fall,—not necessarily the largest or highest,—so that observation of the closeness of the rings may be made. Sad it is to reflect that this remnant of the ancient Caledonian Forest is doomed, since, as the veterans succumb one by one before storm and time, there will be none to take their place, unless a portion of the wood be enclosed as a sanctuary. At present, as far as can be observed, not a seedling is to be found within the wood itself. Yet there is small doubt that dense thickets would arise with the survival of the fittest if only sheep and deer could be kept out. This is practically certain, because seedlings may now be seen of various heights inside the railway fence, where sheep and deer cannot penetrate, though hares can, showing that the blue hares are not the sole or chief depredators. It is affirmed that one Scots fir will afforest a moor, if given time,—provided, that is, the heather has overcome the grass."

At the top of Crannach Wood, and indeed sprinkled throughout, are some very quaint old birches, resembling ancient olive-trees in growth and colour. The ground is delightfully intersected with glens, hollows, and deep brown burns, carpeted also with a wealth of bracken and moss. On a really fine day, passing through shady hollows, emerging again into patches of brilliant sunshine, all the while treading a noiseless way on the soft rich herbage, sheltered by the gnarled and vigorous branches of these ancient natives, it is one of the most romantic and delightful walks in the forest.

"Pleasant it was, when woods were green
And winds were soft and low,
To lie amid some sylvan scene,
Where, the long drooping boughs between,
Shadows dark and sunlight sheen
Alternate come and go;

Or where the denser grove receives
No sunlight from above,
But the dark foliage interweaves
In one unbroken roof of leaves
Underneath whose sloping eaves
The shadows hardly move."

I can corroborate Mr Malan's surmise that on ground protected from deer or sheep these hoary sires would soon raise up generations to succeed them.

In Doire Darrach Wood, on the shores of Loch Tulla, are trees of similar interest. Here I have enclosed various suitable patches, the result being that a growth of Scots fir, birch, and rowan is coming up and flourishing exceedingly. I have no doubt but that miles of ground could be afforested in this way, if money could be found to fence, and tenants be willing to sacrifice the ground.

In parts of Perthshire the larch is making a noble effort to reproduce itself. In a few isolated cases I have already taken a thinning out of self-sown plantations, which have managed to make headway even against sheep. But this subject is leading me far away from my walk to Altchaorunn.

I reach Kingshouse comparatively early, and have a long rest there. I have still five miles more till I reach the hospitable lodge. My course

now lies down Glenetive, with the rugged heights of Dalness Forest on my right and the Black Mount march on my left. Later in the season this is a weird walk towards evening, when the stags from each side come low on the ground and roar to each other across the corrie. The tremendous bellowing echoing among the rocks above, I confess to a feeling of somewhat uncomfortable hurry to get home on one or two such occasions, for certainly the roar of many stags in the gloaming is a very awe-inspiring sound, however familiar it may be. My heart rejoices as I see the blue smoke curling up under the hill, and the little lodge rises to my vision. I know so well all the routine there and exactly what every one will be doing, and these thoughts hasten my weary feet swiftly over the last mile of the way. I am soon in the familiar kitchen, questioning where every one is. Not home yet! so I stroll up the bridle-path, knowing I shall see a group of grey figures on their homeward course before the twilight deepens, if there have been no mischances by the way.

It is a cheerful party at Altchaorunn that evening, the best party in the world, consisting of two people whose minds are attune and tastes sympathetic. Next day I potter about the doors all day, fishing in the river for tiny sweet-tasting brown trout, and spying the familiar Tops from time to time, if, perchance, to pick up a stag on the sky-line, or even one or more of the grey figures. I think this was the first time in my recollection I had spent a whole day at Altchaorunn without my rifle. I thought the idea of this would make me sad, but it did not a bit. I was so absolutely grateful and happy to be once more among the hills, revelling in the solitude and silence, rejoicing in the sound of the rippling burns and the sough of the light winds as they chased each other down the corries, and feeling again close to the tender, mysterious things which make the hills as living friends.

Next day, Saturday, I was on the road again to Kinlochetive, on the shores of Loch Etive, passing by Dalness House and giving a call by the way to Mrs Stuart, the proprietrix of Dalness Forest, —as good a neighbour as may be found anywhere, and the personification of a hospitable Highland lady. With a light heart I swing along the seven miles, cross the river Etive by the footbridge, and soon find myself at the stalker's house, beneath the shadow of the majestic Ben Starav, 3541 feet, rising sheer from the seaboard. Adjacent to the stalker's house is a little bothy, replete with every contrivance for the comfort of the belated stalker, or for such wayside wanderers as myself. How can I describe the charm of this secluded spot, the sea lying within a few hundred yards, the cry of the sea-birds floating round all night as a lullaby, and the background of the mighty Ben watching over all like a giant sentinel. The goodwife from the neighbouring cottage soon

brings in a bowl of Scotch broth, a mutton chop brought in the lunch-bag from Altchaorunn, and a plate of such potatoes as I verily believe can be produced from no other kitchen. Long I sit, when all is quiet, on the doorstep of the little bothy, and indulge to the full the sense of complete rest. I think David the Psalmist must have loved the high tops and solitary places, and understood the wonderful things of the deep seas, for he tells us how God "bringeth forth the clouds from the ends of the world, . . . bringing the winds out of His treasures." And what wonderful treasures are to be found among the hills, encircled by the floating mists and resounding in the boisterous winds, if we only seek them and love them in the finding. What greater knowledge could be found of the terrible secrets of the sea than in Psalm cvii., "They that go down to the sea in ships; . . . these men see the works of the Lord, and His wonders in the deep"? To have written these things, and many more, in the praise and conception of Nature, must have needed a great understanding of her sublime poetry. To one who has never been absolutely alone in any habitation at night, it is difficult to describe the curious sense of deep solitude which it evokes. Personally I delight in it. There is an independence and self-reliant feeling which lifts one far above any sensation of loneliness, for to be alone in the right acceptance of the word is never to be "lonely." So I pass the night on the shores of Loch Etive, with the windows and door wide open to the scent of the sea-weed and the voice of the sea-birds, and in the careful keeping of "the mountains of my love.

For stalking, probably Ben Starav is the stiffest walk in the forest, for the start is from the very sea-level, and the ascent to the top takes very little short of four to five hours. Once when I was young, and I suppose very foolish, I got a stag near the top, rushed down to the bothy, ate an enormous tea of eggs, scones, and jam, and started to walk back to Altchaorunn, where I intended to spend the night, leaving the van with the men and stag to follow and catch me up. But it never did, and I was safely back at Altchaorunn, in a spirit of exceedingly uplifted pride, before the van came laboriously rattling up with its burden of men and beast.

The Sabbath dawn broke calm and lovely, and the earth was soon warmed with the rising sun, which swept away the mists and crowned every blade of grass with a diamond diadem. It was pleasant to loiter round the doors for a time and gossip with my neighbours, a stalwart family of sons and daughters, who love the hill and draw always back from far afield to the foot of the great Ben, which has been to them as a cradle.

By-and-by we start away for Glenkinglass. Father and son row me part of the way,—a delicious experience in the fresh autumn morning, the sea dancing beside us in its green

and glancing lights, and the time made pleasant with anecdote and reminiscence. My destination is Ardmaddy, in Glenkinglass. The stalker's place there is now filled by John M'Innes, the companion of so many glorious days on the Altchaorunn ground. Ardmaddy is one of the most peacefully lovely spots to be imagined,—a fertile croft close round the house, and a sheltering hill behind. This end of Glenkinglass is also warmed by strips of oak coppice, which afford great shelter to the deer in winter, and in summer-time clothe it with a peculiar charm, set in the bosom of the rugged hills. I have often stayed for a few days at a time in the bothy at Ardmaddy, which is similar to the one at Kinlochetive, and I recall the early mornings there as something almost unreal in their loveliness. Often one would wake to find the sea and all surroundings enveloped in mist. Gradually as the sun rose this would vanish,—not all at once, but in patches here and there, leaving long streaks of lace-like garlands between sea and land, like the girdle on a bride's wedding-garment.

