaching his house, Donald helped his bride down, and taking her hand, led her to the door of her new home. On the threshold they were met by his mother, who presented the young wife with the bridal bread and cheese, the peculiar properties of which are well known. The agitated Annie timidly broke off a small portion, which she tasted amid the loud cheers of her friends. Immediately she stepped over the door step, a number of small cakes, baked on purpose, were thrown over her head, into the midst of the expectant crowd, when there ensued a scene of scrambling, pushing, and jostling most amusing to an outsider, each one striving his or her utmost to obtain a bit of the coveted cakes. Mr Craven turned for an explanation, when Captain Sutherland told him that it was an article of firm belief among the young people, that any one so unfortunate as not to secure a morsel of these cakes would not be married for years, and perhaps not at all. This ceremony over, the company entered the house, when Donald taking his proper position as host, bade all his guests welcome, and invited them to spend the night in "keeping his wedding." Here again the barn was converted for the nonce into a ball-room, which the skilful taste of Donald had decorated in a very effective manner. A number of fir torches, of which he had collected a good store, blazed in every available sconce, throwing a cheerful light on the merry scene.

The fun now waxed fast and furious, the piper blew his hardest, the dancers sprang, leaped, and whirled; the whisky circulated, and all was enjoyment.

Towards the "wee sma' 'oors ayont the twal'" Mr Craven noticed the bride whispering to her mother and two or three friends in a nervous sort of way, and then attempt to steal away from the giddy throng unnoticed; but other eyes besides Mr Craven's were keenly watching this manœuvre, and a a voice called out—"The bride's awa'! the bride's awa'!! to the bedding! to the bedding!!" and instantaneously the dancing ceased, a rush was made after the bride, and as many as possible crowded into her sleeping apartment, where by this time she had been undressed by the willing hands of her bridesmaids, and placed in her nuptial couch. Her left-footed stocking was thrown

among the guests, and happy the mortals on whom it fell; for it will be their turn next to be "bedded." The bridegroom was then incontinently laid violent hands on, rapidly denuded of his outer habiliments, and stowed away by the side of his bride. A bottle and glass was then handed to him, with which he pledged his friends in a "*deoch an' doruis*." As they fell back the bride's mother approached to the bed with a bottle of whisky and a small cheese, which she duly deposited under the pillows, for fear the young couple should suffer hunger or thirst during the night. The whole company then filed out of the room with a chorus of good wishes, some of which were more noticeable for heartiness and good-will than for extreme delicacy of expression, and returned to the barn, where dancing was kept up with unflagging interest until the brightness of the morning sun subdued the artificial light of the pine torches. This warned the revellers that it was time to "raise the bride." Accordingly a procession was then formed to the bridal chamber, and the young couple aroused from their slumbers. Donald soon made his appearance, when the female portion of the guests went in and dressed the bride, who was then led out in triumph to receive the congratulations of the assembly. The bottle was again produced and everyone took his "morning," after which they all sat down to a substantial breakfast of porridge and milk, eggs, scones, butter, and the remnants of the cold meats from yesterday's feast. The breakfast over, the company dispersed and left the married lovers to commence life's journey together, which we hope ended as auspiciously as it began.

Mr Craven was not sorry to get away, for he was quite done out with dancing, want of sleep, and strong whisky; but still he was very much gratified to be able to say that he had, for once in his life, assisted at a real Highland wedding.

The next few days were occupied in transacting the business for which he had travelled so far, and then Mr Craven was obliged with genuine regret to bid adieu to his kind, warm-hearted friends; and after promising to return and spend his summer holiday with them he began his journey homeward, which he accomplished, thanks to his dearly-bought experience, much more comfortably, both to himself and others, than his journey north. On reaching Edinburgh he good-naturedly cen-

sured Major Munro for the trick he had played upon him, and amused all his friends with the recital of his adventures and escapes—though he never, to the last day of his life, forgot the agony of that moment when, paralysed with fear, he lay in the lonely bothie amid the hills of Sutherlandshire and saw the rough-looking Highlander standing over him with the deadly knife raised in his hand.

PRINCE SHIN AND HIS LOVELY BONA:

A LEGEND OF INVERSHIN.

Long ages ago there stood in the vicinity of Invershin a strong massive castle, built and inhabited by a foreign knight—a stern, haughty man—of whose antecedents nothing could be learned with certainty, although there were plenty of rumours concerning him; the most generally received one being that he had fled from his own country on account of treason, or some other crime. Be that as it may, he had plenty of wealth, built a splendid castle, and kept a great number of retainers. He was extremely fond of fishing, and spent the greater part of his time in the pursuit of the gentle craft. He invented a peculiar kind of cruive, so ingeniously constructed that the salmon on entering it set in motion some springs to which bells were attached: thus they literally tolled their own funeral knell. He was accompanied in his exile by his daughter Bona, and his niece Oykel, both alike beautiful in face and figure, but very dissimilar in disposition. Bona was a fair, gentle being, who seemed formed to love and be loved. Oykel was a dark beauty, handsome, proud, and vindictive.

Among their numerous household there was one who, though not a relative, seemed on terms of intimacy and equality. He was called Prince Shin of Norway, and was supposed to have retired to this northern part of the kingdom for the same reason as his host. He was young, handsome, and brave, and, as a matter of course, the two young ladies fell violently in love with him. For a time he wavered between the two, but at last he fixed his affections upon the gentle Bona and sought her hand in marriage. The old knight gave his consent, and the future looked bright and full of happiness for the young lovers.

The proud Oykel was deeply mortified at the Prince for choosing her cousin in preference to herself, and the daily sight of their mutual attachment drove her into a perfect frenzy of jealousy and wounded pride, until at length nothing would satisfy her but

the death of her rival. She accordingly bribed one of her uncle's unscrupulous retainers to murder her cousin Bona, vainly hoping that in time the Prince would transfer his love to herself. The ruffian carried out his cruel order and concealed the body in a disused dungeon of the castle.

Great was the consternation and dismay caused by the sudden and mysterious disappearance of the lovely Bona; hill and dale, mountain and strath, corrie and burn, were searched in vain; river and loch were dragged to no purpose. Prince Shin was inconsolable; he exerted himself to the utmost in the fruitless search; then, wearied in mind and body, he wandered listless and sad through the flowery fields of Inveran until he reached the birchen groves of Achany, the quiet solitude of which suited best his desolate state. Here, with no prying eyes to see his misery, nor babbling tongues to repeat his sighs and exclamations, he gave himself up for a time to the luxury of grief. Suddenly there arose in the breast of the father the agonising suspicion of foul play. But upon whom could his suspicion fall? Who could have the slighest reason or incentive to injure the kind and gentle Bona? He pondered and mused in gloomy solitude until the terrible idea grew in his mind that it must have been her lover who had thus so cruelly betrayed her trustful love. "Yes," he muttered, "it must be Prince Shin who has committed this diabolical crime; he has tired of her and taken this way to release himself from his solemn contract with her and me, but the villain shall not escape; his punishment shall be as sudden and as great as his crime."

Having thus convinced himself of the Prince's guilt, he caused him to be seized during the night and thrown into the same dungeon in which, unknown to him, lay the body of his beloved daughter.

The accusation and the seizure were so sudden and unexpected, that, for a time, Shin lay in his dungeon totally overwhelmed with grief and indignation—grief at the loss of his bride, and indignation at the suspicion and at his own treatment. He was at length startled by hearing a faint moan somewhere near him; as if from a person in great pain. He strained his eyes to pierce the gloomy darkness that surrounded him; at last, guided by the repeated sound, he discovered at the other end of the dungeon a

recumbent figure, so still and motionless that it might have been lifeless but for the occasional faint, unconscious moan. "Alas!" exclaimed he, "this is another victim of treachery and cruelty, who is even worse off than I. But who can it be? I have missed no one from the castle, except my adored and lamented Bona." While thus speaking he knelt to examine the figure more closely, and as he became more used to the gloom, he could see a little better, when, to his inexpressible horror and astonishment, he discovered it to be none other than his lost bride, whose young life was fast ebbing away through a frightful stab in her snow-white bosom.

Nearly frantic with grief, he strove with trembling hand to staunch the blood and bind up the wound, at the same time calling her by every endearing name that love could suggest. Again and again he kissed her cold lips, and pressed her tenderly to his heart, trying in vain to infuse life and warmth to the inanimate form of her he loved so well. He was interrupted in his melancholy task by the heavy door of the dungeon creaking on its rusty hinges, as it slowly opened to admit a man-at-arms whom Shin recognised as one of the foreign retainers of the old knight.

"Ah! Randolph, is it thou they have sent to murder me? Well, do thy work quickly, death has lost its terrors for me, now that it has seized on my Bona; but yet I would that another hand than thine should strike the fatal blow, for I remember, tho' perhaps thou forgettest, the day when stricken down in the battle-field thou wert a dead man, had not I interposed my shield, and saved thy life at the risk of my own." So saying, he looked the man calmly, sadly but firmly, in the face.

Randolph had, on first entering, seemed thunderstruck at seeing the Prince, and looked, during the delivery of his speech, more like a victim than an executioner. He changed colour, trembled, and finally, throwing himself at the feet of the Prince, faltered out with broken voice, "Oh! my lord; indeed, indeed, you do me wrong. I knew not that you were here; never would I raise an arm to injure you, my benefactor, my preserver! No, I came to—to——." Then glancing from the Prince to the lady Bona, he hid his face in his hands and

groaned out, "I knew not you loved her, or I would rather have died than——."

A sudden light broke in on Shin; he sprang like a tiger at the trembling man, and seizing him by the throat, thundered out, "Accursed villain, is it thou who hast done this foul deed? Thy life shall be the forfeit." Then changing his mind, he loosened his deadly grasp, and flinging the man from him as though he were a dog, muttered between his close-set teeth, "I will not soil my hands with the blood of such a dastard, he is only the base tool of another." Then raising his voice, he continued, "Tell me, thou double-dyed traitor, who set thee on to do this most horrible deed; and for what reason? See that thou tellest me the truth, villain, or, by the bones of my father, I will dash thy brains out on the stones beneath your feet."

The trembling Randolph then explained how he, being absent from the castle on a foraging expedition, knew nothing of the betrothal of Prince Shin and the lady Bona, that on his return he was sent for by Oykel, who, in a private interview, told him she was engaged to the Prince, and that Bona, through jealousy, was trying all she could to set the old knight against Shin, and had even laid a plot to poison both her and the Prince, and that he (Randolph), believing this specious story, and being greatly attached to the Prince, was easily prevailed upon by Oykel to murder her cousin; that he had temporarily hidden her body in the dungeon, and was now come to remove it, and was astonished and horrified to find she was still alive. He then went on to say, that he thought he saw a way to undo some of the mischief he had been the means of doing—to assist him to escape, and to carry the lady Bona to a place of safety, until it was seen whether she would recover, and what turn affairs might take at the castle. The Prince gladly availed himself of his assistance. They made their escape, and remained in concealment for some time, until Bona had somewhat recovered her strength.

In the meantime, Oykel, driven to distraction at the disappearance of Shin, seeing the utter fruitlessness of her crime, stung by remorse, and rendered reckless by the pangs of unrequited love, threw herself into the river, which has ever since been called by her name, and which, it is said, is still haunted

by her restless, weary spirit. Bona is commemorated in Bonar.

Prince Shin and Bona now came from their concealment, and, being fully reconciled to the old knight, were married with great pomp, and shortly afterwards sailed to Norway, where they lived long and died happy.

DONALD THE FIDDLER:

A FAIRY TALE.

CENTURIES ago, when the good town of Inverness was yet in its infancy, there lived in one of its meanest streets a well-known character called Donald the Fiddler. He was a tanner by trade, and might have earned good wages, for at that time tanning was one of the principal industries of the town; but Donald was a lazy fellow who much preferred to roam about playing his fiddle than working at his useful though not odorous calling. He was a married man, and stood not a little in awe of the sharp tongue of his bustling, shrewish wife.

It happened one morning that when Donald awoke from the heavy sleep induced by his strong potations of the previous evening, he found his wife already up and out, not, if the truth be told, an altogether unprecedented occurrence.

Not feeling very much inclined for work, and his wife not being present to drive him to it, Donald determined to take his fiddle, and enjoy a ramble into the country. He remembered hearing that there was to be a marriage at Petty, where he and his fiddle would be sure of a welcome. He had managed with many a yawn and stretch to get into his clothes, and was just slinking out of the door when, as ill-luck would have it, he met his wife full in the face. One glance at Donald and his fiddle was enough for her. Putting down the basket of clothes she had been washing in the river, she approached her good-for-nothing spouse with arms a-kimbo, and treated him to a "bit of her mind."

At a few yards' distance from the house was the fosse or ditch which ran round the burgh and was the receptacle of so much refuse from the numerous tanpits and malt-kilns that it was commonly called the "fou," or foul pool. It was protected by a paling, but through the negligence of the authorities, this defence was often broken and dilapidated. Thus it happened, that as Donald slowly retreated before the menaces of his enraged wife, he reached an unprotected part of the fosse, and

just at this moment the virago, having worked herself up to a pitch, raised her by no means slender arm and aimed a blow at her husband, to avoid which Donald made a quick backward step, lost his balance, and, before he knew where he was, had fallen head-over-heels into the "fou." This performance was greeted with shouts of laughter from the neighbours, who had been attracted to the spot by the previous quarrel. Their laughter was renewed as they watched poor Donald spluttering and floundering about in the mire, until he succeeded in clambering out, a wretched object, on the other side, when, uttering maledictions on his tormenters, he took to his heels and quickly ran out of sight. He did not go to the marriage at Petty; but after getting himself somewhat cleaned, spent the day drinking and idling with his worthless companions, and it was long after nightfall before he left them to return home. He had a long way to go, for he was on the opposite side of the river to the town, but he knew his way, and it being a bright, moon light night, walked briskly on. It was with a feeling of relief that he passed Tomnahurich, that strangely shaped hill, which rises so abruptly from the surrounding level ground; for it was reputed to be the haunt of the fairies; indeed, its very name implied that fact. So with a half-fearful glance up at the uncanny place, he hurried on.

After a time he began to feel weary. He did not think the way was so long. Surely he ought to be in sight of the river by this time? The night was growing cold and he was very sleepy; but he stumbled on over the uneven and broken ground a little longer, until he pulled himself up short with an exclamation of supreme astonishment. "Why! what is this?" Here he was again under the very shadow of the fairy hill. He has been walking in a circle for the last hour. Tired out, perplexed, and annoyed, he sat down trying to collect his scattered ideas; but fatigue and the fumes of the drink he had taken overpowered him, and he fell sound asleep.

How long he slept he did not know, but it was still moonlight when he was aroused by someone shaking him and calling him by name. On opening his eyes he saw an old gentleman very richly dressed in black velvet, slashed with crimson satin, having a fine cloth cloak, trimmed with fur, thrown over his

shoulders, and a tall, peaked hat on his head. As Donald rose to his feet rubbing his eyes, the old gentleman said, "Be quick, Donald, and come along with me. I have often heard of your skill as a fiddler, and as I have a large party of friends at my house to-night, I want you to come and play for them. I will pay you well; see, here is a gold piece to begin with, and if you please me I will give you another after you have done."

Donald was delighted at his good luck in meeting such a liberal patron, but asked the gentleman in a tone of surprise, where his house was, as he could not remember any house within some distance of where they stood. "Oh!" replied the old gentleman, "my house is close by, just a few steps this way and you will see it." And sure enough there was a splendid mansion lighted up with innumerable lamps, the court-yard full of servants in grand liveries, handsome carriages and spirited horses, while more guests kept arriving every minute. Donald was quite overwhelmed at the sight of all this magnificence, and would have drawn back; but the old gentleman taking his hand drew him forward, and together they entered the mansion. If Donald was astonished before, he was now doubly so. He was ushered into a sumptuous ball-room illuminated with thousands of parti-coloured lamps, and filled with a gay assemblage of handsome men and lovely ladies, all dressed in the richest materials, and glittering with countless gems, which flashed in the many hued lights of the silver lamps, while the air was heavy with sweet perfumes, and above all arose soft, voluptuous strains of enchanting music. Donald had never heard music like it before, nor could he tell what instruments were used to produce such enrapturing sounds; and much he marvelled that his poor fiddle should be deemed worthy of being heard in comparison; but he concluded it was in request for reels and strathspeys. And such seemed to be the case, for he was soon told to play his liveliest airs, to which the whole company danced.

Faster and faster they went round and round, jumping, flinging, and capering, till poor Donald's eyes were dazzled at the rapidly whirling figures, the gorgeous dresses, and the brilliant jewels seemed to be mixed up into one glittering undis-

tinguishable mass. His arm ached, his fingers were tired, still the dancers showed no signs of fatigue. On they flew, round and round, in and out, through the giddy mazes of the never-ending reel. Donald would fain have stopped playing for them, but something, he knew not what, compelled him to continue. He discovered to his terror that he could not cease. His limbs trembled, his head swam, heavy drops of perspiration dropped from his heated brow. He looked on the dancers with dismay. No sign did they show of giving up; they moved as gracefully, sprang as actively, and looked as cool as when they commenced.

Slowly the idea dawned on his perturbed mind that these tireless dancers must be more than human, and that he himself must be under some enchantment. This terrible thought gained strength as he struggled in vain to stop his fiddle. Then, thoroughly frightened, he called out, "Holy Saint Mary, help me; what shall I do." The words were no sooner uttered than he felt himself free. In a moment the dancing ceased, the brilliant company vanished, the glittering lamps went out, the splendid house and servants all disappeared, and Donald found himself once more in the open air, standing under the shadow of Tomnahurich, on whose dark summit the sun was now brightly shining.

"Mercy on us," ejaculated the astonished Donald, "I must have been all night with the fairies. It's far on in the day now; whatever shall I say to the wife? she'll no believe me at all." Thinking over his strange adventure, Donald slowly bent his steps homeward, but when he reached the river he stopped short, looked, rubbed his eyes, and looked again. He then soliloquised thus—What's this! the town looked bigger than it used to. He certainly never saw those buildings before. What could it mean? He crossed the river and entered the town, so strange and yet so familiar. He looked round with wondering eyes. Yes! there is the castle, he recognised that; there were the principal streets, he knew them although they were improved and lengthened; the churches, too, looked about the same, but where did all those new houses and streets come from; and the people, too, were all strange, not one acquaintance did he see. They were all dressed so strangely too. Utterly bewildered,

poor Donald turned his wondering steps towards his own house. Wonder on wonder! he could not find it, and what was more, even the fosse itself had disappeared. He turned to the bystanders, who crowded round and gazed on him with intense curiosity. He asked for his wife, for his neighbours, for his employer; but he got no answer. They did not know who he was talking about, and enquired with surprise who he was? and where he came from? He told them that he was Donald the Fiddler, that he lived close to the fosse at this end of the town and that he had been all night with the fairies in Tomnahurich.

This only made them laugh, and they called him a madman, until an old man said that he recollected his father telling him that when he was a boy there used to be a "fou" about there, but that it was covered in years before the speaker was born. He then asked Donald in what year he had left his home, and great was the astonishment of all when Donald mentioned a date just a hundred years before, so that instead of being one night in Tomnahurich, as he had imagined, he had been there a century. Thinking the people were mocking him, he wandered off alone to think over the unaccountable circumstances. He soon found himself opposite St. Mary's Chapel, one of the few buildings he recognised. The door stood invitingly open. Service was about to be held, and the people were passing in. Donald remembered with a thrill of gratitude that it was by means of his appeal to St. Mary that he had been set free from the fairies, and he determined to enter the church to return thanks for his deliverance.

The congregation noticed his entrance, and his strange antiquated appearance drew all eyes upon him. Their curiosity, however, soon changed to horror, as they saw that at the first words of the holy service Donald fell down a mouldering mass of decaying bones.

The good fathers of the monastery buried his ashes, said masses for the repose of his soul, and duly recorded in the chronicles of the church the miracle performed by their patron saint; and although the written chronicle and stately church have long since disappeared, the legend still remains.

THE ROUT OF MOY:

AN INCIDENT OF THE 'FORTY-FIVE.

During the Rising of 1745, Inverness had a full share of the danger and excitement incidental to that stirring time. As in most other towns public opinion was much divided, some espousing the cause of the young Chevalier, while others, of the more prudent sort, declared in favour of the reigning monarch. Consequently, it was a source of great satisfaction to the latter class, when, in the early part of 1746, Lord Loudon, with some two thousand Government troops, were stationed in the town. His Lordship and some of his principal officers, took up their quarters at the "Horns," a well-known inn, situated at the foot of the Castle Wynd, facing the Exchange. This house was originally built by the Forbeses of Culloden, and used by them for many years as their town residence, but was afterwards turned into an inn.

On Sunday, the 16th of February, 1746, Lord Loudon and his officers were seated at dinner, at the early hour then in fashion, in the "best inn's best room." The wine circulated freely, and the company were in high spirits, talking, laughing, and cracking jokes with the comely Highland maid, Maggie Macgillivray, who waited upon them, and who, although an ardent Jacobite, did not object to the flattering attentions of the gallant young officers, who were as much amused as astonished at the ready wit and power of repartee shown by this simple, uneducated, bare-footed, waiting-maid. But Maggie had a wise head on her shoulders, and though her vanity was tickled at the compliments paid her by the military gentlemen, her heart was untouched by all their admiration. She took note of all that was said and done, with the view of informing her Jacobite friends of the future movements and intentions of Lord Loudon, so far as she was able to gather them, from the conversation going on around her.

Dinner was scarcely over, when a messenger arrived in hot haste with the important news that Prince Charles Edward had, that morning, arrived at Moyhall, the residence of Angus Mac-

kintosh of Mackintosh, about twelve miles from Inverness. These tidings caused great excitement among the assembled officers, who discussed the news in all its bearing and possible results quite openly before Maggie, never imagining for a moment that she would take any heed of what was said in her hearing. Indeed, to all appearance, she was wholly engrossed in her work of clearing the cloth and bringing in more wine. Not a movement of her face, or glance of her eye, denoted the excited interest she felt; not even when Lord Loudon expressed his determination to advance immediately on Moyhall and secure the person of His Royal Highness did she evince a single trace of her indignation at the scheme and her nervous apprehension for the safety of the Prince. She lingered about the room listening to every word; she heard all their plans, noted the time of their intended departure and other details, and it was only when she heard Lord Loudon giving orders to have a cordon of his men drawn round the town, to prevent any messenger going out to apprise the Prince of his peril, that she quietly slipped away, and, bare-headed and bare-footed as she was, started to run the twelve long miles to Moyhall, sustained by a double incentive, for, not only was she a fervid admirer of "Bonnie Prince Charlie," but her own favourite lad was one of the retainers at Moyhall, and she trembled for her lover's safety as well as for that of the Prince, and so, "love lending her wings," she arrived at Moyhall in good time to warn its inmates of their approaching danger.

Mackintosh was himself a Royalist, and was, at this time, in Ross-shire, on the King's service; but his lady was a strong Jacobite. She was a daughter of John Farquharson, of Invercauld, and was a high-spirited, courageous lady, who subsequently so distinguished herself by her devotion to the Princes' cause, that she obtained the soubriquet of "Colonel Ann." During Mackintosh's absence with the Royal army, she not only entertained His Royal Highness at Moyhall but afterwards actually raised a body of some four hundred of her husband's clan, and led them in person to join Lord Strathallan, at Perth, where she rode at the head of the regiment, wearing a man's hat on her head, and carrying pistols at her saddle-bow. This body afterwards fought at Culloden.

Nothing daunted by the startling news brought by the faithful and fleet-footed Maggie, Colonel Ann at once proceeded to take the necessary measures to defeat the machinations of the enemy, and although she had then no troops at her disposal she had a woman's keen wit and more than a woman's courage. Sending in haste for Donald Fraser, the chief's blacksmith, a quick-witted, capable man, she told him of her dilemma, and requested his assistance. Between them they soon concocted a scheme to defeat the threatened attack.

The first thing was to secure the safety of her Royal guest, who was at once securely hidden until daybreak, when he was conducted to Moybeg, about a mile distant, where his friends, the Camerons, under their chief, "the Gentle Lochiel" were encamped. Here he resolved to make a stand if attacked.

His Royal Highness being now out of immediate personal danger, the blacksmith, arming himself and five other men (the entire force at their command) with sword and musket, hurried out to repel the advance of fifteen hundred trained soldiers.

It was a fearful night, black as pitch, the intense darkness only fitfully illumined by flashes of forked lightning, while heaven's artillery thundered overhead, and the rain fell in torrents. So severe was the storm that the attacking party was delayed, and the advance guard, led by Norman Macleod of Macleod, for some time lay in a hollow, not knowing what to do by reason of the flashes of lightning that confounded all their designs.

In the meantime, Fraser and his five companions took their stand in a sheltered place, about two miles from Moyhall, called "Creag-an-Eoin," surrounded by high rocks, and only accessible through one narrow entrance. Here they waited

"In thunder, lightning, and rain"

for the onslaught of the foe. There was a quantity of divots, of turf, and peats piled up to dry, and the blacksmith stationed his men amongst these, at some distance from each other and on both sides of the road, so that from where Fraser himself stood to the man furthest from him about a quarter of a mile of ground was covered between them.

As soon as the first of Loudon's troops, led by Macleod,

came within a hundred yards or so of the blacksmith, he fired his musket, and called out at the top of his voice, "The Mackintoshes, the Macgillivrays, and the Macbeans will form in the centre, the Macdonalds on the right, and the Frasers on the left," as though he had a large army of Highlanders at his back. This cry was echoed by the man standing nearest him, who, in his turn, passed it on to the next, and so on, each man firing as fast as he could all the time, and shouting out the battle-cries of the various clans supposed to be present. The first shot fired by the blacksmith killed Donald Bàn MacCrimmon, Macleod's famous piper, who stood by the side of his chief. The fall of the piper, coupled with the firing and shouting of Donald Fraser and his five companions, combined with the darkness of the night, and the lurid lightning which threw the stacks of turf and peat into strong relief, and made them look like masses of soldiers, so deceived Macleod that he, imagining that he was opposed by a strong force, fell back on the main body, led by Loudon himself. These, in turn, were seized with a panic, and breaking into disorder, literally fled back to Inverness, carrying the body of the slain piper along with them, the only casualty on either side during the fight, but many of the Government troops were thrown down and trampled upon by their terror-stricken comrades during their hurried flight to the town. According to Home's *History of the Rebellion*, "The panic, fear, and flight continued till they got near Inverness, without being in any danger but that of being trampled to death, which many of them, when they were lying upon the ground and trod upon by such numbers, thought they could not possibly escape."

Even on reaching the town Loudon did not feel safe, so he hurried his men across Kessock Ferry as quickly as possible, and never drew a halt until he reached the wilds of Sutherlandshire. Here, he was afterwards followed by the Duke of Perth, and his forces broken up; after which Loudon himself made for the sea coast. He then took passage with Macleod and his followers to the Isle of Skye, where, at Dunvegan, he and Lord President Forbes remained in safe quarters until after the battle of Culloden.

As soon as the result of the blacksmith's stratagem became

known at Moyhall a messenger was despatched to the Prince with the good news. He immediately returned, and soon after marched with all his force—which was greatly augmented in consequence of the news of Loudon's ignominious defeat—on Inverness, which place he occupied on Tuesday the 18th of February, taking up the same quarters vacated by Lord Loudon only two days before at the "Horns," where the faithful Maggie was delighted beyond expression by the gracious permission to wait on him, and was rendered a proud woman on being personally thanked by His Royal Highness for her zeal in his service, which thanks he supplemented by a handsome present, so that Maggie was enabled to leave the "Horns" and return to Moyhall to marry the man of her choice, and bring up a large and handsome family, some of whose descendants are still to be found in the district.

Donald Fraser, "the doughty knight of the anvil," was ever after his daring exploit, locally known as "Caiptin nan Cuignear," the Captain of the Five. He was subsequently one of Colonel Ann's regiment, and fought bravely for his Prince at the battle of Culloden.

There is a very pathetic story told about the famous but unfortunate piper, Donald Bàn MacCrimmon. He was engaged to a very pretty and amiable girl, and was shortly to have been married to her, when the summons came for him to accompany his chief to the service of the Prince. Donald felt the parting keenly, and had a presentiment that he should never see his beloved again. This feeling was so strong that he composed a lament, known as "*Cha till mi tuilleadh*," or MacCrimmon's Lament, which he played on the departure of Macleod's party from Dunvegan Castle, the plaintive strains of the wailing lament intensifying the grief of the wives and sweethearts of the departing clansmen. The piper also set the Lament to words in a beautiful Gaelic song, which has been freely translated by Sir Walter Scott, as follows:—

Macleod's wizard flag from the grey castle sallies,
The rowers are seated, unmoored are the galleys;
Gleam war axe and broadsword, clang target and quiver,
As MacCrimmon plays "Farewell to Dunvegan for ever!"

Farewell to each cliff, on which breakers are foaming,
Farewell each dark glen in which red deer are roaming,
Farewell, lovely Skye, to lake, mountain, and river,
Macleod may return, but MacCrimmon shall never.

Farewell the bright clouds that on Culen are sleeping,
Farewell the bright eyes in the fort that are weeping;
To each minstrel delusion farewell! and for ever—
MacCrimmon departs to return to you never.

The Banshee's wild voice sings the death-dirge before me,
And the pall of the dead for a mantle hangs o'er me;
But my heart shall not fly, and my nerve shall not quiver,
Though devoted I go—to return again, never!

Too oft shall the note of MacCrimmon's bewailing
Be heard when the Gael on their exile are sailing;
Dear land! to the shores whence unwilling we sever,
Return, return, return, we shall never!

It may be imagined with what feelings of poignant grief MacCrimmon's betrothed listened to his sad farewell, and her own spirits being overcast by the separation, and being gifted with a fine poetic fancy, she relieved her over-charged heart by composing a touching Gaelic song in answer to the lament of her lover. It is as follows:—

Dh 'iadh ceo nan stuc mu aodann Chuilinn,
Is sheinn a' bhean-shith a torman mulaid,
Tha suilean gorm ciuin 's an Dun a' sileadh
O'n thriall thu bhuainn 's nach till thu tuilleadh.

Cha till, cha till, cha till MacCruimein,
An cogadh no sith cha till e tuilleadh,
Le airgiod no ni cha till MacCruimein;
Cha till gu brath gu la na cruinne.

Tha osag nan gleann gu fann ag imeachd;
Gach sruthan 's gach allt gu mall le bruthach;
Tha ialt' nan speur feadh gheugan dubhach,
A' caoidh gun d' fhalbh 's nach till thu tuilleadh.

Cha till, cha till, etc.

Tha'n fhairg fadheoidh lan broin is mulaid,
Tha 'm bata fo sheol, ach dhiult i siubhal;
Tha gair nan tonn le fuaim neo-shubhach,
Ag radh gun d' fhalbh 's nach till thu tuilleadh.

Cha till, cha till, etc.,

Cha chluinnear do cheol 's an Dun mu fheasgar,
'S mac-talla nam mur le muirn 'g a fhreagairt;
Gach fleasgach is oigh, gun cheol, gun bheadradh,
O'n thriall thu bhuainn 's nach till thu tuilleadh.

Cha till, cha till, cha till MacCruimein,
An cogadh no sith cha till e tuilleadh,
Le airgiod no ni cha till MacCruimein;
Cha till gu brath gu la na cruinne.

THE LILY OF THE NESS.

In the latter part of the seventeenth century there stood about the middle of Church Street, Inverness, one of those quaint buildings which were getting old-fashioned even at that period. The ground floor with its low ceilings, was badly lighted by small windows filled with panes of bottle glass, and was used as a shop and warehouse. The upper part of the house was reached on the outside by a flight of stone steps leading into a balcony which ran the entire length of the building. These upper rooms had queer little latticed windows, and were full of odd corners and unexpected nooks, while the high wainscoat of dark oak, and the heavy beams of polished wood which crossed the low ceilings made them appear somewhat gloomy. The whole building was surmounted by a many-gabled roof of red tiles. Strange and uncomfortable as such a house now appears to our enlightened eyes, it was thought quite the thing in those days; in fact was one of the best houses in the town, and far above the generality of the others, which were mainly low, rough-built, thatch-roofed houses of one story. The owner, Mr Cuthbert, was a wealthy and highly-respected townsman, a Bailie to boot, and though the shop was low-ceilinged and badly-lighted it contained a valuable and extensive stock of rich silks and brocades, fine broadcloths of the bright shades of colour then affected by the beaux of the day, satins, velvets, and costly ribbons, fine linens from Ireland, finer Damasks from Holland, delicate laces from France, and all the other materials which went to constitute the stock of a wealthy merchant two hundred years ago.

Mr Cuthbert was a widower, with one daughter, a tall, slender, graceful girl, about nineteen, whose amiability joined to her beauty made her a general favourite, so that she was popularly known by the fanciful sobriquet of "The Lily of the Ness.".

Some two years before our story opens the Bailie's family received an addition in the person of his nephew Archibald Cameron. This youth was the son of Mr Cuthbert's only sister,

who had married a Highlander, but both his parents having died, leaving him unprovided for, his uncle took him to live with himself, intending, if the lad showed ability, to bring him up in his own business.

To young Archie, the change from the free untrammelled life he had hitherto led in the wilds of Lochaber to the confinement of a town, however small, and the regular hours and strict routine of a business proved very irksome at first; but a due sense of his uncle's kindness, and a warm affection for his beautiful cousin, soon reconciled him to his new life. He was a lad of good parts and soon made himself master of business details.

There was another inmate of Mr Cuthdert's house, James Ogilvy, a south country man who had served his apprenticeship with the Bailie, and at this time held the responsible position of manager in the establishment. He from the first looked askance at young Cameron, and felt his introduction into the family as an intrusion. This feeling of aversion was intensified by noticing a growing affection between Archie and his beautiful cousin, whom Ogilvy had long worshipped in secret, biding his time before speaking out and declaring his passion. On the other hand, young Cameron's haughty Highland spirit was constantly being chafed by Ogilvy's overbearing manner towards him and the many petty slights and indignities he had it in his power to inflict. This mutual animosity at last broke out into a flame. Bailie Cuthbert missed a considerable sum of money from his strong room, to which only he, Archie, and Ogilvy had access. The latter did not scruple to insinuate that young Cameron was the culprit. The accusation was indignantly repudiated by the fiery youth, and in the heat of his rage he denounced Ogilvy himself as the thief.

The worthy Bailie was at his wits end. He could not, and would not, for a moment suspect the son of his dead sister, but still he had no reason to doubt the honesty of Mr Ogilvy, who had been with him, man and boy, for many years. As it was however impossible that the young men should remain any longer under one roof, Mr Cuthbert determined upon sending Archie on a voyage to Jamaica, where the Bailie had an extensive business connection, trusting to time and his own watchful ness to discover the pilferer.

Archie Cameron embraced his uncle's proposal with alacrity. He was delighted at the prospect of a sea voyage and being able to see a little more of the world. The only drawback was his warm affection for his pretty cousin Margaret. It was hard to leave her without having a definite engagement, and that he knew was out of the question just then, when he was under a a cloud. However, he felt pretty easy in his mind regarding his love affairs, for although he had never openly declared himself to her, still the sweet free masonry of love between himself and Margaret made him confidant that she returned his passion.

Archie had a very fine, large collie dog called Bruce, which he brought to Inverness from Lochaber, and which was his devoted and inseparable companion, and as he could not take him along with him to Jamaica, he gave him as a parting gift to his cousin Margaret, trusting to the old proverb of "Love me, love my dog" for his being well cared for in his absence. Bruce, with his keen, almost human intelligence, seemed to fully understand the situation, and readily attached himself to his master's lover, at the same time showing a great dislike to James Ogilvy, with whom he had never been much of a favourite.

Time passed on; the fair Lily of the Ness drooped a little at first, after her cousin's departure, and the sagacious Bruce, as the representative of his master, was the recipient of many a soft caress, and the constant confidant of many a sweet whispered word of love. In due time news reached Inverness that Archie had arrived safely at his destination, and afterwards of his success in the mission he had been entrusted with.

During Cameron's absence abroad, Ogilvy paid marked attentions to the lovely Margaret; but so skilfully did he hide his real feelings under a cloak of respectful deference, that though much annoyed at his conduct, she could not openly complain of or refuse his services, and the Bailie, honest man, never dreaming that his servant would presume to make love to a member of his family, saw nothing in Ogilvy's attentions but the proper respect that an inferior owed to his master's daughter.

Only once did Ogilvy forget himself and allow his passion to assert itself. It was a lovely summer evening, the air felt fresh and cool after the heat of the day, and Margaret, who had spent the evening with a friend, was making her way home,

accompanied by Bruce, along the banks of the Ness, when, though the surrounding scenery was so familiar to her, she could not help standing to admire the charming picture. The setting sun was casting his last rays ere sinking to rest behind Craig Phadrick, gilding the swiftly-flowing river as it ran between its green banks, lingering over the town as though loth to take his departure, lightening up the high steeples of the various churches till their gilded vanes dazzled the eyes and caused one to rest them on the dark summit of fairy-haunted Tomnahurich rising grim and gloomy in the shadow. Margaret was a lover of nature, and the stillness and beauty of the evening caused her to linger longer than her wont, while her thoughts were busy with her absent lover, who was soon to return home. She was aroused from her pleasing day-dream by hearing a quick footstep behind her. She hurried on without turning her head, but was soon overtaken, when she was much annoyed to find that it was James Ogilvy who had overtaken her.

She dreaded a *tête-a-tête* with him, but saw no way to prevent it, as she could not refuse his company when they were both going in the same direction. Margaret though an amiable was also a quick-tempered girl, and could not help showing her annoyance. She answered all his civil speeches briefly, even curtly if not crossly, but her coolness only served to increase his ardour, until he could not restrain his feelings any longer, and gave vent to his passion in such a rapid flow of fervid periods that Margaret became quite frightened. Having informed him in a few cold words that his proferred love was distasteful to her, and that her own was irrevocably given to her absent cousin, Margaret tried to hurry past him, but Ogilvy, now quite beside himself, seized hold of her hand and swore that she should listen to him. Margaret, now thoroughly alarmed, screamed aloud, when, with a vicious growl, Bruce sprang full on the chest of Ogilvy and bore him to the ground; then, seeing his mistress was uninjured, he obeyed her call, trotted quietly after her and both soon arrived safely at home.

After this incident, Ogilvy's conduct underwent a great and sudden change. He grew reckless, neglected his business, and became unsteady in his hours of leisure, and the Bailie, who watched him narrowly, felt convinced that there was something

wrong, but still he could not detect him in any actual dishonesty. When, however, he afterwards discovered that his manager was in the habit of spending his evenings in the company of loose characters, gambling and losing far larger sums than he could honestly come by, Mr Cuthbert summarily dismissed him, saying that he had now no doubt at all in his own mind who the thief was on the former occasion, but that, as he had no legal proof he would not now prosecute him.

The detected villain now quailed under the righteous wrath of his master; but instead of feeling compunction, and making any reparation for his crime, he slunk away full of hatred in his heart and vowing vengeance on the whole of Mr Cuthbert's household. But his detection and dismissal was a great relief to Margaret, who naturally rejoiced that the good name of her lover was now cleared from even the shadow of a doubt, and her joy was increased a few days later on the receipt of a letter, by her father, from Archie, containing the welcome news that he had already landed at Glasgow; but that in consequence of a slight accident to his right hand he was unable to write himself, and had to get the ship's steward to do so for him; and further, as he intended staying a few days in that city, he had, to save trouble, sent his heavy sea chest by water to Inverness, while he himself would follow in a few days by coach.

The next evening, two men brought a large and heavy strongly-corded chest directed to Bailie Cuthbert which, they said, had just been landed from a Glasgow vessel. They were instructed to carry it up to Archie's bedroom, and, after the Bailie had suitably rewarded them for their trouble, Margaret led them into the kitchen, and took care to see that they were liberally regaled with refreshments.

The dog Bruce seemed to think there was something wrong. He did not endorse his mistress's kindness; he growled onimously at the men, while the chest on its arrival seemed to excite him in a most extraordinary manner. He first sniffed suspiciously all round it, then followed the men as they carried it upstairs, barking furiously and trying to leap upon it. They drove him away, but he waited their return downstairs, there growling and showing his teeth at them, until they left the premises. The sagacious animal then returned to Cameron's bedroom, and renewed his

violent barking, leaping upon the chest, and at the same time tried to tear the thick ropes from it with his teeth. The perplexed Margaret in vain tried to quiet and coax him from the room. At length the Bailie himself, who was entertaining a few friends, becoming annoyed at the continued uproar, proceeded upstairs and with a stout stick beat the infuriated Bruce out of the apartment.

Vexed to see her favourite in disgrace, Margaret remained alone in the room to see if she could discover anything to account for the strange behaviour of her sagacious and favourite friend, who was usually so quiet and docile. She examined the chest with care, but could find nothing except a large wooden box, firmly locked and strongly bound with a stout rope. As she sat quietly in her chair, thinking over the matter, she was suddenly startled by a sound as if someone was breathing near her, yet no one was to be seen ; she held her breath and listened more attentively; yes! there was no mistake. She distinctly heard heavy breathing, and to her surprise and terror she discovered that it proceeded from inside the chest.

Running downstairs, regardless of all ceremony she rushed into the room where her father sat entertaining his friends, and in breathless haste told her wonderful story. As if to corroborate her statements, Bruce, who had in the meantime again secured admittance to the bedroom, was heard barking more violently than ever.

Convinced that there was something strange about the chest Bailie Cuthbert at once decided to break it open. Accordingly, calling upon the servants to bring lights and implements to force the lock, he, accompanied by his friends and daughter, proceeded upstairs to solve the mystery. The rope was quickly cut and the heavy lid forced open, when a loud report instantly followed ; two pistol shots rang through the apartment, but fortunately, without injuring anyone. Before the smoke could clear away Bruce, with a savage snarl, sprang forward and fastened his teeth in the throat of a man who lay concealed in the box, and who was immediately recognised as James Ogilvy. Nearly frantic with pain and terror, the trembling wretch begged, in a choking voice, to have the dog called off, and he would confess all. With no little difficulty Bruce was induced to let go his grip, when

Ogilvy was firmly secured, and peremptorily required to give an explanation of how and for what purpose he got there. He then confessed that, on being dismissed from the Bailie's employment in disgrace, he determined upon revenge, and had joined with two other men, desperate as himself, in a plot to rob Mr Cuthbert's well-stocked warehouse, and afterwards carry off the fair Margaret, whom he said he loved to distraction, and whose person he was determined to gain by fair means or foul. His knowledge of Archie's absence and intended return, suggested the device of the letter, purporting to come from him, and getting himself smuggled into the house in a sea-chest. He also confessed that his companions were to be at the house at three o'clock in the morning, when he was to have admitted them, and from his intimate knowledge of the premises and the habits of the household they anticipated an easy access and a rich booty without being discovered.