'A wind came up out of the sea,
And said, 'O mists, make room for me,'
And hurried landward far away
Crying, 'Awake! it is the day.'"

Nowhere have I seen such wonderful morning effects as at Ardmaddy.

Who is there that has been to Black Mount who has not heard of Sandy M'Leish?—of whom more quaint tales can be recounted than probably of any other man of his class in Scotland. He lived for years in this favoured spot. He was a mighty hunter of the red deer, a perfect sleuth-hound, a relentless tracker, and once he had marked down a beast, he would pursue it with the greatest determination and dogged perseverance till he secured it. On his own ground, I suppose few stalkers did better work. He was no respecter of persons, and said exactly what he meant to every one, "putting you in your place" in a way which was unanswerable. I remember on one occasion I got up to a shot in rather an awkward spot at the top of the wood in Glenkinglass. I had crawled forward to a shelving rock, whence I expected to get a fair shot at the beast. I had just settled into position, unaware of the proximity of any one, when a hoarse voice whispered in my ear, "Shoot him dead!" Such an interruption was enough to put one off the shot altogether. As it happened, I did shoot him dead. I afterwards asked M'Leish why on earth he had gone so near to spoiling my whole chance? "Weel, ye see, I didna want to have a lot of bother with him among the rocks." However, though he never moved from where he fell, we did have a lot of bother with that stag. He got hopelessly fixed up in some very bad places, and it was all M'Leish, the ghillie, and I could do to pull and drag and lower him to more easy ground. M'Leish was not very fond of the drudgery of the hill. On this

occasion he argued, and talked, and gave directions in Gaelic, without exerting himself overmuch to help out the situation. At last, rather impatiently, I said, "Pray, do talk English, M'Leish; I cannot understand a word you say in Gaelic." "It is a pity you had not learned such a useful thing before taking to the hill," was M'Leish's dry rejoinder. On another occasion I was crawling after him to get within shot of some beasts. To my horror he had my new rifle out of the cover and was dragging it through the rough heather. I anxiously appealed to him to be careful with the precious weapon. "Tak it yersel'," and the rifle was left on the spot, while M'Leish crawled swiftly on without further comment. A young sportsman, unaware of Sandy's peculiarities, was eagerly pressing forward side by side as they climbed a stiff pony-track. M'Leish disliked walking alongside any one, and, being unable to shake off his companion, at last turned round and said, "This path is meant for one, and I lead the way." This was certainly a crushing manner of expressing his views. With M'Leish's sayings and doings one could fill a volume, and, with all, he was a warm-hearted, kindly, God-fearing man, bringing up a large family late in life to be a help and support to him and his wife when he got too stiff for the hill. M'Leish has migrated to Dalmally now, and I often go and have a crack over old times when I am passing. The last time I was there he greeted me with, "I thought yon wumman walked like Lady Breadalbane."

I could not linger long at Ardmaddy, as I had still to make my way to Glenkinglass Lodge before nightfall, so I was soon passing along the almost sylvan path among the oak coppice, which takes one some two or three miles up the glen. As I reached the little primitive schoolhouse I found service was being conducted by a missionary from Taynuilt. There I paused and shared with the simple people whom I love their offering of praise and prayer, never more sure to reach the divine ear than from the glens and hills on which He has left such special marks of blessing in their charm and beauty. It was good to sit there, with doors and windows open to the river and sunshine, and hear the familiar words, join in the well-known tunes, and see around those kindly faces which have never greeted me but with a smile, or from whom I have never parted but with a warm farewell. All the rest of the way I carried with me the memory of that simple service, feeling that the day had been in so many ways a true Sabbath.

Glenkinglass Lodge seemed like a palace of luxury that evening,—an excellent dinner, waited on by a most solicitous abigail, a cheerful fire (there are only stoves in the bothies, which cause the temperature at times to vary between exceeding cold and melting heat if the utmost care is not bestowed on them), and, later on, a bed with actually a

spring mattress! This lodge is quite a little mansion in its way,—sitting-room, three good bedrooms, servants' room, and kitchen. The two rifles who go there for the inside of the week seem to enjoy it immensely. A homely plain cook takes charge, and the other maid is generally a good valet and waiter, so that both outer and inner man are well cared for. A stone's-throw away is also a good bothy for the ghillies, and capital stalker's house. The river Kinglass flows in front, and when in spate splendid baskets of sea-trout can be got within a few hundred yards of the lodge.

I was sorry to feel on Monday that one more walk would bring my expedition to a close. It had been singularly successful and fortunate. I had not experienced a wet day, had regained so much confidence in my walking powers, and was full of gratitude for the blessings of renewed health and energy which had enabled me to enjoy every hour I had spent on the road. About half-way to Black Mount I met H. and O. M. fishing on Loch Dochart. We joined forces and made our way home together. The road to Glenkinglass will always have very tender and abiding memories for me. Only last year, one glorious September Sunday, there being no service in any of the churches, three good friends set out to spend a happy day going to Glenkinglass to lunch. Never was the old adage more belied that "Two is company and three is none," for on this occasion these particular three were of one mind, one in lightness of heart and happiness at the prospect of the outing. What a day of days it was!—brilliant sunshine all the way, the hills touched with the first change of russet from green, and just the element of autumn freshness in the air which makes one feel able to walk for ever. Merrily we sped along the ten miles down, beguiling the way with talk both grave and gay; at the lodge a cheerful luncheon, and then an hour's strolling about with camera and telescope; the return up the glen again, with the sun gradually setting behind us, dusting all the Tops with lustrous rosy light. How little did we think that so soon one of these three friends would be snatched from life by the relentless sea! Genial playfellow, true friend, keen sportsman, in all the charm and brightness of his personality, in the midst of a life so full of usefulness and interest, taken from us in a moment! Is it strange, we sometimes dimly wonder, why these things are so,—that those who are so beloved, and who so love life, should be taken away so long before it seems time for them to go? To those who love them best the comforting answer comes, that the parting is but for a little while, and only "till we meet again."

"Far may we search before we find
A heart so manly and so kind."

IN PURPLE BAY.

I.

THE kind loan of a bungalow belonging to the Chinese Maritime Customs at a place near the mouth of the Pearl River, twenty-five miles west of Hong Kong, and the pleasant change of climate that it promised, fitted well with the necessity of working for a Chinese examination. Hence the Teacher hereinafter referred to and quoted.

From its perch on the side of a hill our abiding-place overlooks the sea. As we climb up the verandah steps we see it is tied together with rattan, like a Malay house or the Temple of Solomon, where neither hammer, nor axe, nor any tool of iron was heard in the house while it was building. It is held upright against typhoons by fir-tree poles, which from its roof-beams and sides slope down in every direction into beds of concrete. Its walls look as if they were made of thousands of palm-leaf fans, and indeed they are. The ceilings and party-walls of the four rooms are lined with yellow-brown matting, loosely rounded at the corners. But for the windows, a fanciful person here where I write might imagine himself a fly in a confectioner's paper-bag.

Presently up the steps there march two Customs' braves on sentry duty. An hour ago they were coolies carrying our baggage and bedding on their shoulders. Now they carry Winchesters, and wear conical straw helmets and loose blue blouses edged with turkey red. In the middle of these garments, front and back, is a badge like a mustard-plaster, bearing their official numbers in red characters. They drag out matting and blankets and make ready to keep sweet vigil in the verandah. I would send them away, but if I did they might imagine that we thought ourselves unworthy of protection, and so we should "lose face."

To-day being the 15th of the month, the moon of course is at the full, and shines upon a sea alive with fishing-boats that carry no lights. Tiny sparks which trail astern of many of them seem to be some sort of lure for the fish. Other boats, anchored in pairs a cable's-length apart, are dragging in their seines, the nets called *sok ku*,—the very word and the very thing concerning which Mencius rebuked his Prince what time Alexander was king in Macedon: "Cease to break in on thy people's time, and their grain will be more than they can eat. Keep thy seines from out their ponds and waters: then fish and turtles shall be enough and to spare."

A howling and singing rises up through the moonlight from

the sea; but whether this is an artifice to drive back the fish from escaping at the bag-mouth of the net, or whether it is only rousing the night-owl in a catch, I have not yet inquired. The steady cool breeze blows inland, the thermometer is at 70° Fahrenheit, and there are no mosquitoes. So the second *kang* beaten out at the guard-house ends the first day.

II.

We have entered upon our new possession and beaten the bounds. Below us the guard-house where live our half-dozen of braves. Beyond a low but steep grey hill, all bent grass and granite outcrop, projects like a bastion into the sea. To the left a mile of dune and yellow foreshore follow the sweep of the bay to another scarred headland at its eastern extremity. From the sea to where the hills stretch back from the flat land is perhaps half a mile. That is the length and the breadth of it; and in the middle there is a wood and a curved roof of green glazed tiles shining among the fir-trees. Now, green tiles indicate a temple; and this one is well known as the chosen seat of the Goddess of Heaven, and has a great reputation. Our way there lay by the sea-shore across the golf-links of Someday, now abandoned to myriads of lady's-slipper and a very pale harebell,—a veritable Tom Tiddler's ground when the wind blows, with the silver dancing to be picked up first.

The Chinaman always seems to spoil his ship for a ha'porth of tar. He buys a magnificent equipage, and lets himself be driven by a coachman in a dirty coat. He spends $100,000 on a temple, goes up to it by a tumble-down bridge over a muddy ditch, and builds a dirty tea-shop against its carved and gilded front. The temple was built on the same model as all the Buddhist and Taoist temples that I have visited. In front are two small granite lions on pedestals, but they look more like pug-dogs. The portico is a curious imitation in white granite of a style of architecture often carried out in lacquered wood. Twenty-feet granite monoliths support crossbeams also of granite, from which again other pillars run up to the angle of the roof. All this work is very slight, considering the material, the pillars not being more than a foot square. Graven and gilt upon them are texts: "Plenteous Grace shall flow, brought from four seas in passage-boat of Kindness," and so forth.

Three high but flimsy wooden doors open upon the first court-yard, where a monstrous effigy of gilded countenance sits on his throne. Cloistered passages lead to a second and larger court. Here are huge censers of bronze, plaster genii in garish clothing, palm-trees in pots, a buzzing sweet-meat

stall. In one place are twenty female images facing each other in niches across an aisle, like choristers, each with a naked baby instead of a hymn-book. Their names are above their heads, The Gently-smiling One, or The Sex-Changer. To these mothers pray. A number of unkempt persons, who turned out to be priests,—Temple-Blessings they call themselves,—were loafing about in ordinary coolies' costume. Business was slack, and the clerk of the Fortune booking-office was asleep upon his wooden counter. Finally, we unearthed the manager or abbot, I know not which to call him, smoking opium in his counting-house in a wing of the building. He was a grubby old man, who told us he had been to California as a herb-doctor. He was also kind enough to take us personally through white-washed passages and doorways without doors to a farther courtyard, where the white walls were decorated with mouldings of green banana leaves and pink lotus lilies. The roofed-over part of this courtyard (you must not think of a temple as an indoor place) was the bedroom of the Queen of Heaven. There was not much privacy, nor furniture either. There was a plain table with one of those Chinese dressing-cases on it, the sort that opens out into a mirror and a wonderful number of little drawers, and folds up like a conjuring trick into a small black-wood box inlaid with mother-of-pearl, bound and studded out of all proportion with brass fittings. For women to do their hair at this table amounts to a religious rite. The combs supplied are of the cheapest order and none too clean. Does this argue lack of artistic perception, this contempt of detail; or does a brilliant imagination scorn such outward aids? The abbot-manager was good enough to present me with one of these combs, which of course I accepted with gratitude. An awkward pause, and then a delicate hint that some return was needed before the merits of the comb could be expected to work. "How much?" I whispered to the Teacher with resignation. "A dollar, at the least," he magnificently replied. To my amazement, lucre unadorned was considered no adequate return for the gift of good health,—"sprightly body," as the abbot called it. A few flowers now, or something of that nature.

The bed was really beautiful. I should be sorry to guess what it must have cost; but it was carved elaborately, and inlaid with many sorts of woods of every shade of yellow and brown. It was fitted with mosquito-net and gold-embroidered silken coverlets and splendid hangings. I saw there also a row of tiny scarlet shoes for her "golden lilies." The Queen of Heaven is, then, another victim to foot-binding? This furniture, as well as all the great bells, drums, models of ships, and incense bowls, has been presented to the temple by grati-

fied worshippers. As a whole, the scene compares very ill with the better sort of Buddhist monastery, where, if there is great ignorance of the creed professed, there is at least a strong discipline and decency and order.

III.

The way to Fly Hamlet lies by Leper Lane. (Neither of these names is known to the aborigines, but surely explorers may call their country as they please.) The oysters bring the flies, and the lepers are being drawn out of the country places round about, to be at the Shrine of the Goddess of Heaven for her Birthday Felicitations.

Skirting the temple, the road took us through the pine wood, up the hill, and down again into open country dotted with lychee orchards, that look as if they are planted with the orderly trees of a Dutch toy-box. And there, between hedges of quickset and dog-rose, we met the first detachment of lepers, an old woman and a man about forty, each with a couple of baskets of rice, fresh vegetables, and bedding slung on a stick over their shoulders. They were trotting along briskly enough, and seemed little affected. Nor should I have noticed there was anything wrong with them had I not happened to glance at the Teacher, and observed that he was holding his head very high, with his lips very tightly shut, and looking uncommonly sick. "Didn't you see?" he said, stretching forth his hand flat, with the fingertips crooked like talons. But for five miles we passed through many a group of them, in all stages of the disease, mostly resting at the wayside,—for it seems that they are easily tired. There must be two types of the disease. I have seen none like Naaman, white as snow. These were a brown people—brown clothes, brown bandages, brown swollen faces, brown hands where hands they had. "Cumshaw, Taipan, cumshaw!" is their monotonous low cry. Then they would make as if to touch us, till the Teacher was like a pony when it has to pass an elephant. To give them charity was out of the question, as had we done so it is highly probable that they would have besieged our matshed, and perhaps carried it at the crawl; nor would our braves and their Winchesters have availed anything against such an army. The Teacher was disturbed. "I try," he said, "to nourish the Mock-at-Danger Disposition; but there are two things that I cannot stand up against. Of insects the most fearful is a cockroach, and of diseases it is *that*." I agreed as regards the winged cockroach. Trodden on, he leaves his softer parts behind, and rending and discarding heart and entrails, as the

Chinese say of a hero, scales the nearest foeman's leg, mere shell and valiant spirit. But a poor leper, I only feel great pity for him.

The Teacher says I am a bird who has not yet known the bow, and tells a long tale of a friend of his who once stayed a week with him, handing himself rice out of the same bowl. He seemed to have some slight skin trouble, but said it was just when the razor slipped. Then when he went back to his village the disease proclaimed itself.

"What then?" I asked.

"What then? I went straight to the big medicine house and bought a length of that electric-wire light they make in Japan."

"And is that effective?"

"Not to cure: only to diagnose. This is no superstition. Foreign doctors know it. When at last it was dark enough I stood before the looking-glass and lit the ribbon. O Fortune, I saw my face was green! Had it been red, then Hell at work!"

I daresay his face was green enough. "All the same I meant, what did *he* do?" I observed mildly. He, it appeared, had none Above—that is, of an older generation—to object to his presence; and from Below, of course, objections would be at variance with Propriety. So he lived on in the bosom of his family, and has now been doing so for several years. His wife is affected, and probably one of the children, besides a female bond-servant. We agreed that his conduct displayed much lack of consideration. And yet, after all, it is easier to be self-sacrificing when self-sacrifice is expected of you. What an angel the first unselfish person must have been!