The gentlemen listened in surprise, wondered how he had not been suffocated, and were curious to learn how he arranged to get out of his hiding-place without assistance, the chest being so firmly locked and corded, but their surprise was still greater increased when he showed them how, by a simple contrivance, a portion of the box would move aside, and thus enable him, not only to breathe freely but to cut the rope. The lock, the key of which he had in his pocket, opened from the inside, while he was also provided with a complete set of house-breaking tools and a pair of pistols. Bailie Cuthbert having extorted from the rascal what signals were to be used between him and the rest of the gang, had him afterwards safely lodged in jail, and, securing the assistance of the town constable, awaited the arrival of Ogilvy's accomplices, who, deceived by having their signals answered as arranged and the door opened for them, were easily captured, and sent to join their leader. In due time they were all tried, convicted, and suitably punished.

When Archibald Cameron did really return he sent no large chest in advance, but brought all his belongings along with him, and was received with open arms both by the charming Margaret and her delighted father. The Bailie at once gave a willing consent to the marriage of the cousins, stipulating only that they should remain unmarried for a year, at the end of

which he would take his nephew into partnership. The Lily of the Ness was thus not transplanted into strange soil, but lived happily and flourished in her native town, and when at length the worthy Bailie, full of years and honour, laid down the burden of life which he had borne so worthily, he was surrounded in his old age by the loving care of his daughter and grand-children, and when at last he was carried to his last resting place in the old Chapel Yard, his remains were followed by a large body of his townsmen, with every mark of respect and esteem, while Margaret, her husband and their children continued his profitable and extensive business, and reared a family of sons and daughters worthy of their forbears.

THE CURSE OF LOCHGARRY.

Among the hundreds of gallant Highlanders who in 1745 flocked to the standard of Prince Charles Edward, not one was more devoted and loyal than Donald Macdonald of Lochgarry. He fought bravely for his beloved Prince as long as he could, and when fighting was no longer of any use he gave up home and country, left wife and family, and cheerfully followed his master into exile.

Macdonald's wife, Isabella Gordon of Glenlivet, and their three sons John, Alexander, and Peter remained behind at Lochgarry. Not long, however, were they allowed to stay there in peace. The ruthless Cumberland, then in the full flush of his triumphant cruelties, soon laid his destroying hand on the estate and it was only when he and his troops were breaking through the front gates of Lochgarry Castle that its mistress, disguised as a man in kilt, bonnet, and plaid, escaped, with her sons, from the back of the stronghold. The fine old castle was burnt to the ground, its policies and grounds destroyed, and the numerous retainers and tenants of its owner scattered like chaff before a whirlwind.

The fugitive lady and her sons succeeded in making good their escape to France, where they joined Lochgarry who had taken up his residence in Paris in order to be near his beloved Prince. His ancestral castle being burnt and his lands laid waste, Macdonald took a solemn vow never to put foot on British soil until his rightful Sovereign should be restored to his own. As there was no immediate prospect of this taking place, Macdonald settled himself and his family in their adopted land. He secured appointments for his two eldest sons in the Garde Ecossais and the youngest he placed in the Swiss Guard.

He himself became a prominent figure in Paris. He was at this time between fifty and sixty years of age, a strikingly handsome man, with a dignified carriage, and fine martial bearing, and being always attired in full Highland costume he was the cynosure of all eyes. Though he was a proscribed and landless

exile, his spirit was as high and his courage as undaunted as when he was in the height of his prosperity and chief of Lochgarry. He would brook no slight either to himself, his king, or his countrymen, as the following anecdote will show. On one occasion while dining in a Paris cafe, he overheard a party of seven Frenchmen at a distant table deriding the young Chevalier and the half-clad savages he had brought with him. In an instant Macdonald's glass was shattered at the head of one, and his dirk thrown in the midst of all. He then and there challenged the seven on the spot and fought them one by one, killing or wounding them all. It may easily be imagined that not many Frenchmen would care to meddle with the fiery Highlander after such a signal exhibition of his prowess. But trials of another sort, more difficult to bear, overtook the stout-hearted Lochgarry.

His youngest son Peter died, in the flower of his youth, and shortly afterwards his other two sons, John and Alexander, were thrown out of their commissions by the disbanding of the Scotch Guard. Alexander, being fond of a military life, elected to enter the Portuguese service, in which he lived and died; but the eldest, John, pined for his native country, and not sharing his father's strong Jacobite sentiments, determined to secretly leave France and return to Britain.

Lochgarry receiving intelligence of his son's design, followed him post-haste to Calais, where he overtook him on the eve of embarking. Finding that all his commands, arguments, and entreaties failed to alter John's determination, the angry father solemnly denounced his undutiful son.

Drawing his fine form to its full height, his eyes kindling with indignation, and his outstretched hand tremulous with emotion, Macdonald thundered out the fearful malediction known as the Curse of Lochgarry—"My curse on any of my race who puts his foot again on British shore; my double curse on him who of my race may submit to the Guelph; and my deadliest curse on him who may try to regain Lochgarry," and then, throwing his dirk after John's receding figure, he turned his back for ever on his eldest and best loved son.

His son's defection was a severe blow to the haughty spirit of Macdonald, but when he subsequently heard of him making

his submission to the reigning monarch, accepting a colonelcy in the British army, and getting the attainder of Lochgarry removed, Macdonald's cup of bitterness was full and overflowing. He was completely crushed, never rallied again, and shortly afterwards died a broken-hearted man.

Colonel John Macdonald obtained possession of his hereditary estates, built a beautiful modern mansion on the site of the old castle, furnished it elegantly, and went to live in it, intending to settle down among his people and tenants, but "l'homme propose le Dieu dispose." No sooner had he gone to reside in it than he and the whole household began to be alarmed and annoyed by the most extraordinary and inexplicable noises. Bells would ring without human agency, followed by violent knocking at the hall door by unseen hands, while in the dusk of evening, or by the pale light of the moon, a shadowy form would be seen flitting round the castle—a form which the servants and tenants declared to be the wraith of the old laird.

The Colonel endured this state of matters as long as he could, but at length the constant strain on his nervous system broke down even his robust health, and the burthen of his father's curse laying heavy on his conscience, he was compelled to shut up the house which had cost him so much to build, throw up his commission, and return to France, where he died shortly afterwards, leaving his house and estate of Lochgarry to his surviving brother.

Alexander Macdonald, however, never took possession, whether from fear of his father's curse or because he did not wish to leave his adopted country, but from whatever other cause, the house remained closed until his death in 1812 when his widow, Dona Maria Zose da Costa, a Portuguese lady, came to Scotland with her only son Anthony, with the double purpose of his entering the British army and taking possession of the ancient family residence and estate of Lochgarry.

This young man married Cassandra Eliza Macdonald, and brought her to live at Lochgarry, but the same alarming noises and visions that had driven his uncle from his inheritance also made it impossible for them to inhabit the castle. The dreadful curse seemed to follow the innocent descendant of the old laird. Neither Anthony Macdonald or his young wife could sustain the

continual incubus of the haunted house. He was compelled to leave, and eventually sold it, the former attainder having barred the entail. He, however, never regained his health but died a disappointed and broken-hearted man, at the early age of thirty-one.

THE WITCH OF KNOCKANDO.

In the good old superstitious days it was a common belief in the Highlands, that witches and fairies had the power to take the milk from the cows or transfer it into another channel. Nearly every district has its own local legend embodying this idea. The following is one.

The guidwives of Knockando were in great trouble and distress in consequence of finding their usual supply of milk falling off day by day. All who kept cows suffered more or less from this scarcity—all except one old widow woman named Elspet, whose few cows seemed to give far more than usual, if one might judge by the appearance of sundry pails of every description, filled to overflowing daily, to be seen in her "milk hoose." As a matter of course she was suspected of witchcraft, especially as she was not generally liked among her neighbours, but though they suspected and watched they were totally unable to bring the charge home to her, until the secret was discovered by one of the more curious guidwives of the clachan.

Janet Macnab was the wife of the largest farmer in the district, and consequently one of the greatest losers by the unaccountable dearth of milk. She was a thrifty, bustling woman, with a strong will and a sharp tongue of her own as seldom idle as her hands.

Feeling sure that old widow Elspet had something to do with the milk famine, Janet determined to watch her carefully and try to discover if she was indeed using witchcraft for her own benefit and the injury of her neighbours. For some days Mrs Macnab discovered nothing suspicious beyond the enormous quantity of milk the widow's three poor cows seemed to produce, for her whole time was taken up with making butter and cheese. Baffled, but still convinced that there was something uncanny about the strange affair, Janet could neither eat nor sleep for the all-absorbing desire that possessed her to solve the mystery; so one morning before the sun had barely thrown his first rays over the top of the hills, she rose from her restless couch, and leaving

her guidman peacefully at rest, went out to cool her fevered brow in the fresh air of the early morning, and walking some little distance, the current of her thoughts led her almost unconsciously in the direction of the widow's cottage.

The beauty of the early morning and the stillness all around calmed her troubled breast, for not a movement was yet visible in any of the houses; as yet no smell of burning peat or wood sullied the pure atmosphere, and she was on the point of returning home when she fancied she heard someone speaking in a low tone of voice, quite near to where she was. Janet looked eagerly around, and at length on the other side of a hedge espied old Elspet kneeling on the long wet grass of the meadow, muttering something to herself. Convinced that she was on the verge of an important discovery Janet held her breath, and creeping along silently, peeped through the intervening hedge, and there saw the old hag sweeping the heavy dew, which glistened like diamonds in the rays of the rising sun, into her lap, and as Elspet threw out and drew back her long skinny arms and claw-like hands, she repeated in a monotonous chant—

> "Mear's milk and deer's milk,
> And every breast that bears milk,
> Frae John o' Groats to Solway sea—
> Come a' to me, come a' to me!"

Janet's first impulse was to run and arouse the neighbours, and denounce the witch thus detected in the actual performance of her unholy cantrips; but on second thoughts she stood still, and reasoned with herself thus—If the simple saying of a few lines could bring milk to her own byre, why should she not be silent as to what she had witnessed, and in a similar way reap the benefit of her newly acquired knowledge. It would be worth while at least to try the experiment. Having arrived at this conclusion she waited quietly until Elspet had disappeared into her own cottage, then, stooping down on the wet grass, Janet imitated as well as she could the gestures of the old witch, at the same time repeating the words of the charm; but fearing to ask too much at first, she substituted the words "Come pairt to me, come pairt to me," instead of "Come a' to me, come a' to me."

Whether the fact of her having altered the words of the

charm, or from some other cause, it did not act as in the case of old Elspet, who always found the milk so uncannily stolen, properly stored away in her dairy after performing her unholy rites, but in Janet's case the effect was wonderful and instantaneous, for no sooner had she uttered the magic words than from every part of her dress poured forth a copious and continuous stream of rich new milk. It dripped even from the edge of her short petticoat and trickled from the lappets of her snow-white mutch, ran from her sleeves, and spouted out from underneath her low-heeled shoes.

Terrified astonishment was Janet's first feeling as she perceived the extraordinary effect of her weird incantation. However, her natural hardihood soon overcame her fears, and she laughed aloud with glee at having discovered such an inestimable secret. Running home as fast as her feet could carry her, at the same time leaving a broad milky trail behind her, she reached her home while yet all the other inmates of the house were sound asleep. Hastening in, she soon filled every pail, bucket, skillet, bowl, basin, jug, mug, and flagon she could lay her hands on, and still the inexhaustible supply kept up. But she began to feel a little uneasy when she remembered that, although she knew the charmed words to produce the milk, she was totally ignorant of the counter-charm to make its flow cease. In this dilemma she gesticulated with her arms and hands as if trying to push something from her, crying out at the same time "Go frae me! go frae me!" but all her efforts were unavailing; the milk continued to flow as fast as ever, and in a few minutes the spotless kitchen floor was covered over several inches deep with the precious fluid.

Now thoroughly frightened, Janet screamed aloud and soon aroused the whole household. They frantically flocked around, with every ejaculation of surprise and wonder in their vocabulary; but they were of course quite helpless in this strange and unheard of emergency, and could afford the unfortunate woman no assistance whatever. Janet in the meantime was getting hysterical, and could only reply to the eager questions showered on her from every side by terrified screams, and sobs, and tears.

Perceiving that they were likely to be soon inundated with the ever-flowing fluid, the farmer caught hold of his bewitched wife, carried her out of the house, and deposited her in the

middle of the "square." Here she was quickly surrounded by all the brute creation in the neighbourhood—calves, pigs, dogs and cats all came and eagerly lapped the unaccustomed treat so plentifully and freely placed at their disposal.

The unhappy victim of her own cupidity was meanwhile struggling in hysterical convulsions. Between the paroxysms she was able to utter a few sentences; but the only intelligible word her distressed husband could make out was the name of old Elspet. Whether his wife was denouncing her as the cause of her present sad condition, or wanting her assistance to relieve her from it, he could not tell. He, however, thought it best to send for the old witch, but just as he was telling one of the herd boys to run for her she made her appearance.

After completing her magical and unholy rites in the meadow she proceeded to her cottage expecting to find the bewitched milk as usual there before her, but to her utter astonishment it was "conspicuous by its absence." Instantly divining that some opposing influence was at work, she left her home to try and discover it, when she soon struck on the white trail left by Janet. Perceiving at once that someone had discovered her secret, the old hag proceeded on its trail and soon traced it to its destination.

As soon as Janet caught sight of the witch, she screamed louder than ever, and pointing at her with a trembling finger called on her husband to secure her. This was quickly done by a score of willing hands, and the wretched, trembling, shivering old creature was dragged with no very gentle hands to the horse-pond to undergo the usual ducking—the approved method in those days of treating a witch. Just as they were about to plunge her in for the first dip, she begged them to desist, confessed her guilt and promised to remove the spell from Janet if they would only let her alone, but if they killed or further ill-treated her Janet would never rid herself of the enchantment.

Her captors, agreeing to give Elspet a chance of undoing the mischief, led her back to where poor Janet sat, surrounded by a great pool of milk. All the thirsty animals in the village had in the meantime drank their fill, and retired fully satisfied, but yet the supply came as fast as ever.

The old witch bent over the suffering and exhausted Janet,

waved her arms and muttered a long rhyme of which the eager spectators could not gather a single word. It however had the desired effect; the spell was removed, the miraculous supply of milk ceased as suddenly as it commenced; and Janet was gladly taken into her house again to recover from her fright.

During the commotion and bustle caused by this extraordinary affair old Elspet managed to make good her escape and hurried away in double-quick time. She was never again seen in the neighbourhood, and the cows, relieved from her bewitching power, gave their milk in proper quantities to their rightful owners ever after as before.

Janet soon recovered her usual health, and her husband and family had occasion to congratulate themselves on the change that now appeared in her disposition and habits. She grew quieter, more gentle in speech, and more equable in temper, scolded her maids less and cherished her husband and children more. Instead of being, as formerly, avaricious, mean, and stingy, she became open-handed, kind and hospitable, while at the same time she retained her good qualities as a thrifty and energetic housewife. Her husband fully appreciated the additional comfort of his home, and was heard to say to a favourite crony over a glass of toddy—"That the spate o' milk was no sick a bad thing altogether, for it gar'd the beasties hae a guid drink; an eh! mon, it has warked a gey change in oor Janet.

LADY AMELIA FRASER AND HER LOVERS.

Two to three hundred years ago it was too commonly the custom among the upper classes in the Highlands, as well as in the Lowlands, to have contracts of marriage entered into solely on political or territorial grounds, without any regard to the personal feelings of the contracting parties, who were often mere children at the time when their parents thus arbitrarily disposed of their matrimonial future. That most unhappy effects should often result from these alliances cannot be wondered at; but seldom did they lead to such tragic results as the one of which the following is a true account.

In 1685 Hugh Fraser, Lord Lovat, on his marriage with the Lady Amelia Murray, daughter of John, first Marquis of Athole, entered into a curious marriage-contract to the effect that if he should have no son by his wife, or by any subsequent marriage, the lordship and barony of Lovat and all his other estates should go to his eldest heir-female, without division, provided she should marry a gentleman of the name of Fraser. He had no son. He had, however, four daughters, the eldest of whom, named Amelia after her mother, was thus the heiress to all the extensive estates of Lovat. But in March 1696, about six months before his death, Lord Lovat changed his mind, and, making a will, disponed all his property to his grand-uncle, Thomas Fraser of Beaufort and his heirs male. When her father died, in 1696, the heiress was a child of some eleven years, yet even at that early age her grandfather, the Marquis of Athole, arranged a contract of marriage between her and the Master of Saltoun, eldest son of Lord Saltoun, a lad about thirteen years of age, no doubt with the view of gaining sufficient influence by this marriage to secure her in the possession of the Lovat property

against the counter claims of the Frasers of Beaufort.

Naturally the proposed alliance was regarded with great disfavour by Thomas Fraser of Beaufort, and urged on by his son, Simon (afterwards the notorious Lord Lovat, executed for high treason in 1747), he determined by every means in his power to prevent the match from taking place.

To this end they first secured the co-operation and countenance of Charles, Lord Fraser (now represented by the Frasers of Inverallochy), by working upon his political sentiments. Being a fervid Jacobite, this gentleman was easily led to believe that Lord Saltoun would use the additional power which the contemplated marriage would give him in opposition to the restoration of the Stuarts. The opponents of the proposed marriage having thus gained Lord Fraser over to their side, their next step was to get a number of the principal men of the clan to assemble at Essich, on the Stratherrick road, about four miles above Inverness, where they arranged that Lord Fraser should meet them and make a speech, pointing out what a severe master they would find in Lord Saltoun if his son was allowed to marry the heiress of Lovat, and urging them to support the claims of the Frasers of Beaufort to the succession. Having thus gained the goodwill and services of these gentlemen of the clan, the Frasers became bolder and sent a threatening letter to Lord Saltoun, ordering him, at his peril, not to come into that part of the country without their permission or invitation. As may be supposed, Lord Saltoun took no notice of this insolent message, and shortly afterwards paid a visit to the Dowager Lady Lovat at Castle Downie, in reference to the marriage of her daughter; but although Lord Saltoun disdained to take any precautions for his own safety, it was deemed advisable that the young bride-elect should be placed for the present under the protection of her grandfather, the Marquis of Athole.

Evidently not anticipating any molestation, Lord Saltoun set out from Castle Downie on his return journey to Inverness, accompanied only by one friend, Lord Mungo Murray, and their usual attendants. They proceeded in safety until they reached the wood of Bunchrew, in passing through which they were suddenly set upon by Fraser of Beaufort and his son Simon, at the head of a strong party of armed men. Successful resistance

to such an overwhelming force was out of the question, and they were quickly captured, dismounted and disarmed, and then compelled to remount on wretched little ponies, or *gearrans*, as they were called by the country people. In this miserable plight they were taken to Fanellan House, shut up, each in a separate room, and treated with great harshness by the daring Thomas Fraser of Beaufort and his still more reckless son, who had even the audacity to erect a gallows before the house, in full sight of the unhappy prisoners, and threatened to hang them all unless Lord Saltoun promised to proceed no further with the projected marriage.

Finding that even this terrible threat would not frighten Lord Saltoun into submission to their demands, and probably fearing a rescue, they, after five days had passed, removed their prisoners to Aigais, a small rocky island in the Beauly river below Eskadale. The Frasers of Beaufort then attacked and gained possession of Castle Downie, capturing at the same time the unfortunate Dowager Lady Lovat, whose atrocious and dastardly treatment at the hands of the brutal Lord Simon is a well-known historic incident.

After gaining possession of the castle, the Frasers of Beaufort removed their prisoners thither from Eilean-Aigais, and put the castle in a state of defence. But their lawless proceedings now met with a check ; a body of troops was sent against them, who soon retook the castle and relieved the prisoners, the Frasers having to seek safety in flight. Simon Fraser, not daring to appear and stand his trial, was, in his absence, declared guilty, and, with nineteenof his companions in crime, sentenced to death on the 5th September, 1698. Notwithstanding this, Simon, who was as clever as he was unscrupulous, not only managed to evade this sentence, but in time procured a royal pardon for this and his other numerous misdeeds, and also succeeded in obtaining from the Court of Session a decision in favour of his claim to the ancient title of Lord Lovat.

The daring opposition of the Frasers of Beaufort had, however, the effect of breaking off the match between Lady Amelia and the Master of Saltoun, and five years afterwards, when in her sixteenth year, the young lady married Alexander Mackenzie of Prestonhall.

Lord Saltoun had to wait for ten years before he succeeded in obtaining one whom he considered a sufficiently wealthy bride for his son ; but eventually a marriage was arranged between the Master of Saltoun and the Lady Mary Gordon, daughter of the first Earl of Aberdeen, whose fortune of 18,000 merks was there and then paid over to Lord Saltoun, in return for which he was taken bound to make a handsome and suitable settlement in favour of the young couple.

THE EARL OF GLENCAIRN'S DUEL.

THE incidents detailed in this story occurred at the time of the Earl of Glencairn's Highland expedition in 1653. After having, with considerable trouble, raised a large body of men, he had to give up the command of them to General Middleton, who had in the meantime been appointed commander-in-chief. This appointment was very unpopular with Glencairn's men, who were greatly attached to him, and also caused considerable irritation on the part of the officers, which found vent in more than one duel.