Then the Teacher told me of a patent medicine which he had seen advertised, and had sent to his friend the leper, who returned his grateful acknowledgments. It had done all it promised to do, but only up to a certain point. After the first day the patient had indeed found a golden worm in his mouth, a red one on the second day, and on the third a black worm bigger than the others. So far so good. But unexpectedly the thickenings and the sloughings continued. Now was it not strange that the Teacher, knowing what courteous liars his countrymen are, should fail to see the poor wretch's meaning, which was, as I suppose, "I took one dose and flung the rest to the chickens. And I wish I could force it down the throat of *you*, with your 3 candareen 6 lé of charity." That is my interpretation. But with Chinese you never know what to believe. I think the Teacher is a more than usually truthful Chinaman, and he told me, as of his own knowledge, a story more wonderful perhaps than that of his friend's vermicular prodigies. This spring his old aunt, who lives with him, had very bad toothache, and went to one of those street dentists who have the roof and side of their stalls fes-

tooned with strings of teeth and pull out yours while you wait. He met his aunt just after the operation. Within the four seas all are brothers, so you know very well what was his first question. No, it had been quite painless—really so; not painless dentistry, but abstract painlessness—all owing to a white ointment that had first been smeared on the gums. These teeth had been quite firmly set and deeply enfanged.

Lepers and dentistry, what sights and subjects for an April walk among fields of the springing rice! To strike a new vein we turned aside into a bypath, and straightway encountered one whose face was the face of a rhinoceros.

Fly Hamlet is approached between cairns of oyster-shells. The method by which these oysters are grown is rather curious. The cultivators plant tiles in the sandy shallows, and the oysters grow in clusters about them. After three years they are ripe to be gathered by the simple process of picking up the tiles again. They are dried and strung on rings of split bamboo, and have an enormous sale among the eating-shops of Canton and Hong-Kong. The shells are burnt to make lime to build our houses.

The village is one long street, flowing like a river with the most surprising twists and bends. When it meets an obstacle in the shape of a temple or the house of a Riches Lord, it swirls off at right angles to its former course. It is hardly eight feet wide, and is banked in by one-storied shops without fronts, or rather whose fronts are taken down every morning like those of a doll's house; and so the everyday life of the people is being acted in a series of theatres on each side of you as you walk along. Here is a scene of Chinese at rice, squatting in a ring on the shop-floor; here the shopkeeper is lying on a plank-bed filling his opium pipe, or perhaps lighting incense-sticks before the tablet, or having his head shaved. In a village at home it is the hardest thing for an inquisitive bycomer to find out how the people live, with their shut doors and little windows blocked with geraniums.

The street was full of yellow dogs and children playing knuckle-bones, that neither barked nor called names after us. By this it was clear that the tidewaiter's station of the Imperial Maritime Customs was not far away. "Having seen much not easily astonished." I noticed one other curious thing at Fly Hamlet. In several places the walls were placarded with what looked like a Chinese character of great size and complicated design, and yet obviously was not one. This is an incantation posted on the wall of a sick man's house. It is called a "fu" (a word that has no signification), and it represents no idea to mortal ken. Therefore, to be logical, it must convey *something to the eye* of a devil. But here the ex-

planation tails off into vagueness.

At the Customs station we borrowed ponies to take us back. The Teacher—a Chinese "read-book teacher"—is certainly a plucky man. He had never been on a horse before. He had absolutely no control over it: only when my pony went fast or stopped, his did the same. When we reached level ground we made as near an approach to a gallop as can be made out of the double-shuffle of a Cantonese pony.

"And wider still the crevice rano
Betwixt the saddle and the man."

But, clinging on "five-parts alive and three-parts dead," he only urged me to go faster. This was his way of nourishing a Mock-at-Danger Disposition, and a very good way too.

IV.

'Tis now the witching hour of 5.30 A.M. An Inferno of *bells and gongs has awakened* me; so here I sit, like Xerxes, on a granite crag, looking over a wide sea, and my fleet.

"He counted them at break of day,
And when the sun set where were they?"

Many of the country boats, having pre-dated their felicitations, are already on their ways home, whether along the coast or up into that inextricable tangle of water-ways, the estuary of the Pearl River. Sometimes in Malay countries you may see a bright patch of colour on the ground in front of you, resolving at your approach into a whirl of butterflies that skim away lightly in all directions. These junks remind me of them, as they drift from the edges of the pack in the bay, and flit out of the crowded harbour. Their veined sails are set to a following wind, and glow pink in the sunrise. Some are prosaically dragged along arm-in-arm with steam launches made fast alongside. But one *of the biggest boats, setting a* bright example against such commonplace, even dispensed with sails, and was rowed away in contempt of the wind and sheer pride of heart. With twenty pairs of oars keeping true time, and a rhythmic *Ho, haw! Ho, haw!* she swept along in true old-world galley style. Had she been the one that Marco Polo commanded, half a mile away and you would never have known the difference. A unit of the Viceroy's fleet is in from Canton, and has just fired a salute of six guns. It must be in honour of the Queen of Heaven, whose birthday it is.

Sea and sky alike are blue and unruffled, with wisps of pink cloud upon them. The moon is cut clean in two; and I realise with a sense of astronomical delight that this is as it should be, for she was full when we came here a week ago. In the verandah the braves are getting up: I hear

them clear their throats. But for them and the junk that woke me, now faintly tinkling a mile down wind, there is nothing to break the stillness.

On the beach directly below there stands a rock with a fisher's hut upon it. In front of this there is a wheel something like a treadmill, and the fisherman, steadying himself on a wooden rest, is working it round with his feet. There is something grotesque in the claw-like action. He reminds me of a blue-and-tawny spider spinning in a corner of his web. From the wheel a gang-plank, hand-rails, and winding-gear run twenty yards into the sea; where just beyond them, as the wheel turns round, gradually emerge the four black corners of an enormous net. Now it is swinging clear, except for a silver O in the middle, where a mass of living silver flashes in the sunlight.

Out along the gangway trips the spider to his web. His weapon is a twenty-foot pole with a dipper at the end. He strikes into the pool, and the young salmon flounces half across the net and back again at the indignity. Why did you not keep three strokes farther from shore, good fish? I have seen you and your fellows come round that headland every morning, jumping clear out of the sea as you ran into the streaks of brown fresh water. And again at closer quarters I have seen you—but we will not speak of that, for your death has been tragic and unsportsmanlike. You are not pink inside like your English kin, but white, O salmon! Others of these webs for fishes, scattered far out into the shallow water, are shining like gossamers on an autumn morning.

On the hill above the fishing-net you can see the ruins of a fort. Another to match it stands upon the eastern horn of the bay. I have not been able to find out anything certain as to their history. They were probably built by pirates, or else by the Cantonese Government in a spasmodic attempt to repress pirates, a few decades ago, and were knocked abroad by some gun-boat of ours in '39 or '40. Their working lives must have been very short, as even now the grey bricks are hardly weather-worn. Now, is it not curious how you never see an old thing in hoary China? (Except, of course, chinaware, which our friends collect. "That means Ming Dynasty," they say triumphantly, as they show you, wrong side up, the characters upon it. So it does, sure enough.) There are a few genuine antiquities on view at Canton; and, of course, the loot of a capital city brings many heirlooms into circulation. But it is a general rule, as you go through town and country, that all you see indoors and out is not 200 years old; and but for a few banyan trees and monasteries and a city wall or so, little, indeed, is more antique than the grey heads of the elders.

I think of a village I know not twenty miles from London. There is the Crouch Oak, or

one of them, in which King Charles hid. In a church not far from thence is a postern gate of sandstone hewn by the Normans, while the village stocks seem quite modern. But a Chinese farmer has only a modern copy of his family book to show that he and his have tilled the soil for thirty generations, since they came to Canton from the north. There are no garments of the past laid by in lavender, no family china, no old books with queer woodcuts. The oldest thing upon the estate is the horseshoe grave of the ancestor, periodically rebuilt in soft brick and stucco,—the chances are that even the ancestor is a comparatively new one. Houses and household gods serve, and are intended to serve, but for a lifetime. So, like children on the beach, generation after generation build and rebuild in sand; and time, like the rising sea, smooths all out again between sunrise and sunrise.

This morning we "did" the festival, for which such preparations have been made. During the last ten days an Earl's Court growth of mat shed has been springing up, in the shape of a brown corridor half a mile long, between the bay and the temple and a village by the sea-shore. Purple Bay, as our bay is called, was still half full of junks from the country; but the crowd whose subdued roar we heard were city visitors. Six high white steamers, taken off their proper run to Canton and Macao, had brought them, and now occupied the bay as swans a duck-pond.