On General Middleton assuming command, he ordered a review of the Earl's forces, to inspect the men, horses, and arms. As might be expected among irregular troops so hastily gathered together, there were many deficiencies which General Middleton's officers were not slow to observe and openly comment upon, much to the annoyance of Glencairn and his officers. Their angry feelings were, perhaps still more inflamed by the fact of their having just at this time an unusual quantity of wine at their disposal; for, a day or two before, an English ship, laden with about forty tuns of French wine, had been driven ashore on the coast of Sutherlandshire, and was seized by General Middleton, who distributed the wine among the different officers. While the men were all assembled, Glencairn rode along the ranks, and told them that he now held no higher command than a colonelcy, and while thanking them for the ready obedience they had given him, he trusted they would serve their new commander equally well. The men were much moved by this address, and plainly showed they did not like the change; but vowed they would follow Glencairn to any part of the world.

The Earl then invited the General and all the principal officers to dine with him at his quarters, which were at the house of the

laird of Kettle, four miles from Dornoch, where the headquarters were. After having entertained them to the best of everything the country afforded, he turned to the General, and pledging him in a glass of wine said, "My Lord General, you see what a gallant army these worthy gentlemen here present and I have gathered together at a time when it would hardly be expected that any number durst meet together: these men have come out to serve his Majesty at the hazard of their lives and of all that is dear to them. I hope, therefore, you will give them all the encouragement to do their duty that lies in your power." Before General Middleton could reply, Sir George Munro, who had before made himself very disagreeable to Glencairn by his slighting remarks on the appearance of the men, started up, and with an oath exclaimed, "my Lord, the men you speak of are nothing but a number of thieves and robbers; and ere long, I will bring another sort of men to the field."

This uncalled-for and most offensive speech threw the company into confusion. Glencairn's officers rose with their hands on their swords, all speaking at once, demanding to have the insulting remark withdrawn and apologised for. Glengarry, who was present, seemed to consider that the insult was specially intended for him, and he could only, with great difficulty, be restrained by Glencairn, who commanded him to be quiet, saying, "Glengarry, I am more concerned in this affront than you are;" then, turning to Munro, he exclaimed with heat, "You, sir, are a base liar; for they are neither thieves nor robbers, but gallant gentlemen and good soldiers."

General Middleton now found it necessary to interfere, and, raising his voice, commanded both officers on their allegiance, to keep the peace, pointing out the injury that would accrue to the King's cause if they thus quarrelled among themselves, "therefore," he continued, "I will have you to make friends at once," and filling a glass with wine, he turned to the Earl, saying, "My Lord Glencairn, I think you did the greatest wrong in giving Sir George the lie; so you shall drink to him, and he shall pledge you,"

Glencairn, realising the truth of the General's remarks, was willing to overlook the insult to himself, and, gracefully taking the glass, drank to Sir George, who, however, did not respond

in an equally agreeable manner, but in a surly way muttered some indistinct words. The affair was in the meantime left in abeyance, and the company broke up to return to head-quarters.

Glencairn attended the General for about a mile, when he returned accompanied only by two gentlemen, Colonel Blackadder and John Graham of Deuchrie. He appeared by this time to have quite recovered from his annoyance, and laid himself out to be amused. The daughter of the laird of Kettle was a good musician, and played on the virginals, while the servants and attendants danced. Just as supper was served, and the Earl was going to sit down, a servant announced that Alexander Munro, brother of Sir George, was at the gate seeking an audience of his lordship. Glencairn at once gave orders for his admittance, met him at the door, shook hands with him, and invited him to join them at supper, which he did, and afterwards spent two or three hours very pleasantly singing and dancing. During the evening Glencairn and Munro were observed to have a few minutes' private conversation together, but this attracted no attention, as neither of them showed by their manner that anything unusual was going on, although in those few minutes the particulars of a deadly duel were arranged. Munro at length took his leave and the household retired to rest.

The Earl slept in a double-bedded room, occupying one bed, while Colonel Blackadder and Graham of Deuchrie occupied the other. When all the household were sound asleep, Glencairn rose, and without awaking any but his servant, John White, whom he took along with him, went out to meet Sir George Munro, at a spot agreed upon half way between his quarters and Dornoch. Here Sir George met him, accompanied by his brother, Alexander, who had the previous evening conveyed the challenge to the Earl. The duel was to be fought on horseback, with one pistol each, and afterwards with broadswords. They both fired at once, without effect, and then, drawing their swords, attacked each other with concentrated fury. After a pass or two, Sir George received a cut on his bridle hand which caused him to lose control of his horse; on which he asked Glencairn's permission to finish the duel on foot. The Earl instantly dismounted, exclaiming "You base carle; I will show you that I can match

you either on foot or horseback!" He soon proved that this was no idle boast, for in a few minutes Sir George was *hors de combat* with a severe cut on his brow which bled so profusely that he was quite blinded. Still, Glencairn was not satisfied, and he made a plunge with the intention of running his enemy through the body; but John White, with a quick movement, interfered, and forced up the sword, saying, "That is enough, my Lord; you have got the better of him." But Glencairn was so enraged that he turned on his own servant and gave him a severe blow across the shoulders for daring to interfere. However, his Lordship did not resume the duel; indeed, Sir George was now quite helpless, and his brother had great difficulty in getting him back to Dornoch. The Earl and his attendant returned, and got into the house again without anyone knowing that they had ever left it.

When General Middleton heard of the affair he was exceedingly angry, and sent an officer, Captain Campbell, with a guard to secure the Earl, to take his sword from him, and keep him a prisoner on parole, while he used every endeavour to heal the breach between him and Sir George. He might have been successful had not Glencairn been again deeply offended by the following circumstance:—

The duel was naturally the subject of discussion among the officers, who took different sides, and two of them, Livingstone and Lindsay, got so angry over the dispute, that nothing would satisfy them but to fight a duel themselves, with the result that Livingstone, who was a friend of Sir George Munro, was killed. Lindsay was immediately arrested, tried, and sentenced to be shot at the Cross of Dornoch at four o'clock the same day.

The Earl made every effort to save his friend's life, but the General turned a deaf ear to all his entreaties, and the sentence was promptly carried out.

Glencairn was so very much annoyed at the evident partiality shown by the General to Sir George Munro, that, finding it impossible to co-operate with them, he determined to leave altogether. He accordingly marched away southwards with only his own troop and a few gentlemen volunteers, not a hundred men in all.

Learning of their defection, the General sent a strong party

after them with orders either to bring them back or fight them. Glencairn, however, had pushed on to Assynt and secured the passes, so that he was able to defy double the number sent after him, and they eturned without attacking him. Glencairn afterwards continued his march to Kintail, thence to Lochbroom, Lochaber, Loch-Rannoch, Loch-Tay, and on to Killin, where he was joined by Sir George Maxwell with a hundred men, William Earl of Selkirk, with sixty, and Lord Forrester with eighty, and so found himself at the head of about 400 horsemen. But he was too good a subject to allow personal feelings to stand in the way of his duty, and he sent the whole force on to General Middleton "so that they might not be wanting in their duty to the King's service when occasion might offer."

The Earl was now taken seriously ill; but he still continued his efforts to raise men for his Sovereign, and within two months had again brought together two hundred horse. But all his exertions were in vain; the cause was doomed, General Middleton was utterly defeated, and his army scattered. Many of his men came to Glencairn and offered their services. He, however, saw the futility of further resistance, and decided upon capitulating to the victorious General Monk.

He accordingly agreed to enter into a treaty with that officer, but it was nearly a month before it was concluded; indeed, at one time the negotiations were broken off altogether, when Glencairn made a sudden raid upon Dumbarton, killed between thirty and forty men, took twenty more prisoners, besides a number of horses, and two hundred loads of corn. This successful attack made Monk anxious to complete the treaty of capitulation, which he did on very favourable conditions, described as follows by one of his lordship's officers, who was present:—

"That all the officers and soldiers should be indemnified as to their lives and fortunes, and that they should have passes delivered to each to secure their safety in travelling through the country to their own respective homes, they doing nothing prejudicial to the present Government. The officers were to be allowed all their horses and arms, to be disposed off as they pleased. They were also to have the liberty of wearing their swords when they travelled through the country. The common soldiers were allowed to sell their horses; they were obliged to deliver up their arms,

but it was ordained that they were to receive the full value for them, as it should be fixed by two officers of Lord Glencairn's and two of General Monk's. All which particulars were punctually performed by the General. Two long tables were placed upon the green below the castle, at which all the men received their passes, and the common soldiers the money for their arms. This happened upon the 4th day of September, 1654. The Earl of Glencairn that same night crossed the water, and came to his own house of Finlayston.

DUNTULM CASTLE AND ITS VICTIM.

In the early history of the Highlands the clan Macdonald holds by far the most prominent position, both as regards numbers and extent of territory.

At different periods during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries they held possession of, or exercised authority over, the whole of the North West Islands, as well as the Sudereys—the name by which the whole Hebrides were then called—besides many places on the mainland, particularly in Argyleshire, whence they took their secondary title of Thanes of Argyle. From the Lewis in the north to the Isle of Man in the south they ruled supreme at one time or other. They did not in those days own subjection to the king of Scotland, but, as Lords of the Isles, and representatives of the ancient Earls of Ross actually entered into treaties and alliances with the English and other foreign Courts on the footing of independent Princes.

It can easily be understood how, owing to their great numbers and the scattered and detached character of their possessions, disputes and divisions were rife amongst them, often quarreling and engaging in petty wars on their own account when not actively employed in fighting the battles of their superior, the Lord of the Isles.

On the death of one of the chiefs, a dispute arose among his followers as to his successor, there being two claimants to the honour—one the son of the late chief, who was supported by the majority of the clansmen on that ground, but as his character and antecedents had made him very unpopular, being of an avaricious, cruel, and treacherous disposition, a good many of the clan espoused the claims of his cousin, a brave, outspoken,

gallant young man, who had already proved himself a good soldier and a wise politician.

Finding themselves in a minority, the cousin and his adherents retired to Uist, whose inhabitants were favourable to them, for the purpose of concerting with each other, and organising a scheme for obtaining possession of the Isle of Skye and the Castle of Duntulm.

There was enmity, deep and deadly, between the two cousins but their hatred had a longer and deeper root than the contest for supremacy now raging between them—they were rivals in love as well as in war.

The hoary Castle of Duntulm held a lovely prize, which both the men coveted to call his own. Margaret was an orphan, a ward of the late chief. Beautiful, amiable, and accomplished, in addition to being an heiress, she was the admiration of all the eligible young men for miles round; and often had her hand been sought by the neighbouring chiefs. By the terms of her father's will, however, she was to remain a ward at Duntulm until she became of age, when two courses were open to her choice—either to marry the young Lord of the Isles, or take the veil. The fair Margaret was a lively, merry girl, fond of gaiety and society, and the thought of being immured in a convent was most distasteful to her; at the same time, she had conceived a great dislike to her destined husband.

Cupid, that blind and fickle god, had indeed shot one of his random arrows, which had deeply pierced fair Margaret's breast; but it was the cousin instead of the chief to whom her heart owned allegiance.

The knowledge of being loved by the object of his adoration spurred this youth on in the slippery paths of ambition, for, as the fond pair of lovers argued, if he could attain to the chiefship, then the letter of her father's will would be kept, if not the spirit.

It was no easy task for her admirer to leave his betrothed behind him when he set sail for Uist, but there was no help for it. After a few weeks had passed in that island, he determined to risk a stolen visit to his beloved. Choosing a favourable night, and, with only one attendant, he set sail for Skye. Landing at some distance from the stronghold, he left the boat in

charge of his companion and carefully made his way to the castle. Stealthily he moved forward; warily he picked his footsteps, keeping well in the shadow of the castle walls, for well he knew his life was not worth a moment's purchase were he discovered by its lord; yet he risked all for one look, one word of his dearest Margaret. His well-known signal was heard with delight; and with the quickness of a woman's wit a plan was formed to enable her to meet her admirer, whom she lovingly chided for running such danger for her sake.

After the first few joyful moments at thus meeting once more was over, her lover spoke seriously of their future movements, and confided to her a scheme he had been concocting to surprise the castle and make himself master of the Island. It was arranged that Margaret should visit a neighbouring convent, the lady superior of which was a relative of her own, and thus be out of danger when he attacked the castle. "My plan is,' continued he, speaking with earnestness and determination, "My plan is to cross the sea with all my men at night, land quietly, and immediately begin to build up with stones every means of exit from the castle, and then dig under the foundation until it is so undermined that it will fall by itself, burying beneath its crumbling walls our enemy and his principal followers. This will strike such a panic into the rest of the clan that, I have no doubt we shall easily subdue them. But now, dearest, I must tear myself away, or I shall be discovered; haste back to thy chamber, I will wait till I see the light at your window—I shall then know you are safe."

With loving words and lingering caresses, which seemed to say

> Parting is such sweet sorrow
> That I could say good night till it be morrow.

the lovers at length separated, full of hope of a speedy and happy re-union, alas! never to be realized. So absorbed were they in their conversation that they did not observe the crouching figure of one of the chief's retainers dodging their footsteps, and listening with bated breath to all that was spoken at their secret tryst.

Nor did anything occur at the castle to excite Margaret's suspicions of discovery. She was allowed to pay her proposed visit to the convent unopposed, where she waited with ill-con

cealed impatience the looked-for news of the attack on the castle.

The night fixed upon arrived—a stormy, gusty night, the thick drifting clouds obscuring the light of the moon, the dark lowering sky fitfully illumined by livid streaks of lightning, while the sound of the distant thunder re-echoed from the weather-beaten rocks.

Margaret's lover and his men embarked in spite of the threatening state of the weather, for, he argued, the more tempestuous the night, the better his chance of taking the castle by surprise, so he and his willing comrades battled manfully with the wind and waves, and at length reached the rocky coast of Skye. As their boats grated on the shingly beach, each man sprang out quietly, and without a word being spoken took his place in the ranks, freed his right arm from the folds of his plaid, drew his claymore, and stood waiting the signal to advance.

"Now, my friends, forward," said their leader, as the last man took his place, "follow me."

They advanced swiftly and noiselessly for about five hundred yards, when the front rank paused in dismayed astonishment, for a flash of lightning had revealed a momentary glimpse of what appeared to be a long dark wall between them and the castle. "What is this, a dyke!" exclaimed the leader in accents of surprise, "why, there was never a dyke here." Again the electric fluid illumined the landscape with a vivid glare; again the invaders saw the dyke, but they saw it moving and advancing towards them; then the truth burst like a thunderbolt upon the reckless youth and his party. "'Tis the Macdonalds—the Macdonalds are upon us!" cried the bewildered men; but above all rang out the clear loud voice of their commander. "Steady, forward, did we not come to meet the Macdonald's, why do you hesitate then? Forward, my friends." Recovering from their temporary panic, the courageous invaders rushed forward to meet the foe, and also to meet their fate. The Macdonalds came in overwhelming numbers, and after a short but determined fight, the would-be chief found himself a prisoner, with only three alive, who were made prisoners along with him, out of all his brave band.

The grey light of early dawn was struggling with the darkness of departing night as he and his companions in misery were marched under the frowning portals of gloomy Duntulm; and

before the first rosy gleams of the rising sun had appeared, the bodies of his three friends were hanging on the traitors' gibbet in front of the castle, while he was ushered into the presence of his enraged cousin, who received him with mock courtesy, thanked him with a sneer for the honour he had paid him by coming to visit the castle with such a large retinue; and with sham apologies for such poor accommodation, conducted him to the top of the highest turret of the building, and, showing him into an apartment, said, pointing to the table on which was a piece of salt beef, a loaf of bread, and a large jug, "There is your dinner, which I trust you will enjoy; I will now leave you to take a long repose after your late exertions."

The youth bore all these gibes and sneers in silence, and, as the door closed behind his vindictive kinsman, he threw himself on the floor and gave way to the gloomy forebodings induced by his melancholy situation. After a while, he began to speculate on what his fate was to be, and why his life had been spared. Then, in spite of his despondency, he began to feel hungry, and, going to the table, made a hearty meal. "Well," he soliloquized, "they don't mean to starve me at anyrate." The beef being very salt, he soon became thirsty, and reached out his hand to take hold of the big stone jug. What means that sudden start? why does he gaze upon the jug with such despairing looks? Why does he groan so heavily?—the jug was empty! not a drop of water to quench his raging thirst! This, then, was the cruel fate reserved for him. Overpowered with the dreadful discovery, he sat stunned and motionless, but, hark! some one approached the door; he heard voices, perhaps, after all, it was an oversight. The hope, faint as it was, inspired him with fresh vigour, and springing up, he called loudly to those he heard outside the door. No response was given to his repeated entreaties for a drink of water; no response, yet he plainly heard men's voices speaking to each other, and a strange inexplicable noise that he could not at first comprehend, but as it went on he understood it too well. 'Twas the noise of masons building up the door of his prison, even as he had contemplated building up the doors of the castle, had he been the victor instead of the vanquished.

Now, indeed, he began to feel there was no hope for him—that he was doomed to die one of the most painful and agonising

deaths that his enemy's relentless cruelty could suggest—death from thirst made more intense by the salt beef which the cravings of hunger compelled him to devour.

Let us draw a veil over his sufferings. No pen, however graphic, can describe his lingering agonies. Many years after, when the turret was again opened, a skeleton was found grasping in its fleshless hands, part of a stone water jug, the other part of which had been ground to powder between the teeth of the poor thirst-maddened victim of Duntulm.

Margaret waited at the convent for the news that came all too quickly. She heard of her lover's defeat, and that he was a prisoner in the hands of the cruel Lord of Duntulm—it was enough. She sought refuge in the cloisters; her loving heart broke under its weight of sorrow, and, in spite of the care and attention of the kind sisters, their tender patient pined away, and in a few short months the lovely but unfortunate Margaret was laid to rest in the peaceful cemetery of the convent.

LAZY ARCHIE FRASER.

In the extensive district known as the Aird, bordering on the river Beauly, and in the midst of the wild, yet romantic scenery where

> The whelming torrents roar
> Rude rushing down the excavated deep

form the beautiful and romantic Falls of Kilmorack, there lived many years ago a man named Archibald Fraser, better known among his neighbours as Lazy Archie. He was somewhat of a character, and was regarded by his neighbours as a foolish, good-tempered fellow, not quite so devoid of intellect as to be a *natural*, yet not altogether so bright as his fellows. Some people, indeed, were ill-natured enough to hint that Archie's indolent, sleepy manner arose more from laziness than from any lack of brains, However this may have been, he certainly got through life without taking his full share of its labours. He was a strong, able, good-looking man, possessed of a fund of quiet humour which made him a general favourite in spite of his slothful habits. He would so amuse his companions with his dry jokes and quaint sayings that they would be oblivious at the time to the fact that Archie was making them do his share of the work in addition to their own.

Many stories are told of his ingenuity in shirking labour. Rod-fishing is an occupation that does not require any extreme exertion; but even this was too hard work for Archie, though, as it was absolutely necessary that he should provide food for his young family in some way, he found fishing in the well-stocked waters of the Beauly—where, at the time salmon were so plentiful that, in parts of the river not agitated by the rush of the water over its numerous natural cascades, they could be seen

sporting in myriads—an easier way of doing so than any other. His *modus operandi* was curious:—He had a number of tame ducks which he had trained to fish. He baited his lines and fastened them to the legs of the ducks, which he drove into the middle of the river, while he comfortably reclined on the grass. In a little, he would entice them back, and, as they landed, would unfasten the lines, and take possession of the fish hooked in this novel manner.

On one occasion his indolence nearly cost him his life. He was employed with a number of others making preparations for the funeral of Lord Lovat of that day, who was buried at midnight in the family vault. Getting tired, as usual, of the work, Archie looked about for a chance of shirking, and conceived the happy idea of going into the open vault to take a quiet rest, rightly conjecturing that it was the last place in which his comrades would think of looking for him. Archie made himself comfortable in the darkest corner of the spacious tomb, quite undisturbed by the gloomy associations of his surroundings. Whether the solemn stillness of the place, or the effects of the whisky with which all the labourers had been liberally supplied, was to blame, Archie had only been sitting quietly for a few minutes before his head drooped, his eyes closed, and in five minutes he was sound asleep. Hour after hour passed by, and still he slept. The funeral cortege arrived, the solemn service was read, the remains of the deceased Lovat was laid in the vault, and the crowd dispersed, yet still Archie slept on. His disappearance caused no surprise among his companions, who supposed that he had, as usual, got tired and skulked home; but when, next day, his wife informed them that he had not returned they began to think some accident had befallen him. Search was made all round the neighbourhood; but as no one ever dreamt of going near the vault, the search was of course ineffectual.

For three days and three nights was the unsuccessful search kept up, and fears were entertained that poor Archie would never be seen again in the flesh, when quite unexpectedly his retreat was discovered on the vault being opened to enable workmen to complete some arrangements inside.

One can fancy the consternation of the men on seeing, as they opened the door, the gaunt, half-famished Archie rush out

with a terrific yell, his face deathly pale, with hollow cheeks and sunken eyes. The workmen fled panic-stricken, not recognising Archie in the wild figure which sprung frantically after them. Thus they all ran to the nearest house, where, the inmates, not being so startled as the men, were collected enough to recognise him as he sank on a seat, half-fainting from exhaustion. The scare over, Archie was attended to, and having partaken of a hearty meal, which he swallowed as ravenously as a hungry wolf, he was enabled to go home and comfort his sorrowful wife and children.