The lepers' caravanserai was the first thing we came upon—little lean-to's of matting just high enough to crawl into, with no ends, twenty-seven of them. I feel I am beginning to understand the leper now: his is an absolute abandonment of all that once appealed to him, and these card-houses are the concrete expression. "I used to live under a tiled roof with my parents and sons: I worshipped at the Hills. To those Above I was respectful, to those Below I was kindly. Now I live among reeds and rushes like a foreigner and a savage." The lepers themselves were squatting in a double row by the entrance to the village, each with his bowl beside him. A damsel who was passing by crossed herself, or made some equivalent gesture, and flung a handful of cash at the nearest bowl, without deigning to look whether she had hit or missed. It was interesting to notice that the beggars within the range of her bounty did not snatch hastily at the coins, as might have been expected, but gathered them up one by one with a listless, indifferent air, which made us suspect that they were working on some co-operative system.

I daresay many pilgrims got no farther than the village itself. Here were roods of the commoner kind of eating shops, full of square tables for four, where everything you

can wish for that is greasy or fried or sodden, in the way of flour-puffs, split and dried ducks, fish maws, and rosaries of dried oysters from Fly Hamlet, is slopped about in pretty earthenware bowls of five colours. The guests are not, as a rule, of the five orders of nobility, though you might think they were from the magnificent way in which they call for the "eight big bowls." They are, you will observe, apt to relax under the genial influence of food. This one has tucked his lower lip under the lip of his rice bowl, and for all his long dress is shovelling in rice like a coolie. That other shows a tendency to draw up his feet upon the bench, to untie his trouser leg at the ankle, and to roll back his loose calico socks. He thus obtains a current of ventilation over his lower limbs: he is also fanning himself down the back.

Just beyond the eating shops are the "fantan" rooms, screened off from the street by brightly painted paper walls. Here you put your money on 1, 2, 3, or 4; and the croupier, who is always naked to the waist and emaciated, flips off bright brass cash by fours from a heap on the table with a chop-stick. He is extremely deliberate; but at last the remaining two or three decide whether you have won or lost. People squat all round the mat-covered board, stoically entering records of the way the luck is running. You hear nothing but "Buy 3," "2 and 4"; and when they are broke they quietly hop down from their perches and take themselves off.

At the door of the guard-house a stand of enormous and grotesque tridents, axes, and spears represents the insignia of office. The major's charger, a miserable little white pony, is resting hard by on three legs and his head-stall. Inside, a few braves girt with bandoliers are lolling and smoking. There is, however, little for them to do, for a more orderly crowd was never seen.

The corridor takes you dry-shod across a patch of rice land to the temple. It is a covered way with plank flooring, perhaps twenty feet wide, not counting the booths that open upon it for its full length on either side, after the manner of a Burlington Arcade. These shops are full of all sorts of mementos and useful trifles, like needles and thread for torn dresses, packets of medicinal tea from the mountains, picture-scrolls of the Holy Mother, books eulogising the temple —but, above all, paper cocks. Why paper cocks, I do not know; but there they were, in hundreds and hundreds, as large as life and twice as natural, festooned outside the shops in such wise that they made an orange border to the dense blue crowd in the roadway. All heads are clean-shaved in honour of the occasion; and the sunshine drips through cracks in the roof down on their "new scoured cauldrons."

In the courtyard before the temple the crowd was thicker

than ever, but within the three doorways was pandemonium indescribable. Things were seen in glimpses, and then a heave of the crowd or a maxim fusillade of crackers tore away the attention. In the first courtyard, by the palm-tree, a sweating coolie was drawing holy water from the well, and slopping it out to pilgrims *gratis* for dear life. No time for ritualistic elegancies, which, besides, we don't value a brass cash. . . . In a cloister by the model junk a middle-aged woman of respectable appearance — some good wife, no doubt — was arguing with a dirty Temple-Blessing over a bamboo joint, full of divining spills. "Ten cents deposit first," he was saying; "just now a box was stolen." The lady (she is plain and anxious-looking) compromises by agreeing to say her prayers on the spot. She tells the fellow what it is she desires in two short words, without troubling to lower her voice, and then down on her knees in the thick of us, while we push back to give her room to knock her head clear of our toes. She rattles her box of spills till one flies out. . . . Bang, clang, drum, and gong! We are pushed and hustled away by the swaying throng. . . . A crowd of women struggling to light incense-sticks at the guttering tapers in a brazen censer as long as a trough. . . . A roar of voices, drifting smoke, and ashes that flutter down.

Strange how people know their own business best. The gold faces of the images and their fat red arms, which looked so garish on the day of my peaceful first visit, are now seen through a veil of smoke effulgent countenances and rosy limbs. Remember, then, that these monstrous Chinese deities were never designed to be walked round, patted, and patronised, but to be gazed up to with the eye of faith amid soul-stirring accompaniments.

There is a clear space before the Queen of Heaven, and half a dozen women are kneeling on round mats there. They have all black patches on their foreheads from bumping their heads on the ground. The ground may be dirty but it is dry, and the patches are wet and shiny. I think there is something artificial about this. One old lady is setting to work in a most business-like way. As soon as she has said her prayer she kow-tows, and as soon as she has kow-towed she shakes out her tally. Her daughter-in-law standing by picks up each one as it drops and takes it to the table where the clerks are writing. They enter the numbers on a slip of paper according to her directions. "No. 13 for Ah Ling, Elder Brother-in-law, please," and so on, right through the family. When the tale is complete she will take her list to the ticket department and exchange it for the oracles. It is all so methodical.

Such was the worship as I saw it: mercenary, but obviously sincere. Sincere it must

be, for there is no public feeling on such a subject. If I shake or do not shake the oracle how can that concern you? If you wish to know your future why ever should I approve or deride? And that is the sum of it. There is no communion of saints, no public prayers: certainly no general thanksgiving for the privilege of working in the world.

The Teacher declined to learn what was in store for him. I had no scruples, and besides, as the proverb says—

"Enter Country, follow Customs:
Out by River, follow Bends."

So I paid my three cents and, having twice ignominiously shaken out all the tallies in a heap on the ground, succeeded at the third attempt in getting a single one to jump out by itself. I exchanged it with the booking-clerk for a scrap of yellow paper, badly printed but big with destiny.

V.

The vessel that is to take us back lies in the bay, beating time to the ground-swell with her white spars. Within the bungalow the tearing up of newspapers conveys a melancholy suggestion of packing, change, and decay. Before my dictionary disappears let me decipher the oracle of the Queen of Heaven. Now, my prayer was after this wise: "With respect to Birthday Celebrations, is it or is it not allowed to enlighten ignorance of my humble country?" And this is her reply:—

"Temple of the Queen of Heaven.

"The Temple - Blessings of the Queen of Heaven respectfully tender This:—

"A Middling Destiny.

"Graceful Crane on shining pinions steady,
For ten thousand miles of sky art ready?
Ah, beware, the hidden arrow flying
By thy native sedge may lay thee dying."

Graceful Crane.—Nay, but first, let me see,—let me see. Why, that's this article. There is no obstruction in this. *Hidden arrow.*—Hum—is this the editor? No, for what follows? *By thy native sedge.*—Does this portend that the office coolie, as he goes to the post, will lick the stamps from off her shining pinion, and fling my Graceful Crane into the harbour? It is impossible, I suppose, completely to circumvent Destiny, but I will block her out at any rate from *that* course of mischief — and post the packet myself.

Edward A. Irving.

Customs Bungalow, Purple Bay.

A LADY OF THE OLD REBELLION.

BY LYDIA MILLER MACKAY.

CHAPTER I.

When Hugh Campbell came home from fighting under Marlborough in France he found his father three days in his grave and himself Chieftain of Locharn. He brought a brilliant reputation home with him, for, young as he was, he was an experienced soldier, and had fought at Ramilies when he was but a boy in his teens. Yet that seemed little to him, when he found the old grim castle of his boyhood empty of the last one of his family. It seemed strange to him, too, after eight years' experience of the world, both in camps and in courts, to find himself back in the wild north country, with its barbarous ways and the little petty feuds and warrings that had been hot before he went away,—so strange, indeed, that he was at first like a foreigner on his own lands and among his own people.

He had not been two weeks in Locharn, however, when all the old fierce clan spirit that of late years had been somewhat tempered was roused in him again. The cause of this was neither more nor less than a letter from his father's old enemy, Maclean of Scorry, proposing to patch up the ancient feud that was between them and be done with it for ever. The letter was full of fair words,—too fair and smooth for one who had bitter memories of Maclean and his ways; and it ended with the proposal—for it came to no less—that the old disputes should be settled by a union between the families. "I have no son," wrote the wily chief, "and my lass Isobel will be my heiress, and I would be weel content if things were put to rights as was the fashion of old time, when there was a weel-faured, weel-dowered lass on the one side and a gentleman of Sir Hugh Campbell's distinguished reputation on the other."

Locharn was amazed at the impudence of the man. Here was he scarce home after eight years' absence, and there were meeting him on every side tales of what his clan had suffered in that time at the hands of Maclean of Scorry. There was a township in Locharn hardly yet done smoking after a raid his barbarous followers had made on it, and it was not six months since the man who wrote so friendly had taken the law into his hands, after the fashion that was lingering yet in these parts, and hanged three of the Campbell men to the Scorry trees for the crows to pick at. Ay, and if Locharn could have forgiven these things, there were old bitter memories of his boyhood—of plottings and schemings Mac-

lean had made against his father—that he could not forgive, and the remembrance of them made his blood boil when he looked at the smooth words on the paper, and thought of the man who would make an end of the whole thing with easy compliments and the offer of a Maclean bride.

Sir Hugh sent back a short sharp answer to Scorry's letter. He said to himself with a grim smile that he would get no more such from the same quarter. Yet he was sure the thing was not done with altogether, and the more he considered it the more he was puzzled by it. He could not come at the gain that Maclean of Scorry expected to make by having himself for a son-in-law, and yet he knew very well that some gain must have been in his mind, though he could not fathom it, and at last he put the matter from him, expecting that time would throw light on it.

Time and Rumour brought him tales in plenty of the Macleans, father and daughter, —how they were hot Jacobites both of them, and how the castle of Scorry, high on its wave-beaten rock, was the fostering-place of half the plots that were framed against Queen Anne. The lass, but newly home from a convent in France, was already known, it seemed, for a beauty, and yet Locharn was not drawn by the accounts he heard of her, for she was said to be her father's right hand, and to have the temper and the tongue of the Macleans, which was saying she would make a stormy wife for any man. Moreover, she was rumoured to be as much at home on a horse's back as a boy might be, and to be as skilful with a pistol as other women would be with a bodkin. Altogether, it was not a very likeable picture of a lassie that all he heard of her left in young Sir Hugh Campbell's mind, and it was far indeed from his own image of what a woman should be. That, to tell the truth, came from his never-to-be-forgotten memory of the sweet saint who was his mother. It was a sad and solemn thing to the new Chief of Locharn to go into her chamber after his long absence, and to find there no change save the one great change, that it was empty of her who had adorned it. For the rest, the tapestry of her own embroidery hung still upon the walls, and her very chair and footstool and the table with her Bible and little books of devotion stood as he remembered them. He was not so hardened by the years that he could look on them dry-eyed. "God grant," said he to himself in all honesty, "that if ever wife of mine comes to Locharn, she may be like her that was here before her."

For two years after Sir Hugh's home-coming the country was full of the whisperings of Jacobite plots. Then Queen Anne died, and King George was proclaimed so peacefully that many were surprised; and the country seemed to be settling into security at last, when of a sudden the High-

lands were all ablaze with the fire of rebellion, and Locharn found himself back at his old work of soldiering, with every fighting man of his house at his back. He did good service for King George in these days; but his clan fought not for one king or the other, but to have a blow at their old enemies, and especially at the Macleans of Scorry, who, indeed, suffered more than any others at the battle of Sheriffmuir, so that when the whole thing was over, and the blaze put out, and King Jamie was away over-seas again, it was but a broken remnant of Scorry's men that went back to their homes.

Scorry himself was counted so dangerous an enemy to the Government, that a price was offered for his person; and it chanced that it was Sir Hugh Campbell who was intrusted with the work of apprehending him. He was not unwilling to undertake it, for he had heard and known enough of the man since he came home to make the contempt and distaste of him that he learned in his boyhood ten times stronger. Fair words that covered a foul intent, smooth appearances that had a trap beneath them, open dealings and then a stab in the dark,—these were Maclean's ways, as the Campbells had learned to their cost time and again. Locharn thought grimly in these days of the letter he had received three years before, and of the plan behind it that had come out at last, and which was just to win himself and his sword and his military experience to the cause of the Pretender,—ay, and if that had failed, to help Scorry out of such a difficulty as he had come into now, when a Whig son-in-law might have turned out very advantageous.

It was on an evening in late autumn that he got news of Maclean's presence in his own castle of Scorry, where he was said to be lying concealed until such time as he could get away to France; and Sir Hugh lost no time in taking the road there, with a score of armed men behind him. With him rode one who was unarmed, James Campbell, called the Preacher, who was his distant kinsman, and had been chaplain to his regiment in France,—a shrewd merry man, with a great scar on his broad face that he got carrying Locharn off the field at Malplaquet when he was all but mortally hurt.

"What about the lassie, Hugh?" said he as they rode, picking their way cautiously because of the badness of the roads. "Think you she's at Scorry yet? I would not wish to see a woman where there's fighting. The work is too rough for them—though I've seen brave ones too in my day."

The chief laughed. "This one thinks little of it, by all accounts," he answered. "There's not a more dangerous Jacobite in the country-side than herself."

"Well," said the Preacher dryly, "that is what she would not be if she had seen all I

have. I have known fighting and warring all my days, God knows, but I never saw the murdering of women and children and unarmed men that I saw under the last Stewart. Ah, lad! the days of the Persecution are an old song to you, but to me they are bitter yet. I can feel the very cold of the nights in the kirkyard of Greyfriars, when there was a musket-shot at our ears if we as much as raised our heads above the level of the tombstones. I was a strong young man then, but there were poor souls in an evil case among us, and when I think of it I pray God we have seen the last of Stewart rule. Ah, they were bad times."

"Bad times indeed, cousin," said Locharn. "I think our own are better. And for me, all I ask is a fair field and a clean fight, and Heaven bless the winner."

"And, eh man!" he cried, sniffing at the wind, "do you not get the smell of the sea? There's some pleasure in a night ride in the old country."

It was the grey dawn of the morning when the company came in sight of the castle of Scorry and heard the waves breaking below its walls. It stood at the far edge of a rocky promontory, and was defended on three sides by the sea and on the fourth by a steep brae up which the path went crookedly. On the top was a considerable space of level ground, and on one side of the castle a garden had been made of recent years. The building itself was an odd-shaped pile, and at one time had been strongly fortified. At the back was an old round tower no longer in use, but connected with the more modern house by a short passage or bridge of stone, which was uncovered at the top, and left a kind of arch-way beneath. There was no sight or sound of any one when Locharn and his men rode into the courtyard. If the chief of the Macleans was in Scorry, it was clear he did not expect visitors.

"Open in the king's name," cried Sir Hugh, and the Campbells hammered on the great door till they made noise enough to waken the dead. There was no answer from within, however, and those outside were weary hammering, and were about to take stronger measures to get entrance, when at last there was a great fumbling at the lock inside, a rattling of chains and of bolts, and the door was thrown open.

An old grey-headed serving-man stood in it shaking with fright, his wrinkled face the colour of parchment, and his eyes blood-shot and blinking at the dawn.

"Is your master here?" Locharn called out to him. "Is Mr Maclean in Scorry?"

The man stammered out that he was not, and his disturbance seemed so great that Sir Hugh made sure he was lying. He called to some one to keep hold of him, and pushed past him into the great hall, that was all dim and

shadowy yet, because it was so early. There he found emptiness and silence, but on the oaken table were traces of a recent meal which seemed to show that the chief was in the castle. Yet before long he began to be doubtful of that, for each passage and chamber that he entered held only the same emptiness and desolation, and except the one, there was not so much as a servant—man or woman—to be seen anywhere.