Archie's exploit made a great talk in the district, and for a time he was quite the lion of the place, receiving a good deal of sympathy and assistance. He found it so very much more pleasant as well as profitable to relate his wonderful adventure to deeply interested hearers and live on the fat of the land for the kindly simple-minded country folk seemed to think that they could never feed him enough to make up for his enforced three days' fast, that he grew lazier and more disinclined for steady work every day. Thus time passed on, with the result that when the excitement had blown over, and Archie had subsided into his original insignificance, his family were poorer and worse fed than ever.

But some little time after this, his neighbours observed a difference both in his own appearance as well as in that of his wife and children. They grew plump and fat, and a most savoury smell of cooking was frequently noticed issuing from their cottage as though they fared sumptuously every day, and yet to all appearance they were as poor as ever. Archie was as lazy, his croft as illtended and unproductive, and his children as ragged as usual. It was a puzzle which the good folks of the place set themselves determinedly to find out. Occasionally one or other of them would drop in at Archie's cottage, as if by accident, just at dinner time, and would of course be asked to take a share of what was going. On expressing their admiration of the extra savoury quality of the broth, and enquiring of what it was composed, Archie would lightly turn them off by saying it was just a rabbit he had snared, or one of his wife's hens which had got its leg broken; but these excuses only served to excite the curiosity of the neighbours to a higher pitch, for well they

knew that no snared rabbit nor broken-legged hen could produce such rich and delicious broth. One honest wife, more ingenious than the rest, took the precaution secretly to examine the refuse thrown out of Archie's cottage, when she discovered not only the bones of hens, but of geese and turkeys, in profusion, and even those of a lamb or kid. Her report of what she had discovered, confirmed and strengthened the suspicions which already existed that all these dainties were not honestly come by.

Archie was now interviewed by some of his acquaintances, and taxed with theft. This accusation he indignantly repudiated ; and, telling them to mind their own business, he stubbornly refused to gratify their curiosity as to the source from which he drew his supply of rich dainties.

Baffled, yet fairly convinced that some underhand work was going on, the neighbours talked more than ever. The rumour spread, losing nothing by repetition, until it reached the ears of the civil authorities, and one unlucky day poor Archie was apprehended, and taken before the nearest Justice of the Peace on a charge of stealing. There were plenty of witnesses to prove his possession of articles of food far beyond his power to procure honestly. He was called upon for his defence, and to the surprise of all present he persisted in saying that he had come honestly by everything and, moreover, that he had worked hard for them. With an air of injured innocence he complained of the unkindness of his neighbours in bringing such charges against him, and defied them to prove that they had lost any of the articles they had accused him of stealing. The worthy Magistrate was puzzled. It was a peculiar case. Here was a man found in the daily consumption of food totally out of his power to buy, yet there was no one in the district who complained of being robbed ; further, it was proved that Archie was never absent long enough from home to enable him to steal these things from any distance, and as he firmly maintained his innocence, there was no option but to order his discharge.

After this Archie found his life anything but agreeable. All his acquaintances looked askance at him. They believed him to be a common, paltry thief, and looked upon him with undisguised contempt ; for, with the strange moral obliquity peculiar to the Highlanders of that period, while they regarded as a hero the

man who "lifted" a score of cattle, they looked with infinite disdain on the humble thief who rifled hen-roosts and sheep-pens.

It was a hard time for Archie and his family. No one would employ him even if he was ever so anxious to secure employment, and had it not been for his mysterious inexhaustible larder he and his family must have starved. His former associates shunned him, and his accusers grew bolder and more inveterate every day. Having failed to prove him a thief, and yet wishing to account for his strange supply of provisions, the good folks began to whisper and hint at witchcraft as being at the bottom of the mystery. This idea being broached rapidly gained force, until at last the minister was spoken to and asked to investigate the scandal. Archie was summoned before the Presbytery to answer the dreadful charge of being leagued with the Evil One. He was now in a sad plight. Though able to withstand the terrors of the law, he shrank from the (to him) far more terrible power of the Church, and reluctantly promised to explain the source from whence he drew his plentiful supplies. He then proceeded, followed by the whole crowd of elders, deacons, and people, to the foot of a steep, high rock near his house, and pointing up to a certain place near the top, he exclaimed, "There is my secret; in that cleft there is an eagle's nest. I discovered it by accident, and climbed up to try for eggs. I found they were hatched, but I saw that the parent bird was away procuring food for her young. A fine turkey, which she had just brought, was lying in the nest, and while she was absent I secured it, and it made us a splendid dinner. The idea then occurred to me, why should I not go to the same place again and obtain food? I did so, carefully watching when the old bird was absent on her foraging excursions. Thus I obtained a constant supply of food of the best quality, although I had to climb that steep and rugged rock to get it; so it is quite true that I had to work hard for it."

The explanation satisfied everyone. Archie had vindicated his character as an honest man, and he was at once reinstated in the good opinion of his neighbours. But, alas! "Othello's occupation's gone!" for whether the eagle grew tired of providing food from which she got no benefit, whether she was frightened at her nest being discovered, or from some other

reason, certain it is that she and her brood took a moonlight flitting; and the next time Archie made his perilous ascent he found the eyrie desolate and empty. Thus he had to fall back upon his former plain and scanty fare, for which he had to work like his neighbours. He again became the butt of his comrades' homely, good-natured ridicule. Yet he often was heard to say that he was far happier so than when he enjoyed plenty at the expense of the eagle and the ill-will of his neighbours.

THE MASSACRE OF EIGG.

In the present enlightened age it is difficult to realize the state of society which produced the wholesale massacres of men, women, and children, which too often sully the page of Highland history and cast a foul blot on the escutcheon of some of the bravest clans. These harrowing scenes, which make one's blood run cold even to read about, were the outcome and often the climax of old and deadly feuds between rival clans, causing further acts of aggression and retaliation, of bitter hatred and cruel revenge.

One of these feuds had long raged between the Macleods and Macdonalds, and in revenge for some act of aggression by the Macleods of Waternish, the Macdonalds of North Uist determined to make a sudden raid and inflict signal punishment upon them. They waited for an opportunity of attacking unawares, and at length succeeded.

It was a calm, peaceful Sabbath morning, when according to the custom of the day, the inhabitants of Waternish were assembled at sunrise in the church of Trumpan for early service. No thought of treachery disturbed the congregation, whose attention was taken up in listening to the instructive words which issued from the lips of the venerable priest, when suddenly there rang through the still morning air, without a note of warning, the fierce cries of the hated Macdonalds as they surrounded the sacred edifice. For a moment the doomed congregation stood spell-bound in silent horror; the next, the men dashed to the door only to find it stoutly defended by hordes of exultant Macdonalds, while others clambered on to the thatch roof and set it on fire. The scene which followed baffles description. The terrified shrieks of children and the wailing cries of panic-stricken women mingled with the despairing shouts of desperate men as they threw themselves against the door to

force their way out. In a few moments the burning thatch filled the church with suffocating smoke ; the timbers caught fire, while the ill-fated worshippers suffered all the untold agonies of a terrible and cruel death. When the door caught fire, a few of the strongest fought their way to the threshold, only to be hacked to pieces by the swords of the Macdonalds. In one short hour the dreadful tragedy was over. Nothing was left but the smouldering heap of half-burned timbers and a number of scorched and mangled bodies. Not a soul managed to escape from the burning building except one poor woman who in some miraculous manner succeeded in forcing her way through the fiery doorway only to be struck down by a savage cut from the claymore of a Macdonald which cut off one of her breasts. She fell senseless and was left for dead, but afterwards rallied, and although so dreadfully wounded she was able to crawl a distance of two miles before she expired in the open air through loss of blood.

A speedy retribution, however, overtook the actors in this dastardly outrage. The smoke and flames of the burning church gave an immediate alarm to the neighbouring districts, and in a very short time the native Macleods gathered from all directions and pursued the Macdonalds, who hastened back to their galleys, only to find them left high and dry by the receding tide. Their retreat being thus cut off, they turned back to meet the advancing Macleods, and in order to do so to better advantage they ranged themselves against a high loosely built wall, raised above the beach to shelter the crops. The Macleods no sooner observed this manœuvre than they proceeded to circumvent it. Joining in line, they made a sudden rush against the opposite side of the wall with such impetus that the dyke toppled over and overwhelmed the Macdonalds in its ruins, when every man of them was overpowered and killed either by the falling stones or by the swords of their enemies, who afterwards buried their bodies beneath the debris. The place was named, and is still known by "Milleadh garaidh," which means "The destruction of the wall."

Not long after this, in March, 1577, three young men of the clan Macleod, sailing from Mull to Dunvegan, landed at the Island of Eigg, where, seeing some girls working in a field, they grossly insulted them. The women's screams soon brought

some of the men to their assistance. They quickly seized the Macleods, securely bound them hand and foot, placed them in their own boat, and then set it adrift. Fortunately for the trio, the tide and current carried them to the entrance of Dunvegan Loch, where they were seen and rescued by Ian Dubh Macleod of Minginish, who was returning from Orkney in his galley. Ian Dubh was noted for his cruel disposition. He had formerly assassinated his chief Donald Macleod, X. of Harris and Dunvegan, and several others of his own most intimate and nearest relatives, and at this time, in the absence of Norman, the legal heir, he had placed himself at the head of the clan, and took possession of Dunvegan Castle. Hearing his clansmen's story, the enraged usurper determined to sail immediately for Eigg to avenge the insult to his clansmen by punishing the perpetrators.

The people of Eigg, expecting that the Macleods would return to retaliate, kept a sharp look-out, and as soon as Ian Dubh's galley was seen approaching, the alarm was given, when all the inhabitants of the island, men, women, and children, to the number of three hundred and ninety-five, under the leadership of Angus, fourth son of John Moydertach of Clanranald, gathered together, and took refuge in a large cave on the sea shore. The Macleods landed, and dispersed in search of the Macdonalds, but not a soul could they find. The island appeared deserted, and conjecturing that their intended victims had escaped to the mainland, the disappointed invaders began to re-embark without effecting their purpose, when, unfortunately, one of the Macdonalds, anxious to find out the movements of the enemy, emerged from the place of his concealment to reconnoitre. His solitary figure against the sky-line at once attracted the notice of the Macleods, who immediately gave chase. They, however, soon lost sight of him, but his footsteps were plainly visible on the snow-covered ground. These tracks were followed, and the cave and its inmates in this way easily discovered. Ian Dubh at once peremptorily demanded that the men who had ill-treated his clansmen should be immediately given up to him, in which case he promised not to molest the rest of the inhabitants. The Macdonalds, all more or less related to each other, refused to give up any of their kinsmen to certain death. This roused the wrath

of the cruel Ian Dubh higher still and he swore to be revenged on every one—man woman and child—on the island. But even yet the Macdonalds did not despair, for the entrance to the cave was so low and narrow that only one person could enter at a time, and then only on his hands and knees, so that it appeared easy for those inside to defend themselves; but Macleod, copying Macdonald's cruel conduct at Trumpan, sent out his men to gather material for a fire, with which on their return he closed up the entrance to the cave.

But before executing his fiendish purpose, learning that a lady of higher rank, the betrothed of their captain, Angus Moydertach of Clanranald, who then owned the island, was in the cave, and fearing the vengeance of her friends, he requested her to come forth, promising to save her life. This offer she declined unless she was allowed to bring young Clanranald along with her. The revengeful Ian Dubh would not listen to this for a moment, for in addition to the position of Angus as leader of the people, Macleod had a long-standing personal grudge of his own to settle with him; but being still concerned at the risk which he would run by injuring the lady, he offered to let her bring out along with her as many clansmen as she had fingers on both hands, always excepting her betrothed, Angus Moydertach.

The distressed woman was now in a terrible dilemma. One moment the instinct of self preservation would predominate, then the thought of the doom which awaited her gallant lover, and the desert which life would henceforth be without him, made her waver in her purpose. Anon the wistful looks of her distressed clansmen as they gathered round her, with a ray of hope dawning on their haggard faces, swayed her resolution, but not a word did they utter, although the lives of no less than ten hung on her decision. Time, however, pressed. It was all the work of a few minutes. She had to make her choice between life and death in a shorter time than it has taken to tell it. For a moment she stood irresolute, looking at the eager countenances of her fellow prisoners, then as her eyes fell on her lover, who stood erect and calm, awaiting his doom with dignified mien, her heart sank within her. She could not, she would not leave him to face such a terrible death alone, and in spite of his

urgent entreaties to save herself, she firmly refused to accept life on such terms, threw herself into his arms, and vowed that they should die together.

Annoyed at her obstinacy Ian Dubh at once gave orders to fire the piled up straw and brushwood. The smoke soon filled the cave and suffocated its helpless inmates ; and thus was consummated by the Macleods what is universally characterised as the most cold-blooded and atrocious crime recorded in Highland history.

Skene prints a paper in the Appendix to his third volume of *Celtic Scotland*, by which the long disputed date of this massacre is now positively fixed. The document is entitled a "Description of the Isles of Scotland," and Dr Skene proves that it must have been written between 1577 and 1595. The former year is mentioned in the paper itself as the date of the massacre of Eigg, while John Stewart of Appin, who died in 1595, is mentioned as having been alive when the description was written. The document, Dr Skene says, "has all the appearance of an official report, and was probably intended for the use of James the Sixth, who was then preparing to attempt the improvement of the Isles, and increase the royal revenue from them." This sufficiently fixes the date of both the document and the massacre of the Macdonalds of Eigg, to which he refers in the following terms (translated into modern English) :—

"Eigg is an isle very fertile and commodious for all kinds of bestial and corn, specially oats, for after every boll of oats sown in the same any year will grow 10 or 12 bolls again. It is 30 merk land, and it pertains to the Clan Ranald, and will raise 60 men to the wars. It is five miles long and three miles broad. There are many caves under the earth in this isle, which the country folk use as strongholds, hiding themselves and their gear therein ; whereupon it happened that in March, anno 1577, war and enmity between the said Clan Ranald and Macleod of Harris, the people, with one called Angus John Moydertach their captain, fled to one of the said caves, taking with them their wives, bairns and gear, whereof Macleod of Harris being

advertised, landed with one great army in the said isle, and came to the cave and put fire thereto and smothered the whole people therein to the number of 395 persons, men, wives and bairns.

Professor Jameson, who visited the scene of the massacre, speaks of the gloomy sensations caused by standing on the very spot of such a fearful crime, the full horror of which was forcibly brought home to him by seeing the light of his torch reflected from the grinning skulls and whitening bones of the unhappy Macdonalds which lay strewn about in all directions. Time, the great magician, is however slowly but surely obliterating the traces of this memorial of the unbridled passions and fierce cruelties of a byegone age. Still the place will always possess a sad fascination for those who are interested in Highland history.

A writer who visited the historic Cave in 1885 says—"The entrance to the cave, which is within a few yards of high-water mark, is a small opening in the face of a large grey rock, surrounded with beautiful grasses and moss. A little stream of water trickles down the sides of the opening from above, and forms a pool just before it. Creeping along the narrow passage, some twelve feet in length, upon our hands and knees, and lighting the candles we had brought with us, we found ourselves in the interior of the cavern. The floor was covered with stones and fragments of rock, of all shapes and sizes, rendering walking somewhat difficult. The air was humid and earthy, and the darkness so thick that the light of the candles served only to make it more preceptible. The only sound to be heard, save our own footsteps and voices, was the intermittent drip of the water which here and there fell from the roof. A feeling of awe crept over me as I stood in the middle of the great Cave, and thought of the terrible atrocity which had been committed within it. The very ground beneath my feet was partially formed of the ashes of the dead; those walls, now dark and silent, had echoed the despairing shrieks of the doomed Macdonalds, and reflected the red glare of the fire from the entrance. Even yet the bones of the unfortunate victims are to be found in the Cave, decayed and blackened with age. Sir Walter Scott is said to have carried away a skull, much to the horror of his

sailors. For many days after leaving Eigg his vessel was detained by calms—a judgment, the seamen averred, for Sir Walter's sacrilegious act. I myself committed similar sacrilege in a small way, for I found and carried away three small bones. A doctor, to whom I have since shown them, at once pronounced them to be human, one being a finger, and another a toe-bone, both of which, the doctor said, must have belonged to a very large man; the third is a child's rib. The whole length of the Cave is said to be 213 feet, the average breadth being about fourteen. Our voices, when raised above a whisper, sounded weird and unnatural, and the black walls seemed to re-echo angrily the noise made by the intruders into the vast hecatomb. I was glad to emerge once more into the open air and the light of day."*

The Macleods of Harris and Dunvegan were in those days one and the same. They have since sold, not only the whole of the island of Harris, but a considerable portion of the ancient possessions of the family in the Isle of Skye.

* *Yachting and Electioneering in the Hebrides.* By Hector Rose Mackenzie. (For Private Circulation.) Inverness: A. & W. Mackenzie, 1887.

THE BRIDE OF ACHALUACHRACH.

It was the betrothal night of the tacksman of Achaluachrach. The ceremony was over, the party dispersed; he and his young bride were taking a moonlight stroll, talking of the happy future which lay before them. Achaluachrach was in high spirits, but his gentle companion was quiet, subdued—almost sad. Her lover rallied her on the depression she evidently laboured under, and laughingly asked if she had already repented her bargain.

"No," replied the girl, as she raised her tearful eyes to her lover's face, and clung closer to his side, "No, I do not repent; but I fear much that our marriage will never take place. I have had fearful dreams lately and this evening when we were contracted, I seemed to see a white cloud coming between us, and, as I looked, it took the shape of a shroud, and since we came out, twice have I heard the croak of the raven. Ah! listen, there it is again!" she cried, trembling violently, as the ill-omened bird flew past them.

Achaluachrach did his best to drive these gloomy fancies from the mind of his beloved, laughed at her fears, called her a silly, nervous lassie, and continued, "you must cheer up, and get rid of these foolish fancies, for I shall not be able to see you for the next day or two, as I start at daybreak to-morrow with a few chosen lads, to make a raid on old Rose of Kilravock, in Nairnshire, whose fine fat cattle will furnish a grand marriage feast for us."

"Oh! Duncan," ejaculated the trembling girl earnestly, "don't go. There will be plenty for our marriage without you running this risk. My mind sadly misgives me; you will either be killed or wounded. For my sake give up this scheme. and stay at home."

But all her entreaties were in vain; her lover was not to be lightly turned from his purpose. He told her not to fear, for there was no danger. Kilravock was old, frail, and lame, and would not be likely to follow them.

The lovers took an affectionate farewell of each other, as they were in sight of the bride's home, which lay on the other side of a burn, spanned by a simple rude bridge, formed of felled trees thrown across. She had just reached the middle of this rustic structure when Achaluachrach turned back, sprang lightly on the bridge to catch another embrace, and whisper a last loving word. He was gone again before his bride had time to speak; but when she recollected where she was standing, she wrung her hands, and cried aloud, "Alas! alas! my fears will be too true, for 'those who part on a bridge never meet again'. Oh, why did he turn back!" said the sobbing girl as she hurried home in deep distress.

The next day Achaluachrach and his friends made the intended raid on Kilravock, secured a rich *creach*, and started homeward in triumph. They reached Strathdearn without molestation, and rested for the night at a place called Broclach, where there was good pasturage for the tired cattle. The reivers, feeling quite secure, determined to enjoy themselves, so, taking possession of a bothy, they killed one of the primest bullocks, and made a grand feast. So confident were they, that they neglected to take the usual precautions against a surprise, and merely placed a youth to watch outside and to keep the cattle from straying, while all the rest ate, drank, and sang inside the hut. They, however, "reckoned without their host," for Kilravock, though old and lame, was too high-spirited to be thus harried with impunity, and, hastily gathering his men, he followed in pursuit. On his way he was joined by men from the districts through which he passed, so that by the time he caught sight of his stolen cattle he found himself at the head of a numerous and determined band, among whom was a noted character, John MacAndrew of Dalnahaitnich, celebrated for his skill with the bow and arrow. He was a very small man, not more than five feet high, and, as he had no beard, looked more like a boy than a man of mature years. He was, however, very strong, courageous, and quick-witted, and much liked by his neighbours, who

familiarly called him *Ian Beag MacAnndra.*

The lad who had to watch the cattle was tired with his long day's travelling, and soon fell sound asleep. Thus, Kilravock and his party were able, favoured by the darkness, to creep up and surround the bothy, a shower of arrows being the first intimation the reivers had of being pursued. Their first impulse was to rush to the door ; but as each showed himself he was struck down. Seeing they could not get out, they made the best stand they could by shooting their arrows at the besiegers ; but here again they were at a disadvantage, for the night being dark they could not sufficiently distinguish their opponents to take aim, while the light inside the bothy allowed Kilravock's men to see the reivers plainly.

Ian Beag soon picked out Achaluachrach from the superior style of his dress as the leader, and, taking aim, he let fly an arrow with such precision that it passed through his body, and pinned him to the wall, killing him instantaneously. On seeing this fresh proof of the little man's skill, a comrade cried out triumphantly, "Dia is buaidh leat Ian MhicAnndra, 'tha thamh an Dalnahaitnich"—God and victory be with you, John MacAndrew, who dwells in Dalnahaitnich. Annoyed at thus having his name and place of abode made known to the enemy, who, he knew well, would try to be revenged upon him, MacAndrew retaliated by screaming out in his shrill voice—"Mile mollachd air do theanga Ian Chaim Choilachaidh"—A thousand curses on your tongue, Gleyed John of Kyllachy.

While the death of Achaluachrach disheartened his followers, it roused Kilravock's men to renewed exertion, so that not a single man in the bothy escaped. When all were dead, the besiegers set fire to the frail building, which in a few minutes formed a funeral pile over the slain. The only one that escaped was the youth who had proved such a faithless sentinel. Favoured by the darkness of the night, he hid himself, witnessed the sad affray, heard all that was said, and then made his escape to carry the ill news to the sorrowing bride and her friends.