The old man who had opened the door protested that he was alone in the castle, and that Scorry had gone away riding the evening before, and yet his eyes continually followed the Campbells with an anxiety he could not hide, so that Locharn could not but think that Scorry was concealed somewhere, and that the fellow feared he would be discovered. He posted men in the court-yard and at the great door, so that no one could escape from the castle without being seen, and made diligent search through the great building, for he was vexed and angry at the very thought that he might be baffled in finding the man he was so hot to lay hands on. One of the Campbell men had an old story of a tunnel that ran underground from one of the ancient dungeons, and though Sir Hugh placed little credit on it, it made him the more speedy in the search.

As for the Preacher, he took no part in the work, but set the old serving-man to get a meal for the company, for the night ride had been long and the men were in need of food; and the man went about his task white and trembling, and with such grief and trouble in his face that Mr James could not but pity him.

Locharn was alone when he made the first discovery that was made. It was in no cellar or dungeon, but on the third storey of the castle. He came upon a locked door, the first he had met with, and finding it at the end of a dark passage and protected by a curtain, he was hot to have it opened; and as it was a slight wooden thing, he put his shoulders to it and burst it in. Then in a moment he stood abashed within the threshold, for the small chamber into which he had come so rudely was a chamber of death, and on a bed before him lay the body of an old worn woman, her hands still clutching the blanket she had caught in the death-grip. Hardly conscious that he did so, he took the bonnet from his head and stood a moment wondering, his eyes travelling round the room. The place was empty of any presence, and yet from the red ashes in the fire-place to the woman's cloak thrown carelessly over a chair, everything had the look of occupation. Sir Hugh's eyes came to the window, and he crossed over to it and looked out, and there in front of him was the old round tower that was not to be seen from the front entrance, and down below him was the narrow bridge that joined it to the building he

was in. At once his mind sprang to the thought that here was a possible hiding-place for Scorry, and in another minute he had found the small stone stair that led down to it, and he gave a whistle to call his men to him. He ran down the stair that was narrow and had little windows here and there looking out to the tower, red now in the dawn, and to the sea washing up to the rocks at the foot of it, and at one of these he stopped of a sudden, for there, quite close to him now, but across the bridge, a woman stepped out from the tower and drew the heavy door of it behind her. He saw her put all her strength to the effort of turning the key in the lock, and with some guess of what she wished to do and her reason for doing it, Locharn sent the hilt of his sword smashing at the window-glass, and in the instant he was leaning from the opening. At the sound the girl started and turned, and, drawing the key from the lock, she looked about her, holding it in her hand, and sent a glance to the window and another over the railing of the bridge to the sheer rock and the sea, and quick as lightning she raised her hand over her head. Sir Hugh did then what shamed him afterwards to remember, and yet in the hot moment, when his blood was up, and he was in full cry, as it were, after his quarry, what never gave him a thought. He raised the pistol that was in his hand and levelled it at her. "Stop!" he called out loudly, "or I shoot." It was then he saw the kind of lassie he was speaking to; and the memory of her standing there on the narrow stone bridge in the red dawn—her dark head outlined against the tower, her wonderful face framed in wind-blown hair—was with him to his dying day. She turned full to him looking up, her hand still raised in the air, and her eyes ablaze with a kind of high scorn and defiance such as he had never seen the like of.

"Shoot and be damned!" she cried out to him, and flung the key with full force over the rock.

Hugh's hand dropped, and he fired out to sea. "You are brave," he said, and could not take his eyes off her. "You are brave," he cried again. He saw in the instant that this could be no other than Isobel Maclean, Scorry's daughter—for her air and bearing, not to speak of her extraordinary beauty, left him no doubt of that.

"Who are you?" she cried tauntingly, "that would threaten a woman."

The red showed under the brown of Locharn's skin. He had the hot temper of his house, and he did not like the position in which he found himself.

"Madam," said he shortly, "I am Hugh Campbell of Locharn,—if you have heard the name."

She gave a great start at that, and her face, that was white with a long night-watch

by the bed of death, flamed suddenly.

"I have heard it to my cost," she said bitterly, and came in at the door below him. He drew back abashed, and went down the few steps to meet her.

"Madam!" said he, reddening and stammering, "will you pardon the foolish threat of a hasty man?"

"That should be neither asked nor granted between your house and mine," she cried proudly, and went by him up the stair.

Sir Hugh stood a moment looking after her. Then he called again on his followers, and for the next half hour their work was to break open the door that the lady had locked. There was now, they found, no other way of entrance to the tower, and Locharn chafed at the delay. They were in at last, but the place had fallen into such ruins that it was no easy matter to walk in it, and they had to go slowly and cautiously because of great gaps in the stairs and in the flooring. All was silence and emptiness, but down below at the foundation Sir Hugh found what he had begun to suspect he would find. This was just the secret tunnel the Campbell man had heard the rumour of. It was not now so secret as it was evident it had once been, for the entrance to it was quite open. Locharn and his men followed it out to the end, and came to a hole in the rocks above the sea. The growth of heather and bracken in the brae-face was broken down there, but there was no other sign of the fugitives. It was evident that for the meantime, at least, Scorry was escaped.

It was mid-day before Sir Hugh called a halt in the search, and when he came back weary and hungry and not over-pleased to the castle, he found the Preacher a little more hot in admiring Miss Isobel Maclean than he was just in the humour for at the moment. Mr James had seen the lady herself for a few moments, and from what he could piece together of what she had told him, and from what the old half-doited serving-man let out, it appeared that there was some cause for admiring her. The woman who lay dead in the castle had been her nurse, and some ten days agone she had fallen sick of a catching fever, and the Macleans, who had more terror of such sickness than of the most bloody battle, had fled from the place, man and woman, save Miss Isobel and the old bodach[1] who was husband to the poor stricken creature, and the girl had nursed her day and night and would not leave her till she died, which was that morning at the very time the Campbells were hammering at the door.

"As for Scorry," said Mr James, "my belief is that he has another hiding-place on the estate, and that he only came

[1] Old man.

here last night for a good meal, and escaped us, as you say, by the lassie's trick with the key."

"I think that myself," said Locharn, "from the information I had."

"She is a most beautiful lassie," Mr James added, his mind running on the subject, "and there is something about her very fine and courageous, but from what I saw of her I cannot say she is very agreeable. She wishes to go to-day to her kinsman, Sir Alexander Mathieson, at Kintraid, and I promised I would let you know of that."

Sir Hugh had reasons to wish she had chosen to go farther away, for Kintraid stood on a high promontory that by water was not three miles from Scorry, though by land the distance might be more than three times as much because of the long arm of the sea that ran in between the two points. He said nothing of that, however, but asked Mr James if he would ride with the lady, and the Preacher replied that he would be very willing.

Locharn was in the courtyard when they started, and although hardly a remark passed between himself and Miss Isobel, and the lady held her head very high, yet they behaved with a formal courtesy, and Sir Hugh stood bareheaded while she rode away with Mr James. He went immediately afterwards to the room where lay the dead woman, and it surprised and affected him to see that all there had been set in order by the girl herself, the poor worn body being wrapped decently in a linen shroud.

The Campbells were now quartered about Scorry for nearly a week, scouring every hill and hollow for the Maclean chief, and all without success. Yet Sir Hugh was very sure he was in the neighbourhood, and he was confirmed in this belief when a lad was found in the hills carrying a creel of such provisions as would be necessary for Scorry and whoever might be in his company. A ship also appeared out to sea that had the look of a French lugger, and Locharn set a close watch upon the shore lest any boat might put out to it. The weather, however, was dull, and misty with rain, so that all traces of the ship were soon lost, and it was not easy to make sure that the man would not get away after all.

Sir Hugh's mind was somewhat upset in those days. His distaste of Maclean of Scorry, and his hot resentment against him for all the injuries he had done himself and his clan in the past, was not less than it had been; but he had a new image of the man's daughter set side by side in his mind with the old idea he had formed of her. The circumstances in which he had seen her, and her great beauty and noble spirit, and the woman's faith and tenderness she had shown to a poor dying creature, so wrought on him that it was not over-pleasant to him to think that he could be the man to bring her father to the block for a traitor. Yet this

being so, and the man being a dangerous man to the Government, he felt his honour only the more engaged not to slacken his search for him. Indeed he would have felt it to be a blot upon his reputation as a soldier to be moved from his work by the influence of any woman,—and this one, moreover, was no more to him at the most than a fair picture.