It is not known whether "Gleyed John of Kyllachy" was visited with any retaliation for the share he had taken in this night's work ; but Ian Beag MacAnndra became a marked man.

He was sharp enough to suspect that, through the ill-advised praise of his indiscreet companion, his name would become known to the friends of the slain and that he would be exposed to the full measure of their revenge ; he accordingly took certain measures for his personal safety.

Outside his house, near the door, stood a very large fir tree, amid the top branches of which he constructed a hiding-place to which he carried a good store of arrows. To this refuge he repaired every night to prevent surprise. During the day he trusted to his natural vigilance and wits to keep out of danger. One day when some distance from his house, he was overtaken by a party of men whom he at once perceived to be strangers, and guessed what their errand was. In this he was fully confirmed when they asked if he knew John MacAndrew of Dalnahaitnich. Answering in the affirmative, and saying that he was MacAndrew's herd, they asked him to guide them to his master's house, and that they would pay him for his trouble. To this Ian agreed without hesitation, and pocketing the coin, led the way to his own house. Reaching the door he called out to his wife, telling her that some strangers wanted to see the master, and asking if he was within. The guidwife took her cue at once, and, without showing any signs of alarm, said her husband was not just then in the house, but would probably soon be, at the same time asking the strangers to come in and rest. But to gain time, and at the same time enable her husband to carry out some scheme of escape, she bustled about setting provisions before the srrangers, to which they did ample justice. While this was going on, Ian Beag stood thoughtfully by the fire with his trusty bow in his hand ; and while turning over in his mind what course to pursue, he kept, as if unconsciously, bending the large bow, nearly as big as himself, and apparently far beyond his physical powers. His wife glanced anxiously at him, and fearing the bending of the bow might be observed by the strangers, and that their suspicions might be excited, she stepped quickly up to him and gave him a sounding box on the ear, telling him in angry tones not to idle there, but to go at once and look for his master. Ian, thus rudely roused from his reverie, sneaked out of the house with crestfallen air, still carrying the bow along with him. No sooner had he got out-

side than he climbed into his hiding-place in the tree, fitted an arrow to his bow, and called out that his master was coming. Hearing this, the strangers hurried to the door, and, as they emerged one by one, Ian shot them down with his unfailing arrows. Thus Achaluachrach's avengers shared his own tragic fate. His fair, unwedded bride was overwhelmed with grief at thus finding her worst fears so fatally realised. She was tenderly attached to her affianced husband and wept long and bitterly for the sad ending of a life which she had with so much pleasure looked forward to sharing, in mutual comfort and happiness. She never married, but fondly cherished the memory of the unfortunate Achaluachrach as long as she lived, and to relieve her overburdened heart she composed a pathetic Gaelic song, still one of the best known and most popular in the Highlands, in which she relates the dreadful incidents of the fray, bemoans her irreparable loss, and gives vent to her inconsolable and lasting grief.

THE RIVAL GALLEYS.

FEW tourists visit the Highlands without going to see the grand and romantic scenery of Gairloch. Its lofty mountains and lovely glens, coupled with the incomparable beauty of Loch Maree, make it one of the most attractive places in the kingdom. Though so peaceful now, Gairloch has had an eventful and stormy history in the past. At various periods of its early annals it was in possession of different clans. The original owners appear to have been Macbeaths, conquered and driven out by the Macleods of Lewis and Raasay, who in their turn held it until the end of the fifteenth century, when in consequence of the following tragic events it passed from their hands to a branch of the Mackenzies.

Allan "MacRuairidh"—Allan the son of Roderick—was the head of the Macleods of Gairloch at that date. He married as his first wife, the daughter of Alexander Mackenzie, VI. of Kintail, and sister to that renowned Gairloch warrior, Hector Roy. By this lady he had two sons. He married secondly a relative of his own, a daughter of Roderick Macleod of Lewis by whom he had one son. Two of Allan's brothers, who lived with their friends in the Lewis, resented his first marriage, for they bitterly hated the Mackenzies, and the fact of his having had two sons by his marriage with a lady of that clan angered them still more. They swore upon their dirks that no Mackenzie blood should flow in the veins of the future chief of the Gairloch Macleods, and to carry their oath into effect they resolved to murder both their brother Allan and his three sons in order that his estate should revert to themselves. Allan MacRuairidh was of a very different disposition to his blood-thirsty brothers. He lived peacefully with his family at the "Crannag," an insulated fortress built on a small island in Loch Tolly, traces of which still remain. The two unnatural

brothers sailed from Stornoway across the Minch to Gairloch and took up their quarters in an old wattled house surrounded by a ditch, called the "Tigh Dige," where they considered themselves secure from any sudden surprise. Next day they proceeded to Loch Tolly for the purpose of carrying out their cruel design. On their way, however, they learned that Allan was not then on the island, he having gone to fish on the river Ewe. Proceeding there, they discovered him peacefully sleeping on the bank, tired out by his struggles with the finny natives of the river, of which a number lay on the grass, their speckled skins shining in the sun by his side. One would have thought that the sight of their inoffensive and helpless brother would have turned the assassins from their fell purpose, but not so. Without even awakening him, they there and then without any ceremony "made him short by the head," as the old chronicle quaintly expresses it. Having thus disposed of the head of the family, they returned to the island, where they found their brother's wife and two of his sons—the third fortunately for him being absent at the time—and in the coolest manner told her of her husband's fate. In spite of her tears and struggles they then tore her boys from her knees and carried them to a small glen, and, at a place still called "Creag Bhadan an Aisc,' or the "Rock at the place of Burial," brutally stabbed the innocent children through the heart with their daggers. They then tore off their bloodstained shirts or tunics and carried them to the Tigh Dige as trophies of their success. These tunics, however, the heart-broken widow was soon after enabled to get possession of through the strategy of one of her husband's retainers, whom she at once sent off, with this fearful evidence of the crime, to the boys' grandfather, Mackenzie of Kintail, at Brahan Castle. The aged Baron was deeply affected when he heard the sad fate of his grandsons, but being so advanced in years, he left the duty of avenging them to his son Hector Roy, who immediately started for Edinburgh, carrying the bloodstained garments along with him as evidence of the atrocious crime, to report the murder to the King. His Majesty on hearing Hector Roy's terrible news was roused to great indignation and at once granted Hector a commission of fire and sword against the Macleods, and at the same time gave him their lands of

Gairloch by charter, dated 1494, holding direct from the Crown. The redoubted Hector was not long in executing his commission. The assassins were captured very soon after, and put to death with as little mercy as they had previously shown to their innocent victims, at a hollow situated between South Erradale and Point, almost opposite the Island of Raasay, where their graves are yet pointed out to the curious, quite fresh and green among the surrounding heather.

Although Hector Roy obtained a grant of the lands of Gairloch it was not at all quite so easy for him to get possession of it. The surviving relatives of the executed Macleods naturally objected to be thus summarily deprived of their family inheritance in that quarter, and they fought long and desperately to retain it. The descendants of Hector Roy obtained repeated renewals of the original charter from successive Sovereigns, but the Macleods despised such rights and would not yield, and for more than a century there was constant and sanguinary strife maintained between them and the Mackenzies for the upper hand in Gairloch.

In 1610 one of their many hotly-contested skirmishes was fought at Lochan-an-fheidh, above Glen Torridon, when the Mackenzies were led by Alastair Breac and the Macleods by John MacAllan Mhic Rory. Victory was again on the side of the Mackenzies. John MacAllan and eighteen of his followers were taken prisoners; a great many Macleods were killed, and those who escaped were driven out of the country and obliged to take refuge with their namesakes at Dunvegan. Shortly after this a large gathering was held at the Castle to celebrate Hogmanay—in those days a very important festival—and the chief of Dunvegan invited the Gairloch and Raasay Macleods to join their clansmen. Among the servants at the Castle was an old woman, Mor Bhàn, or Fair Sarah, usually employed carding wool. Being very old and naturally shrewd, she was believed to possess supernatural gifts, including the power of foreseeing future events. When the feasting was over and the guests became slightly elevated with the wine, a proposal was made to get Mor Bhàn from the kitchen to the banqueting hall to make sport for the company. Nothing loth, she came at once and began to amuse them with her quaint sayings

and quick-witted sallies, but after partaking of a glass or two she twitted the Gairloch Macleods with having been driven from their own country and obliged to take refuge in Skye. Observing them getting offended at her plain speech, she continued—"But prepare yourselves and start to-morrow for the mainland, sail in the black birlinn, and you will regain Gairloch. I shall be a witness of your success when you return." Whether she really believed that she possessed prophetic power, or merely wished to conciliate the ruffled feelings of her chief's guests, it is impossible to say, but true it is that the men believed in her and trusted her. Next morning they set sail in high spirits in the black birlinn and arrived at their destination in the evening at the head of the Gair-Loch. They were however afraid to disembark, for they knew that the famous Gairloch Macraes, noted for their skill as marksmen with the bow and arrow, lived near. They therefore made for the Fraoch Eilean, or Heather Isle, on the south side of the Loch, and anchored close to it, in a well-sheltered bay halfway between Shieldaig and Badachro, opposite Leac-na-Saighid. Here they decided to wait until morning, when they would land and walk round the head of the Loch towards the chief residence of the Mackenzies. But they reckoned without their host, for their movements had been keenly watched by the two Macraes, Domhnull Odhar Mac Ian Leith and his brother John, who, recognising the birlinn and knowing that the strangers came on no friendly errand, determined to oppose their landing. The brothers took up their position before daylight on a rock ever since known as Leac-na-Saighid, or the Ledge of the Arrows, within range of the birlinn in which the Macleods lay at anchor. Donald being of small stature, stood on the higher of two natural steps at the back of the rock, and John took the lower. Standing on these they were completely sheltered from and invisible to the enemy, while commanding a full view of them as they landed from their boat on the Heather Isle. As soon as day dawned the two Macraes directed their arrows with deadly effect towards the Macleods, a number of whom were killed before their comrades were aware of the direction from which the fatal messengers of death came. In the heat of the fight one of the Macleods climbed the mast of the birlinn with the view

of discovering the position of the enemy. Ian Odhar observing him, took aim at him when near the top of the mast, and killed him on the spot, whereupon Donald facetiously remarked —"John, you have sent a pin through his broth." The Macleods finding it hopeless to fight with an invisible foe hurried back to the birlinn, cut the rope that anchored her to the island, and turned her head seaward. By this time only two of their whole number were left alive. The news of the enemy's landing soon spread and a crowd of Mackenzies gathered for the fray, but when they arrived at the scene of action all that was left for them to do was to bury the slain. Pits were dug into which the dead bodies were thrown with scant ceremony and mounds of earth raised over them, traces of which are still visible. This was the last attempt of the Macleods to land in Gairloch, but there was a desperate sea-fight in the following year (1611) which finally settled the question of supremacy between the rival clans, and since which the Mackenzies have enjoyed undisturbed possession.

Murdoch Mackenzie, a younger son of Gairloch, became enamoured of the daughter of Donald Dubh MacRory, then male representative of the Macleods of Gairloch. Knowing full well that it would be fruitless to ask the lady's hand in marriage in consequence of the deadly feud which existed between the two families, he determined to carry her off by force, trusting that his love and devotion after marriage would compensate her for his rough wooing. Taking into his confidence his particular friend, Alexander Bayne of Tulloch, and choosing a few other doughty companions on whom he could depend, Murdoch provisioned a large galley with stores of wine and provender of all kinds, and with a light heart set sail for the Isle of Skye, where the object of his affections at that time resided. There was policy as well as love involved in the adventure, for the lady, failing issue by John Mac Allan, who at this time was a prisoner in the hands of the Mackenzies of Gairloch, was the heir of line of the Macleods, consequently by his proposed union with her, Murdoch would unite the two rival families, and the ancient rights of the Macleods would become vested in the Gairloch Mackenzies and a troublesome dispute would be settled for ever.

From the very first, the fates were unpropitious to Murdoch's enterprise, for, although the sky was cloudless and the sun shone brightly as they left Gairloch, in a few hours a violent storm arose which drove them to take shelter in the bay opposite Kirkton of Raasay, where the young laird, eldest son of Macgillechallum Garbh, at the time resided.

When young Raasay heard who was on board the galley at anchor in the bay, he immediately sought the assistance and advice of a relative of his own, Macgillechallum Mac Neill, who concocted a scheme which they at once set about putting into execution. Their idea was to visit Murdoch Mackenzie on board his vessel as professed friends, and by stratagem to overpower the crew and take Mackenzie prisoner, with the object of exchanging him for their relative John Mac Allan, who was still held a prisoner in Gairloch.

Acting on his friend's advice, and accompanied by him and twelve picked men, young Raasay proceeded in his boat to Mackenzie's galley, having left orders that all the men on the island should hold themselves ready to go to his assistance in small boats as soon as he should give them the signal.

Mackenzie, quite unsuspicious of evil, heartily welcomed his visitors, and being of a free and cheerful disposition, related the object of his expedition and asked them to drink to his success and to the health of his intended bride. Raasay and his companions accepted his hospitality and, with foul treachery in their hearts, sat down to eat and drink with him. The pleasant manner of the self-invited guests seems to have blinded Alexander Bayne as well as Mackenzie to their real intentions, for he also, like most of the others, joined in the wild revelry and feasting without stint or measure. Four of Mackenzie's friends, however, were wiser, and not feeling quite sure of the perfect disinterestedness of their visitors, abstained from indulging in the viands to the same extent as the others, but young Tulloch and the rest of Mackenzie's companions soon became so overpowered with drink that they retired below to sleep off the effects of the debauch. Mackenzie himself still kept his head and remained seated at the table between Raasay and his friend Mac Neill, drinking toast after toast until young Macgillechallum, perceiving that the

majority had retired, leaving Mackenzie alone, suddenly stood up, and turning round laid hold of young Gairloch, at the same time declaring that he was now his prisoner.

Though taken completely by surprise at this unexpected return for his hospitality, Mackenzie was equal to the occasion, and springing to his feet in a great passion seized hold of Raasay by the waist and threw him violently down, exclaiming as he stood over him, "I would scorn to be prisoner to such as you."

One of Raasay's men, however, seeing his advantage, crept silently towards him and with his dirk stabbed Mackenzie in the back, who, finding himself wounded, sprang back to draw his sword, but, his foot striking against some obstacle, he lost his balance, stumbled, and fell overboard into the sea.

At this point Raasay's men on shore, obeying the prearranged signal, got into their boats and rowed towards the galley. Observing Mackenzie struggling in the water they began to pelt him with stones; but poor Murdoch, though now hard put to, yet, with undaunted courage, kept battling with the waves, and, despite his severe wound, manfully tried to reach Sconsar on the opposite shore of Skye. The sustained attacks of his enemies were however too much for him. Weakened by loss of blood, he could not bear up against the shower of missiles hurled at him, and at last, throwing up his arms, with one bitter cry, he sank to rise no more.

The four of Mackenzie's friends who had kept sober were now in a sad plight. Their leader was dead and their companions incapable. They, however, determined to sell their lives dearly and fought like heroes. They were ably seconded by the crew, who left their oars and came to their assistance. They killed the young heir of Raasay, and his friend Macgillechallum Mor MacNeill, the originator of the plot, and his two sons.

Young Tulloch and his inebriated companions, roused from their sleep by the noise of fighting above them, hurried on deck, only to be struck down and slain by Raasay's men as they emerged one by one from the hold. The fate of their comrades, instead of intimidating the Mackenzies only urged them to greater effort, and they fought with such concentrated fury

that not a single one of those who accompanied Raasay on board escaped. Now the small boats filled with fresh men from the shore crowded round the galley and attempted to get on board, but as each stepped on deck he was knocked down without mercy, and his body pitched into the sea. All the shot and ammunition having become exhausted, the crew of the galley seized pots, pans, and every piece of portable furniture they could lay their hands upon and hurled them with deadly effect at the Macleods, while the remnant of Mackenzie's heroic band plied their swords in right good earnest. Having thus driven off the enemy's boats the four survivors, to which the Gairloch men had now been reduced, tried to pull in their anchor, when a shot from a Raasay boat at a distance killed Hector MacKenneth, "a pretty young gentleman." The remaining three, seeing their companion killed, and being themselves all more or less seriously wounded, cut their cable, hoisted sail, and steered away before a stiff breeze, with their ghastly cargo of dead bodies littering the deck. As soon as they found themselves beyond pursuit, they threw the bodies of young Raasay and his friends into the sea, giving them the same treatment as their own leader had met with at the hands of the Macleods, and whose body, to their great grief, they were unable to recover.

None of the bodies were ever found, except that of Macgillechallum Mor, which some time after floated ashore and was buried at Kirkton of Raasay. The Mackenzies carried the bodies of young Tulloch and the rest of their slain comrades to Lochcarron, where they received suitable interment.

Thus of all those engaged on either side in this sanguinary engagement only three of Mackenzie's followers escaped—John Mac Eachainn Chaoil, John MacKenneth, Mhic Eachainn, and Kenneth Mac Sheumais, the first of whom lived for thirty years after, dying in 1641; the second in 1662; and the third in 1663—all very old men. This skirmish was the last fought between the Mackenzies and the Macleods of Raasay, and ever since the Mackenzies held peaceable and undisputed possession of all the original and ancient territories of the Macleods in the parish of Gairloch.

ANCIENT HIGHLAND HOSPITALITY.

For some time before the following incident occured there had been a bitter feud between a sept of the Clan Grant and the Macgruthers. Savage attacks from one side was followed by cruel reprisals from the other, until the feelings of the one were roused to deadly animosity against the other. A party of the Grants, having made a midnight raid upon the Macgruthers in which they killed several of them, and drove off a number of cattle, so enraged the Macgruthers that, mad for revenge, they did not exercise their usual caution in their acts of retaliation, but, under the leadership of Dugald Macgruther, a fine handsome young man, boldly followed their enemies by daylight into their own territory, and, on coming up to them near a village, attacked them, when a fierce pitched battle was fought, resulting in the overwhelming defeat of the Macgruthers, their few survivors having had to seek safety by dispersing, each man looking to himself. Thus it happened that towards nightfall Dugald Macgruther found himself in an awkward predicament. In the confusion of his hurried retreat, added to by his ignorance of the locality, instead of running away from his foes, he found, to his intense chagrin, that he had actually ran right into their midst ; for, from a slight elevation on which he stood he could see the hamlet immediately below him, and the men straggling in by twos and threes on their return from the pursuit of his own flying followers. He could even hear the joyful shouts with which the women and children greeted the successful warriors.

In utter desparation Macgruther lay down on the ground, and gave himself up for lost. He had been severely wounded in the fight, which, combined with his subsequent efforts, completely exhausted him. He could neither flee nor defend him-

self. In his anguish he groaned aloud, exclaiming "It is all over with me, I can go no further, and I must either die here like a dog and become the prey of the fox and the eagle, or be discovered by some of these accursed Grants, who will soon put an ignominious end to my life" Even the iron will and athletic frame of the hardy mountaineer could no longer sustain the terrible strain of mind and body, and Macgruther grew faint, a mist came before his eyes, his brain reeled, and then all was dark. The strong man had swooned.

When he regained consciousness it was night, the keen frosty air chilled his blood, causing his many wounds to smart. With difficulty he moved his stiffened limbs, and rose to his feet. By the clear cold light of the full moon he looked anxiously around in the vain hope of seeing some place where he could obtain succour. Alas! no habitation met his view save those of his deadly enemies, who were even now seeking his life; for, though all was silent in the village below, he could plainly hear the men who had been placed as sentinels on every hillock and point of vantage calling to each other, and he well knew if any of them caught sight of him, his doom was sealed.

But all at once he formed a desperate resolve, which only his extreme peril made him entertain. He determined to approach the house of the leader of the Grants, and boldly demand his hospitality; for he felt that to remain exposed with his wounds uncared for, during the severe frosty night, would in all probability prove fatal.

Fortunately for his daring design, he was between the watchmen and the village. He was thus in no immediate danger, provided he was careful to keep in the shade.

By a great effort, and supporting his tremulous limbs with his trusty broadsword, Macgruther at length reached the chieftain's house, which he easily discovered, from being the best in the clachan, and knocked loudly for admittance.

Those were the days when men slept with their claymores ready to their hand at the slightest alarm, for a midnight assault was no uncommon occurrence, so, before Macgruther had scarcely finished knocking, the door flew open, discovering the leader of the Grants with his drawn sword in one hand and a lighted pine torch in the other. "Who art thou that so rudely breaks my

rest?" exclaimed he; then, as the light fell full on his untimely visitor, he started, "Ha! a stranger, and methinks a foe; speak! what dost thou want?" "Chieftain," said Macgruther, "you see before you a vanquished enemy. I am Macgruther, alone, wounded, and entirely in your power; but I throw myself upon your hospitality, and trust to your generosity to give me food and shelter. Here is my sword," and handing his weapon to the astonished chieftain, Macgruther drew himself up, and waited with a proud air for the answer. For a moment Grant was silent, while conflicting emotions surged within his breast. Here was the man he hated, on whom he had sworn to be revenged, standing helpless before him; how easy it were by one stroke to rid himself for ever from his constant and dangerous enemy. But the nobler part of his nature asserted itself, and, refusing the proffered sword, with a graceful gesture, he said, "I cannot say thou art welcome, Macgruther; but thou hast appealed to my hospitality, which has never yet been refused to mortal man. Come in, and rest in safety until thy strength be restored. Nay, keep thy sword, thou hast trusted me and I will not doubt thee." The brave chieftain then aroused his household, and bade them attend to the stranger's wants.

His wounds were bound up, meat and drink were put before him, and he was provided with a couch on which he was glad to rest his wearied form. All this was done with the greatest kindness and attention, not a single rite of hospitality being omitted.

The next day Macgruther was sufficiently revived to resume his journey, and, with many acknowledgments to his generous foe, he prepared to take his departure. "Hold." said Grant, "thou hast been my guest, and I must see that no harm happens to thee this day. One of my sons shall guide thee safely until sunset. To-morrow see to thyself, for remember that the Grants and the Macgruthers are still foes, and if ever I meet thee in fair fight I shall not spare thee, and I charge thee to do the same with me or mine. Adieu!" and, with a courtly bend of the head, the proud old man turned and re-entered the house.

Guided safely by young Grant, Macgruther was able to regain the path to his home; at sunset they bade each other farewell, and parted as friends who were to be foes again on the morrow.

A BUNCH OF WHITE HEATHER:

A MEMORY OF CULLODEN.

On a lovely autumn evening in the year 1744, a youth and maiden were strolling through the picturesque woods of Abriachan, now in their full autumnal beauty of variegated colour. The pair were evidently lovers, but not light-hearted ones, for their conversation was grave even to sadness; and often the young girl would lose her composure altogether, and break out into bitter weeping, only to be checked and soothed by the tender caresses and kind words of her attentive lover.

To explain this scene one must go back another generation. During the Rising of 1715 Ewen Cameron and Alexander Fraser had been firm friends and comrades in that unsuccessful attempt. They both survived the struggle and eventually made their peace with the Government, Cameron retiring to his native Lochaber, and Fraser settling down as a tacksman on some land just outside the town of Inverness. Each of them became a widower with one child. Cameron had a son—Donald, and Fraser a daughter—Mary. The old friendship was kept up between the men, although they did not often meet, and when young Donald was sent to Inverness for his education, he found a hearty welcome in the house of his father's old friend, and in a short time a warm affection sprang up between him and the youthful Miss Fraser. Time passed on and young Cameron went to finish his studies at Aberdeen University, and he always broke the journey to and fro at Inverness, spending quite half of the vacation in the company of the winsome Mary.

This growing intimacy between the young folks was looked upon with great complacency by their respective fathers, who desired nothing better than that their ancient friendship should

be cemented by the union of their children. This was the pleasant relations existing between them until the autumn of 1744, when disquieting rumours were heard of another Jacobite Rising, and men—according to the view they took of the matter—were either raised to the highest pitch of enthusiasm for the cause of the gallant young Prince, or excited to anger against the Jacobites for again plunging the country into all the horrors of a civil war.

Ewen Cameron, like an old war horse who smells the battle from afar, felt all his nerves tingle at the news, and throwing all caution aside, boldly placed himself and his only son at the service of his chief, to follow the fortunes of bonnie Prince Charlie.

Alexander Fraser, on the contrary, took a different view from his former companion in arms. For one thing, he was much the older man, and the chilling hand of advancing years had damped his patriotic ardour. He remembered too vividly the narrow escape he had had on the previous occasion to be willing to risk life and property again for political sentiment, and knowing full well that from his former exploits he would be keenly watched in the present emergency, his fears for his personal interests hurried him into the opposite extreme of ostentatious loyalty for the reigning monarch. As a natural consequence of this wide difference of opinion the two old friends violently quarrelled, hard words passed, and all connection between the two families was strictly prohibited.

This was a cruel blow to the lovers, more especially to Mary, who inherited her father's former Jacobite sentiments, and which had hitherto never been openly checked by him—sentiments too which had been fostered by the high-strung enthusiasm of young Donald Cameron. But "love will find out a way" to circumvent the strictest edict and most strenuous watchfulness of parents and guardians, and so Mary contrived to convey the intelligence to her lover that she was going to visit a friend in Abriachan. Donald did not take long in finding his way also to that romantic spot, and thus they met, as it were, on neutral ground, where we will now return to them.

Cameron did his best to cheer and comfort his tearful companion, by dwelling on the great attachment they both bore to

the Stuart cause, and on the glorious prospect they now had of evincing their devotion to their beloved Prince, even at the expense of their personal feelings; but as Mary recovered her composure and even brightened up at the idea of being able to show her loyalty, Donald's spirits seemed to flag, and to become depressed at the thought of leaving his love at such a critical time, just entering, as he was, on an undertaking of which no one could foresee the outcome. As he pensively walked along, he picked sprays of white heather, which he made into two small bunches. Keeping one himself, he presented the other to his love, saying, "Accept this, my dearest Mary, as an emblem of my undying love for you, which will last as long as life itself, and if possible continue even after death. I know not when I shall be able to see you again, perhaps never, for I may fall in the coming struggle; but promise me once more, dear love, to remain faithful to me whatever happens."

"I promise, faithfully promise," answered the agitated girl, "nothing shall induce me to swerve from my affection to you as long as you live." "Aye," Donald mused rather than spoke, "aye, as long as I live, but would she be faithful to my memory after death?" then raising his voice and tenderly taking Mary by both hands, he looked earnestly into her beautiful soft blue eyes and said, "If I should be killed, and if by any means I should be permitted to visit you in the spirit, would you shrink from me darling? would you be frightened?" "Oh Donald," answered the now weeping Mary, "don't say such dreadful things. If you are killed I shall die of grief and then we shall both be in the spirit world." "Nay, but answer me my dearest," urged Donald, "answer me, for if it is possible for disembodied spirits to revisit this world I shall come back to see you, even if I am unable to speak to you; keep this bunch of heather, and every time you look at it, bear my words in mind, and remember your vows of constancy."

The trembling girl took the flowers from her lover's hand and pressing them to her heart, renewed her promises of fidelity. The mournful lovers then took a tender farewell of each other. Donald returned to take his place in the ranks of those heroic Highlanders who willingly gave up love, liberty, life itself, for the sake of their loyal devotion to the Stuart cause. Mary

went back to her father's house, no longer a happy, light-hearted, laughing girl, but a thoughtful, subdued woman, who wept in secret over her separation from a lover whose name even she was prohibited from mentioning before her incensed father; for his fears made him, whatever his private feelings may have been, most anxious to stand well with the Government of the day.

With the keenest interest, Mary followed all the movements of the Prince's army, and her excitement and suspense grew almost insupportable, when, in the course of a few months, she heard of his gradual approach in the direction of Inverness. She had never had an opportunity of seeing her lover, or even of hearing directly from him since she parted with him at Abriachan, but she found out indirectly that he was alive and doing his duty as a loyal Cameron should, but that his gallant old father had fallen "sword in hand and face to the foe."

At length the fateful day of Culloden arrived. Old Fraser, quite overcome by memories of the past, mingled with mixed feelings for the present, shut himself up in his room, refusing all companionship and even declining food. Mary could not stay indoors or outside; she wandered about like a restless spirit, and as the wind bore the thunder of artillery from the battlefield, she shudderingly hid her face in her hands and fervently prayed for the safety of her beloved, as well as for the success of the cause in which he was engaged. As the day wore on the artillery ceased, only to be succeeded by the rattling sound of volleys of musketry. A little later could be heard the crack, crack, of individual shot, coming nearer and nearer. The anxiety of the trembling girl became painful in its intensity. How was the day going? On which side was the victory? She grew sick with suspense and fear, as she stood, with only the servant for a companion, bareheaded outside her house, straining her eyes along the road leading to Culloden to catch sight of the first stragglers with the first intelligence. Not long had she to wait; all too soon came the doleful news of the utter defeat of the Prince, from the pallid lips of wounded clansmen flying for their lives.

As they drew near enough to see her, they stopped their headlong flight for a moment to beg for a drink. "Water,"

they gasped, "for the love of Heaven, give us water." Not in vain did they ask; for, throwing all considerations of prudence aside, and obeying the dictates of humanity, Mary helped the servant to draw water from the well to satisfy the cravings of her thirsty countrymen. At first they passed in twos and threes, then by groups of six or seven, while ever nearer and nearer came, wafted on the breeze, the ominous sounds of firing and shouting, mingled with despairing cries, as the helpless fugitives were overtaken and killed by the brutal troops of the still more brutal Cumberland.

In vain Mary scanned each face, as the Highlanders hurried past, wishing, yet fearing, to see the one face dearest to her in the world. In vain she questioned the men as they took the coveted drink from her hands. They were quite unable to tell her anything of the fate of any particular individual—nothing but the complete overthrow of the whole army and the downfall of all their hopes. Soon the approach of the victorious army in full pursuit compelled her to take refuge inside the house, and watch them from a window, until she saw a trooper overtaking a defenceless Highlander and, regardless of his cries for quarter, deliberately riding him down, and laying the poor fellow's skull open with one slash of his reeking sword. This dreadful sight quite unnerved her; she withdrew from the window in horror, and afterwards spent the weary hours of the night in sleepless misery. Just as day was breaking a handful of small pebbles thrown against her window roused her from her apathy of grief. Hastening to the casement she looked out with fast-beating heart, fearing she knew not what. Her agitation was increased at the spectacle that met her eyes. One of the Prince's army, with clothes torn, dirty, and blood-stained, his plumed bonnet replaced by a handkerchief bound about his head, and shadowing his ghastly pale face and sunken eyes, one arm hanging uselessly by his side, while his legs trembled beneath him with weakness from loss of blood. This forlorn figure beckoned her with his hand to come down, at the same time making signs of caution and secrecy.

Hastily throwing a plaid over her head and shoulders the intrepid Mary went down to meet her strange visitor, but fearful that he might be seen before she could hear what he had to

tell her, she led him into a sheltered arbour in a secluded part of the garden, where they could speak undisturbed. The wounded clansman then related how he and several others escaped from the dreadful field of carnage, and tried to make their way to the town undiscovered ; how they kept together, helping each other as best they could, for they were all more or less seriously wounded, until one by one they dropped down by the way exhausted and died as they fell. "At last," he continued, "there only remained two of us. My companion was a fine young fellow, who, though sorely wounded, still kept up with unflagging spirit, as, he told me, he was determined to reach Inverness and see a very dear friend of his once more. But at length he also had to give up, and as he sank to the ground, with a deep groan of pain and despair, he begged of me, as a last favour, to find this house, which he fully described, and secretly to give you this little bag, which he wore next his heart. He said that his name was Donald Cameron, and that you would understand his message without any further particulars. I waited to close the poor fellow's eyes, and then made the best of my way here to deliver his last message."

With the deepest emotion, the weeping Mary took the little silk bag, which, on opening, she found to contain the bunch of white heather which she remembered so well, now crushed, withered, and stained with the life blood of her lover. With a frenzied cry of the most poignant grief, she pressed the sacred relic again and again to her trembling lips, while the heart-wrung tears of deepest sorrow flowed down her cheeks. When she had somewhat recovered from the first shock of the sad news she turned to the soldier for further details, when, to her intense alarm, she found him lying prone on the ground, totally overcome by exhaustion. The first thought of the terror-stricken girl was that the man was dead, but on placing her hand over his heart, she could feel a slight pulsation. Here was a dilemma ; she could not in common humanity see the poor fellow die before her eyes for want of assistance, and yet how could she succour him without her father's knowledge. Thinking deeply for a few minutes she ran into the house, woke the servant girl, on whom she knew she could depend, quickly explained the situation, and, telling her to dress

and follow immediately, she took some brandy along with her, and hurried back to the arbour where the servant soon joined her, and, by their united efforts, succeeded in restoring the helpless Highlander to consciousness. Having swallowed a little of the brandy, he was enabled, with their assistance, to walk to a disused barn, where Mary had decided to hide him until he was strong enough to provide for himself.

The weeks immediately following the fatal battle of Culloden proved most trying to our heroine. She had not only to bear her own heavy load of grief for the loss of the gallant Donald—a sorrow made the more grievous by the necessity of concealing it—but her finest feelings were daily and hourly harrowed by the fearful scenes of cruelty and suffering enacted in Inverness and neighbourhood by the ferocious orders of the remorseless Cumberland,—deeds which to this day make the blood of every Highlander boil with indignation, and cause a feeling of shame to every true Briton to think that such horrors should have been perpetrated by British troops. Added to all this was the responsibility of concealing and nursing the wounded soldier. But Mary did not flinch from what she considered her duty. Ably seconded by her faithful maid, and letting no one else into the secret, these two devoted women tended the sick man for weeks. They dared not seek for any assistance or medical advice. Even the necessary food and clothing had to be obtained by stealth and at imminent risk of discovery, but by using the simple remedies known to them, and by unremitting attention, day and night, they at last had the happiness of seeing their patient sufficiently recovered to enable him to escape to his native hills.

No wonder that Mary's once rosy cheeks grew thin and pale; that her bright blue eyes looked faded and wan; while her step, once so light and joyous, was now heavy and listless. But, as though she had not already enough to bear, yet another trial was in the meantime being forced upon her in the shape of the most unwelcome attentions of another suitor.

Duncan Shivas, son of the proprietor from whom her father held his land, had known Mary from childhood, had been a school-fellow of her and young Cameron, and joined them in many a youthful frolic. Some years before, he joined the

British army, and his regiment being since that time stationed in the South, he had not seen his old playmate for several years until he was sent to Inverness as one of the force under Lord Loudon. On again meeting Mary Fraser he was struck with admiration at the change he saw in her appearance. He remembered her as a merry, good-natured, good-looking girl of fifteen; he now found her a tall, graceful, beautiful woman. His former boyish liking for the pretty companion of his schoolboy days was turned into a man's ardent passion for the handsome woman, and he took every opportunity of ingratiating himself with her and her father. Mary however soon gave him to understand that her heart was irrevocably given to Donald Cameron, and that, although in the present unhappy state of the country, they might never meet again, she could not for a moment listen to the wooing of another.

Repulsed, but not disheartened Shivas determined to bide his time and watch the course of events. Fortune seemed to play into his hands. He heard of the death of young Cameron, who was reported to have died on the battlefield, and the natural regret for the untimely fate of an old friend was swallowed up in the pleasing thought that the way was now clear for him to win, in all honour, his lady-love. His father dying at this time, Duncan Shivas became laird, and as such, could bring a good deal of influence to bear upon Mary's father. In fact, from his authority as landlord, combined with his power as an officer in the British army, he so terrified and subdued the old man that he could almost make him do as he pleased. He therefore now openly paid his addresses to the distracted Mary with her father's consent. The incident of supplying the fugitive Highlanders with water during the retreat from Culloden came to the knowledge of Shivas, now a Major in the Royal army, and he unscrupulously used it to work on the fears of Fraser, pointing out how, as an old Jacobite, and from the close intimacy between his family and members of the rebel Camerons, his loyalty to the Government was open to grave suspicion, which his daughter's ill-advised action had greatly increased, and that the only safe course was to hurry on the marriage between his daughter and the speaker, as such an alliance would be a sufficient guarantee of the good faith of all concerned.

Uselessly did her father urge, and Shivas plead, but Mary remained immovable. Even if she could, she said, so soon forget her dead love, she could never marry Major Shivas. The mere thought of allying herself to an officer and leader of those who had butchered her countrymen in cold blood was odious to her, and the very sight of his gay uniform and glittering sword filled her with disgust.

Finding gentle means ineffectual, Shivas resorted to sterner measures, for he was determined to marry Mary, with or without her consent. Mr Fraser was considerably in arrears with his rent. His former landlord had never pressed him; but now his son, Major Shivas, put the law in motion and threatened him with eviction unless all his arrears were paid up by a certain day. And this was not all. Mr Fraser was reported at head-quarters as a disaffected subject, and was constantly harrassed by having his house and himself closely watched. Some troopers were actually billetted upon him, and rendered his life miserable by their rude, boisterous, overbearing conduct, turning his house into a tavern by their drinking, swearing, disorderly habits, while he and his daughter had to keep to their own rooms to avoid insult from the licentious soldiers.

Deeply concerned for her father's troubles, for she was tenderly attached to him, having to listen daily to his lamenting and reproaches, and being at the same time annoyed with the attentions and entreaties of her admirer, Mary did not know what to do, and began to think whether, after all, her fidelity to the memory of her dead lover ought to weigh against her duty to, and love for, her only parent.

One evening while in this mood Major Shivas induced her to take a walk along with him and seized the favourable opportunity to press his suit, and to point out the advantages she would gain by listening to him.

"Be mine, dear girl," exclaimed he with fervour, "be mine and I swear that directly we are married I will give a full discharge of all your father owes me. Nay more, I will let him sit rent free in his present house and garden as long as he lives, while I will take you away far from your present abode of suffering and sorrow to the sunny south, where your grace and beauty will enable you to reign as a queen in the fashionable

society that I can introduce you to. I have wealth, and you shall enjoy every luxury you can desire. I will even leave the army to please you."

To all these lavish promises and protestations Mary listened in silence, with drooping head and downcast eyes, trying her hardest to discover what she really ought to do in her most trying circumstances. At length she raised her head and moved her lips as if to speak, but suddenly stopped short, looking earnestly in front of her. Shivas followed her fixed gaze, and was astonished to see the figure of a man, covered with a long dark cloak, standing in the middle of the path, about a hundred yards in advance of them. His melancholy face looked ghastly white in the moonlight, as with a gesture, half of warning, half of farewell, he raised and waved his hand, and then, without uttering a word, moved silently and slowly across the path, and disappeared among the trees which overshadowed it. With an angry exclamation and with his hand on his sword, Major Shivas sprang forward to punish the unwelcome intruder; but he was arrested by a loud scream from his companion, who staggered forward a step or two with outstretched arms; then, with an exceedingly bitter cry of "Donald! Donald!!" sank, half-fainting, to the ground. The Major did his best to soothe the terribly agitated girl, who insisted, amid sobs and tears, that it was the wraith of her lost lover which had appeared to warn her not to forget her promise to him. In vain Shivas tried to convince her that it was only some stroller, possibly one of the rebels, several of whom were known to be still hiding in the neighbourhood. The weeping Mary was not to be comforted, so, finding it useless to urge his suit under such unfavourable conditions, he conducted her home and, reluctantly taking his leave, spent the next hour in a fruitless search for the man who had so rudely interrupted his love-making, and against whom he swore many a curse, "not loud but deep."

As the days and weeks rolled by, the effect of Mary's severe fright began gradually to wear away, and she was ready to believe Major Shivas when he told her that what she had seen was all imagination on her part. He was careful to conceal from her the fact that he also had seen the figure. Every day she saw her father, now old and frail, growing more and more despondent as

the time drew nearer and nearer when he would be turned out of his house and home and cast a beggar on the wide world. At the same time Major Shivas, getting angry at her obstinacy, determined to push matters to extremities, and having found out, through the spies whom he employed, that a wounded Highlander had for a time been concealed on Mr. Fraser's premises, he caused him to be arrested for harbouring and assisting the rebels, while a strict search was made for the fugitive, who, however, fortunately, had left his place of concealment that morning; but though "the bird was flown, the nest was warm," and the soldiers found plenty of evidence to convict Mary's father of the charge.

Racked with anxiety, and fairly driven to bay, Mary at last gave a reluctant consent to her determined lover. By his influence at headquarters Major Shivas soon got her father released from custody. The arrangements for the marriage were hurried forward, and the night was fixed for the contracting ceremony, which at that time was considered of almost as much importance as the marriage itself and was conducted with greater form than it is at the present day.

A week later Mary sat at the open casement window of her bedroom, trying to soothe her troubled emotions and cool her heated brow with the refreshing breeze and calmness of the night. The contracting ceremony was already over and that night week had been fixed for the wedding. Friends had offered their congratulations and good wishes; her lover had gone away, happy and exultant. Her father, relieved from his late pressing anxieties and fears, had retired to rest in peace and comfort. She alone was wakeful and unhappy. Taking no heed of the passing hours, she sat immovable as a statue, gazing with unseeing eyes at the peaceful scene, while her breast was torn with conflicting emotions. At last she was roused with a start by the noisy hall clock striking twelve, and with a last listless glance outside, she was in the act of shutting the window when she was suddenly arrested and held spell-bound by observing a figure suddenly emerge from the surrounding darkness, and pace slowly and noiselessly across the lawn immediately below the window, now flooded with the bright moonlight. Having paced a few yards, the figure stopped, drew something from its breast, raised it to its lips and threw it right through the half-open window.

Mary felt it whiz past her ear and heard it fall on the floor behind her, but heeded it not; her whole attention was concentrated on the figure below, in whose pale melancholy features she recognised the same apparition of her lost lover that had appeared to her on the former occasion.

With starting eyes and suspended breath she watched it making the same sad gesture of farewell and slowly passing out of the moonlight to be swallowed up in the dense darkness of the shrubbery beyond. Then, with a long shuddering sigh, she fell fainting and senseless to the floor.

Day was breaking before she recovered consciousness, when, as she slowly recalled the terrible incident of the night, she wondered if indeed it was only her heated imagination that induced these visions. But at that moment she caught sight of the small object which she remembered having been thrown through the window the previous night. Hastily picking it up, her agitation was increased tenfold at discovering what it was—a small bunch of white heather! Now, indeed, she was convinced that whatever others might say, her long lost and dearly beloved Donald had been permitted to make himself visible to her from the world of spirits.

Mary could never afterwards describe how she spent the intervening week. She dared not, at this stage, break off her engagement with Major Shivas, yet her approaching marriage filled her with the utmost dread and aversion. The only comfort she felt was in the thought that the supernatural appearance of her old lover was a warning of her own death, and that she should soon join him in that world "where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest."

But the dreaded day arrived, and the very hour. Mary, more dead than alive, stood in the big parlour of her house supported by her father and surrounded by friends and neighbours, ready to take the solemn vows of matrimony. The triumphant bridegroom, accompanied by a party of fellow officers, wearing their brilliant uniforms, and clanging swords, with martial bearing, enlivened the scene. The venerable minister was ready to begin the service, when all present were startled at hearing the rapid thud, thud, of a wildly galloping horse approaching the house. In a second it was pulled up at the main entrance. In another

moment the door of the apartment in which the company were assembled was thrown violently open, and a tall figure enveloped in a long dark cloak marched in, and without speaking or looking to the right or to the left, stepped straight up to the trembling bride, seized her in his arms, and, carrying his fair burden, retired from the room as quickly as he had entered it. All this happened so suddenly and was so totally unlooked for, that the spectators were so dazed that no one had the presence of mind to interfere with the intruder, or attempt the rescue of the bride. It would indeed seem as if a spell was over them, for nearly all present had, in the momentary glimpse of his set, white features, recognised the face of Donald Cameron whom they all believed to have been killed on the fatal field of Culloden.

The bridegroom and his more immediate friends, recovering from their astonishment, drew their swords, and dashed to the door, only to see the noble steed galloping off with its double burden. Some of the officers, in their panic, fired their pistols after the retreating but now distant figures, but they were immediately checked by Major Shivas, who feared that his bride might be killed or injured. It was decided to procure horses and ride after the fugitives, but it was all in vain, for long before they were able to set off in pursuit, the runaways were out of sight, and the search, though long and close, proved quite ineffectual.

Weakened and unnerved, as she had been by the great mental strain she had lately experienced, Mary no sooner saw the pale face of her lover for the third time, and felt him grasp her in his embrace, than she thought her last hour had come, and she fainted right off in his arms.

When she recovered her senses she found herself lying on a rough bed of dried bracken and heather in a small underground hut which had been so constructed that little more than the roof was visible above the ground, and that was so covered over with branches, and surrounded on every side with the thickly growing trees and shrubs, that it practically defied discovery. As her mind became clearer Mary saw that she was not alone. Two men were in the hut—one stretched full length on the ground, bleeding from a wound in the head, the other kneeling by his side trying with rough surgery but gentle hands to

staunch the blood and bind up the wound. Mary now felt quite sure that she was going mad, when, in the prone and injured man, she recognised her long lost lover Donald Cameron. Starting to her feet, she laid hold of her other companion and begged him, for the love of Heaven, to explain how she came there and who was he who lay on the floor.

"Compose yourself, my lady," he answered, "and I will explain everything. I am Allan Cameron, foster-brother to him who lies there." "But tell me," interrupted Mary, "is he really living, or is it indeed but a phantom of my distracted brain?" "He is alive just now," continued Allan, "but I very much fear that he won't survive very long, for he has got a nasty pistol shot in the head, and is at present quite insensible. But to continue my explanation, I followed him ever since he joined the Prince's army; we fought side by side at Culloden, and both of us fell wounded at the same time. I was stunned for a time, but on coming round, I saw to my intense sorrow that the battle was going against us. I tried to get up, but a dead comrade lay right across my body, and I had not strength to remove him. Then a sudden rush was made in the direction of where I lay, a handful of our men made a gallant stand for a few minutes, but were soon overpowered by superior numbers, and they had to give way. Oh! what a dreadful sight it was to see our men retreating in disorder or making a feeble stand here and there in groups, while the victorious troopers on their heavy horses rode them down without mercy, slashing right and left with their long murderous swords, killing the wounded, and trampling on the dead. How I escaped with my life I know not, but as soon as I was able I extricated myself from the heap of slain, which no doubt, had helped to shield me from the troopers' swords and the horses' hoofs, and finding I was not dangerously hurt, I bound up my wound as well as I could, and then proceeded to look for my dear foster-brother, Donald Cameron, whom I had promised my mother to watch over and help as long as I lived. After a long search I found him, at some distance from the battlefield on the way to Inverness, lying under a hedge, badly wounded and quite insensible, but, I was thankful to find, still alive. I had a few drops of brandy left in my flask, which revived him somewhat, and we managed in time to reach this

place, where I constructed this hut in which we have been hidden ever since. I soon regained my strength, but Donald fevered very badly, lying for several weeks in delirium, constantly raving about you, fancying that he was dead and that he was watching over you in the spirit, trying to make his presence visible to you. At length, his bodily health was restored, but his mind wandered and the fancies induced by the fever continued. He still imagined himself a disembodied spirit with a mission to watch over his beloved Mary. Thus I could never get him to leave the neighbourhood, and I could not leave him in his helpless mental condition. Sometimes, in spite of my utmost vigilance, he would give me the slip and be absent for hours, and as on his return he always talked about seeing his Mary I was in constant fear that we should be discovered. To-day he was unusually excited, and was rash enough to borrow a horse from a farm near us, without even asking permission, and rode away with it, saying that he was going to rescue his Mary from the hands of his mortal enemy. I waited his return in the greatest anxiety of mind, not knowing where he had gone, or what rash action he might commit, and I was more than thankful to see him come galloping back, but was both astonished and much alarmed to find you, lying quite insensible, in his arms, and himself badly wounded in the head. I presume you are Miss Fraser, the Mary of whom he so incessantly talks. What we shall do now, I confess, I do not know."

Before Allan had half finished his long narrative, Mary was on her knees by the side of her recovered lover, bathing his face with her tears, and calling him by every endearing name. As Allan ceased speaking, she stood up and, brushing the tears from her eyes, said, quietly yet firmly, "I shall stay here and help you to nurse him. If he dies, I will help you to bury him and then wait until you have made good your escape to your own home. I shall afterwards return to my father, and wild horses shall not drag from me the secret of where I have been. But," she continued, as a becoming blush mantled on her fair cheek, "should he recover, then he will be my master and I shall be guided entirely by him."

This arrangement Allan faithfully helped to carry out. He returned the horse to its rightful owner without its being ever

missed. Mary nursed her lover with tenderness and skill, while Allan provided food and shared her labour of love. For days Donald hovered between life and death, while fever racked his weakened frame and delirious fancies crowded his weary brain. At long-last their patience was rewarded. Slowly but surely the wounded man escaped from the Valley of the Shadow of Death ; to their unbounded delight, his brain gained strength along with his body, and he no longer laboured under any delusions, but became once more possessed of "a sane mind in a sound body."

As soon as Donald was sufficiently recovered, the indispensible Allan managed to get an opportunity of speaking to a minister whom they knew to be a true Jacobite at heart, and who readily agreed to accompany him to the hiding-place of the lovers, where, by his assistance, "these twain were made one," and the sorely tried and long divided pair were united for life. As soon as Donald was able to travel, all three made their way secretly to Lochaber, where our hero and his bride were welcomed with open arms by his numerous friends and clansmen, who had all long mourned for him as dead, and were now correspondingly glad to find him not only alive and well but married to such a handsome charming wife.

The sense of security, and the quiet happiness of her new life soon brought back the roses to Mary's cheeks and the lightness to her step. The one rumpled leaf in her bed of roses was her anxiety for her father, but that was soon set at rest by hearing that he was well in health, though mourning for his daughter, whom he supposed to be dead. Her strange and sudden disappearance was ascribed by all her friends to supernatural agency and they mourned her as dead, for the fact of Cameron being really alive had never been discovered by anyone, and they felt convinced that it was his spirit which had carried her off. Major Shivas felt his loss keenly, but sharing the popular notion as to her flight, did not blame her father, and, generously carrying out his promise to Mary, left him in undisturbed possession of his house and land.

When the country had settled down, and the Rising of 'Forty-five had become a thing of the past, Mrs Cameron advised her father of her welfare, and in course of time was able to

visit him and introduce to him his first grandson. The ever faithful Allan also took unto himself a wife and settled down near his foster-brother. There was a strong bond of affection between these two and they often spent their evenings together, talking over old times, and, after the fashion of old comrades in arms, "fighting their battles over again."

Donald and Mary lived long and happily together, and raised a fine family of sons and daughters, to whom they often related the stirring incidents of their early life. On the occasion of their silver wedding, their children, friends, and relatives all vied with each other to do honour to the auspicious occasion, and many and handsome were the presents they received. But nothing pleased them both so much as when their youngest daughter, with a fine sentiment beyond her years, presented them with her simple offering of A Bunch of White Heather.

LOCHINVAR AND THE WILD BOAR.

CENTURIES ago Scotland was infested with wild boars that increased so fast, and became so dangerous to the lieges, that the King issued a proclamation offering a reward to whoever should produce at Court the head of a newly-killed boar. This inducement, coupled with the excitement and danger consequent on chasing these ferocious animals, made boar-hunting the favourite sport of the young men of the time. Among the most eager of the hunters was the young Laird of Lochinvar; and he had a double incentive to exert himself, for he was not only a keen and fearless sportsman, but was also deeply enamoured with fair Margaret Scott, and thereby hangs a tale.

Margaret was the only daughter and heiress of Sir James Scott, a fiery-tempered old knight, whose estate had for some time past been troubled with one of these dangerous animals, which had taken up its quarters there and successfully evaded all attempts to kill or capture it. The infirmities of advancing years prevented Sir James from taking a part in the exciting chase, so he had to content himself with storming at his followers for their want of skill and courage in failing to get rid of the unwelcome intruder.

There were many suitors for the hand of the lovely Margaret, but two only had any chance of success. These were the Laird of Lochinvar and James Ogilvy, and their claims appeared about equal. Lochinvar was, indeed, the favourite with Margaret; but in those days young ladies were not always allowed to wed whom they liked, and her father preferred the wealthy Ogilvy to the younger, more handsome, but poorer Lochinvar. But Sir James was too fond of his daughter to wish to force her inclinations, and willing to give the young laird a chance, and

at the same time get rid of his most undesirable tenant—the wild boar—he promised to give the hand of his daughter to the suitor who should kill it. Margaret herself was well satisfied with this decision; for she had little fear but the brave, daring, and skilful Lochinvar would be the victor. The rivals started on their hunting expedition with very different feelings, Lochinvar eager, fearless, and anxious to meet with the dangerous animal. Ogilvy, on the other hand, did not relish the bargain. He was no great sportsman, and thought an encounter with the boar might be too high a price to pay even for the possession of his lady-love.

It was some time before Lochinvar was able to get on the track of his game. At last he succeeded in rousing the beast from its lair, and fairly started in pursuit. Long and weary was the chase, but at last he got the boar at bay, and after a stubborn and long-contested battle, it lay dead at his feet. Quite worn out with his great exertions, and faint from exhaustion—for he had been slightly wounded in the final struggle—Lochinvar did not at once cut off the boar's head, but contented himself with cutting out the tongue, which he placed in his pouch, and then laid down to take his much-needed rest. While lying sound asleep, Ogilvy chanced to pass that way, and seeing his sleeping rival and the dead boar by his side, he at once conceived the idea of gaining the reward without any personal risk, and at the same time revenging himself on his detested rival. He thereupon quietly cut off the boar's head without disturbing the unconscious Lochinvar, and speedily made his way to Sir James Scott, announced his success, much to the despair of Margaret, and immediately afterwards started to the Court to claim his reward from the King.

When Lochinvar awoke, he at once realised the mean trick that had been played upon him, and made a shrewd guess at its author. On making inquiries his suspicions were confirmed, and full of indignation and anger he started after his cowardly rival.

Arriving at Court, he found, as he had expected, that Ogilvy had just had an audience of the King, and had obtained the promised reward. With some little trouble Lochinvar was also admitted to the royal presence, when he stated his grievance, and craved that justice might be done. Ogilvy was recalled and con-

fronted with his accuser, who again told his version of the occurrence, and denounced Ogilvy as the thief. This was as strongly denied by the unprincipled coward, who not only maintained his own innocence, but overwhelmed Lochinvar with reproaches and accusations. The King was puzzled to decide between them, and asked if they had any witnesses to substantiate their different accounts. "Yes," exclaimed Lochinvar, triumphantly, "yes, I have a witness; the boar himself shall speak for me." "What mean you?" demanded the King, who began to think he had a madman before him. "May it please your Grace to have the boar's head produced, and I will explain," said Lochinvar. This was done, when he opened the mouth and showed the King that the tongue was not there; then, taking the missing member from his pouch, he presented it to his Majesty, explaining that he had cut it out before he fell asleep, for the purpose of proving his right in case any difficulty in the matter should arise. The King was perfectly satisfied, and not only caused the guilty Ogilvy to refund the reward, but ordered him to be imprisoned for his contemptible conduct.

Being himself an ardent sportsman, the King took a great interest in the case, asked Lochinvar many particulars of his encounter with the boar, and in what manner he had at last succeeded in killing it.

"May it please your Royal Grace," said the undaunted Lochinvar, "I just gored him down with my spear."

"You are a brave fellow," replied the King, "and as a mark of my favour and appreciation of your courage and endurance, you shall henceforth be known as the Knight of *Goredown*."

The sequel to this may be easily guessed. The newly made knight returned in triumph to claim his bride. They were married shortly after with the full consent of her father and herself, and they lived long and happily together. In course of time the name of Goredown became shortened into Gordon, and afterwards became one of the great historic names of Scotland.

Tradition has it that the son of this brave man and fair lady was—

> The young Lochinvar, who came out of the West,

celebrated in Sir Walter Scott's famous ballad.

MRS URQUHART AND HER MINISTER.

A HUNDRED and thirty years ago there lived in Petty Street, Inverness, a worthy man of the name of Urquhart, who followed the occupation of a brewer on a small scale. He was married, but had no family, and his wife, though a good wife and a religious woman, was apt to run after novelties in the way of her devotions. Any new preacher or fresh doctrine was sure to find Mrs Urquhart among its followers.

This restless yearning after something or other—they hardly know what—is often observable in married women who are childless. Their natural instincts have no vent in maternal duties, so they take up with some hobby or other to distract their attention. Some make pets of dogs, cats, and birds, others give themselves up to visiting, gossip, and scandal, while many turn to religion as a solace, and are noted as indefatigable workers at church bazaars, excellent collectors of subscriptions, and energetic members of Dorcas Societies. Among the latter class we must place Mrs Urquhart, who was also a very superstitious woman, a firm believer in signs and omens, ghostly warnings, and blood-curdling apparitions. Anything weird or uncanny had a strange fascination for her. She had the prophecies of the great Highland seer, Coinneach Odhar Fiosaiche, by heart and would descant by the hour together about them, and of how wonderfully some of them were being fulfilled.

Mr Urquhart did not share his wife's views, and he often good-naturedly laughed at her stories, but on these occasions she would quote so many examples of second sight and witchcraft and would so overwhelm him with arguments that the worthy man, who loved a quiet life, was generally glad to change the subject.

At the time of our story, the new sect of Methodists, who

were then, under the able leadership of John Wesley and George Whitfield, making such a stir in the religious life of the country, was being talked about, even so far north as Inverness, and of course Mrs Urquhart was one of the first to embrace the new doctrine. Her zeal was greatly increased by a visit from the great George Whitfield himself to Inverness, during one of his annual trips to Scotland, with the double object of expounding his views, making converts, and collecting subscriptions towards an Orphan's Home he had determined to start in Georgia, Carolina, in connection with the missionary labours of the Methodists among the native Indians in that place.

Mrs Urquhart was one of his numerous admirers, and became one of the most regular attendants on his ministrations. She was anxious to contribute something handsome towards his laudable purpose, but unfortunately for her well-meant intentions, her husband's business was not in a very flourishing condition at the time, and the brewer had enough to do to make both ends meet.

In vain his wife endeavoured to prevail upon him to accompany her to hear the famous divine, feeling sure that his eloquence would loosen her husband's purse ; but the brewer would neither go to hear, nor, what was even worse in her eyes, would he contribute a farthing towards the Orphan's Home in America. In fact, the honest man was so annoyed at this latest fad of his wife, that in his anger he did not scruple to call the eminent divine a cheat, little better than a pickpocket, inducing silly women to give him money which they had much better apply to domestic uses. Mrs Urquhart being a woman of great spirit, resented these outspoken views of her husband ; but, finding that her angry recrimination only had the effect of making him more stubborn in his refusal, she determined that, if he would not give her a subscription willingly, she would manage to get some money unknown to him, quieting her conscience with the old axiom that the end justifies the means.

And she had not long to wait before an opportunity occurred to put her newly-formed project to the test. One day her husband, while sitting at his desk counting over some money, was called away, and, meaning to return immediately, he merely closed his desk without locking it.

Here was the opportunity which Mrs Urquhart had been

waiting for; so, hastily going to the desk, she found a small heap of guineas which her husband was going to pay away for barley. Quickly appropriating ten of the shining coins, she closed the desk and resumed her seat as if nothing had happened. Her husband soon returned, and after working at his desk for a short time he locked it, and left the room without apparently having missed the money.

Mrs Urquhart was now in a hurry to present her ill-gotten subscription to Mr Whitfield, so, going to her room, she wrapped the ten guineas in a piece of paper and laid it on the dressing-table while she donned her out-door habiliments. Before she was quite ready, however, she remembered some directions she wished to leave with the servant, and went into the kitchen for that purpose. In the meantime her husband, whose suspicions had been aroused, stepped into the bedroom, and seeing the small packet on the table, opened it, and found, as he expected, the ten guineas, which he at once conveyed to his own pocket and placed ten bright coppers in their place. Leaving the packet seemingly untouched, he quietly withdrew to watch the result.

Mrs Urquhart returned, finished her toilette, took up the packet of coins, and went direct to the lodgings of her favourite minister. Arrived there, and being shown into Mr Whitfield's presence, she made a neat little speech, assuring him of the great benefit she had received from his ministrations, and begging his acceptance of the accompanying subscription as her mite towards his great and good undertaking. The flattered minister thanked her heartily, and placing the little packet in his pocket without opening it, he accompanied his visitor to the door and took his leave of her with many expressions of goodwill and gratitude.

Hardly had he closed the door when he opened the paper, and his astonishment was only equalled by his indignation at finding only a few worthless coppers instead of the handsome sum which he was led to expect. In his annoyance he jumped to the conclusion that the whole affair was meant as a deliberate insult, and, the old Adam getting the better of him, he opened the door and called loudly after the retreating figure of the lady.

Mrs Urquhart at once returned, though somewhat surprised at the peremptory tone; but her surprise was quickly turned to indignation when Mr Whitfield, with a severe look and solemn voice,

rebuked her for her ill-timed levity, and asked how she had dared to insult him by offering such a paltry sum, at the same time showing her the coppers. The astonished woman in turn asked him what he meant, as she was sure that she had given him ten good golden guineas. This assertion only incensed the divine all the more, and in no very measured terms he denounced the woman's conduct, and insisted that when he opened the paper he only found those paltry coppers.

Mrs Urquhart being, as already said, a high-tempered woman, was not slow in defending herself, and remembering how often her husband had warned her against Mr Whitfield, she came to the conclusion that he was indeed the cheat he had been represented to be, so, giving reins to her passion, she poured forth such a volley of abuse and accusation upon him that the discomfited minister, after a vain attempt to withstand the onslaught, had at last to fairly turn tail, retire into the house, and shut the door on his infuriated antagonist, who, finding that she had had the best of the encounter and had succeeded in routing the enemy, began to smooth down her ruffled plumage as well as she could, slowly wending her way home, a sadder if not a wiser woman.

To her agreeable surprise, her husband did not appear to have missed the money, for he never mentioned the subject, nor did he evince any surprise at the sudden cessation of her frequent attendances at Mr Whitfield's meetings. Like a wise man, the honest brewer kept his own counsel as well as his money, and had many a quiet chuckle to himself over the manner in which he had outwitted his foolish wife. He had also the satisfaction of seeing that the lesson he had given her, though sharp, was permanent, for ever after she was content to accompany him to his own church, and never again did she run after strange preachers or new doctrines.

But though the brewer's wife was cured of her yearning after novelties in religious things, she remained as superstitious as ever, and her belief in second sight received "confirmation strong as death" in the following incident, which was at least remarkable.

The Rev. Mr Morrison was at the time parish minister of Petty, some six miles from Inverness, and being a remarkably pious man, living an exemplary life of self-denial and devotion

to his sacred duties, he was looked upon as almost a prophet. One of his parishioners was a fisherman noted for his bad life and utter disregard for the admonitions of the good pastor. Walking one summer evening in the garden of his manse in earnest conversation with one of his elders, the rev. gentleman suddenly paused in the middle of a sentence, and stood staring before him "with unseeing eyes." The elder alarmed, asked if he was unwell, but received no answer. In a minute or so, however, Mr Morrison drew a deep breath, shivered slightly, and, turning to his friend with a horror-stricken face, said, naming the fisherman, "Well that poor unhappy man has often scoffed at my teaching, but he will never do so again, for he is at this moment lying drowned at the new pier at Inverness and his body will be taken into the Gaelic Church to-night and kept there until it is claimed by his relatives.

Strange to say, this vision came strictly true in every particular. The elder hastened to the friends of the fisherman and told them of what Mr Morrison had said. They, having the most implicit belief in his supernatural powers, immediately hastened to Inverness and there found the body of the drowned man, lying in the Gaelic Church, which at that time was used as a sort of mortuary in cases of sudden death until the relatives came forward to claim the remains.

This was quite after Mrs Urquhart's own heart, and she would dwell upon it and gloat over the details with never-failing satisfaction, more particularly when even her husband, sceptical as he was, could offer no reasonable solution of the mysterious circumstance.

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