The weather continued much the same for about a week, the country-side being soaked through with rain, the roads very boggy, and rain-mists covering the hills and hanging continually over the sea-loch. Mr James went east on a business of his own, and Hugh Campbell, who was ever hot for action, began to find it weary work to be hunting Scorry, like a partridge on the mountains. It was in the darkening of the sixth day after coming to the place that he had occasion to go riding on the road to Kintraid, and not requiring to go more than a couple of miles, and being well armed, he took no one with him. The evening promised to be clear. The rain had ceased, the mist gave signs of lifting, and the moon, that had been hidden of late, showed itself for a moment now and then, swimming in clouds. A good breeze was blowing off the land, and the wash of the waves on the shore below the road sounded in his ears as he rode.

He had not gone a mile when he came suddenly on a pony, with a rider on its back, standing by the side of the road, and he called out to know who was there; and the next moment he was off his horse and standing in the path, for, dim as the light was, he made out the face and figure of Scorry's daughter. He cried out her name, and she turned a startled white face to him. "Locharn!" she said, drawing a sharp breath and looking at him with dismay in her eyes. She gathered up the reins of her beast, and was for passing him, but checked herself at once.

"Locharn," she said, speaking in a voice with an appeal in it that moved him as no voice of young or old had ever so moved him before, "I came out to see my father. He is in hiding. You know that. It is not telling you anything to tell you that. I cannot go on now, since I have met you, and those that were with me have left me. Will you do me the kindness to ride back with me to Kintraid?"

She spoke with such haste and trouble of eagerness that Hugh Campbell's mind sprang to the thought that it was Scorry himself she waited for, and that she feared he might come upon them even while they were speaking; and he hesitated, wondering if that were so, and yet eager to ride with her. Before he could speak, she had given the reins to her pony.

"Well," she said lightly and proudly, "I am not afraid. I can ride alone very well," and she was away, and Locharn's suspicions were with the winds and he mounted his horse and was after her.

At first she urged her pony on with the whip, as though wishful to show the man that followed that she no longer desired his company; but the road was so boggy with the week's rain, that it was impossible to make speed on it, and when he overtook her she had a word for him, and the tones of her voice showed no displeasure. Indeed, as they went on she began to speak so pleasantly that Sir Hugh could not but wonder at the change there was in her since he had spoken with her at the castle of Scorry six days before. At first it pleased him greatly, and he took no thought of past or future, but only of the pleasantness of the moment and of the ride; but before very long he began to think the change in her somewhat too great for his liking. There was in her speech such gaiety and quickness of wit, such seeming forgetfulness of any cause of quarrel between them, that his mind became distracted by a doubt of her. Where was now the hatred of his house that had brought the flush to her cheek at their last meeting? He began to say to himself that she was her father's daughter after all; and his mind harked back to that old smooth letter Scorry had sent him, and he asked himself what part she had in it, and what might be her meaning now. A constraint and silence fell on him, and such gloom came over his spirit at the darkening of the bright image he had formed of the girl in his mind that he could hardly rally himself to reply civilly to her remarks. At last she too was silent, and they rode for a considerable time without saying a word. For the first five or six miles of their way the road had gone inland, away from Scorry, but after they had rounded the head of the loch they faced west again, and rode among birch-woods to the Point of Kintraid. The sky was now clear, and the moon had risen and rode free of the clouds that had kept the mastery of the night until now. Locharn could see the face of his companion very distinctly, and it was another surprise to him, for there was no trace in it of the lightness and gaiety of her speech, but a look of strain and anxiety. He was little used to women and their ways, and this one puzzled him, for now the very poise of her head and the curve of her lips forced him to think no ill of her, even as her courage had done when he saw her on the castle bridge, and she had used a word he liked ill to hear from a woman.

Scorry's daughter broke in herself upon his thoughts. "We are getting near the journey's end," she said, "and I have a thing to say to you. I suppose another woman would not say it, but I do not care anything for that." She spoke defiantly and quickly, and Sir Hugh did not know what to say, and let her speak without interrupting her. "There is an old feud between us," she said. "I have heard of it all my days, and I will not forget it, but it

seems my father did that three years ago, when he wrote a letter to you that——" She stopped, and still Hugh could not help her. "Oh, I will clear myself of that, at least," she went on with some passion and bitterness. "I knew nothing of it. He did not know me, when he thought I would be a party to such a peace. I think men are all the same,—they think us of no account except to move about at their will, like the pieces on a chess-board. They did not think of me. I would not betray them though I died, but they did not care though they did that to me." Her voice faltered suddenly, and a swift understanding of the blow Scorry had dealt his motherless lass came upon Hugh, and with it a great heat of admiration.

"I would give ten years of my life to win you," he cried out on the impulse.

The girl gave him a look that accorded ill with the tears in her eyes, and her words went behind his thought like the thrust of steel. "You!" she cried contemptuously. "Do you think I gave you a thought? What I care for is the honour of my own house."

Locharn had not a word, and his thoughts were still in confusion when they came suddenly out of the bushes upon the grassy hill-top over the cliffs at Kintraid. The moon shone white and clear on the water below the rocks, and they saw, close by the Point, what affected them very differently. The girl gave a little cry. "Oh, thank God!" she said, a sob in her voice, "thank God!" But the man had a different thing to say, for there, with the wind full in her sails, and Maclean of Scorry, without doubt, on board of her, was the French ship making for the open sea.

For about two minutes Locharn sat motionless on his horse, looking out over the rocks, for he saw what had happened, and how he had been outwitted by the girl, taken captive and led out of the way like a silly sheep with a rope about its neck.

"I wish you good-night, madam," he said, in a choked voice, when he had recovered himself a little. "I think you have no further need for me."

Miss Isobel sat erect on her pony, her face very white and proud. "Stay," she said imperiously. "When you saw me at the roadside to-night, my father was not fifty yards away, and the boat was waiting for him on the shore below the road. I heard his steps coming when I rode off, and the one hope I had of saving him was that you would follow me. And that is how I asked a favour of you, Sir Hugh Campbell, and if it has cost you something that you granted it, it cost me more when I asked it."

Sir Hugh turned his horse's head and took off his bonnet. "Madam," said he roughly, "it has cost me my honour."

"And me two hours of your company," she cried, "so I think we are quits!"

Locharn put spurs to his horse and rode away.

CHAPTER II.

When matters concerning property came to be settled up after the Rebellion, a fresh evidence of Maclean of Scorry's deceit came to Hugh Campbell's ears. The estate, it turned out, was entailed on heirs-male, and Miss Isobel was heiress only to certain family heirlooms and such inconsiderable moneys as her father might have to leave to her. As for the lands, they were now of course forfeit to the Crown, but the feeling in the country was so lenient towards the old families that had suffered through their devotion to the House of Stewart that for the most part such forfeiture was more in name than in reality. The estates of attainted nobles and gentry were indeed put up to sale by the Government, but in most cases they were sold for a small sum to near relatives of their former owners, who sent most of the rents they got from them over-seas to the exiles.

Things were different, however, in regard to the lands of Scorry, for the Macleans had been so deep in the Rebellion that the nearest heirs thought best to betake themselves to France with their chief, and thus it came about that the man to buy the estate was Sir Hugh Campbell of Locharn. That he did so was very surprising to his friends, and it put him before long in a somewhat unpleasant position, for there was a great outcry made over the thing by many families in the West, and especially by those who had Jacobite sympathies. It was a cruel thing, they said, that a gallant lass, whose beauty and bravery were the toast of the country-side, should be turned out of house and home because there were none of her name or kin to buy in the estate for her, and it was worse than cruel that Locharn should be the man to take possession of it. There was great grumbling over the thing, and among the Macleans on the Scorry estate there was more than grumbling —there was bitter, black hatred of the new owner.

Sir Hugh thought it best to go but little to the place at first, and he left it to be managed for the most part by stewards and underlings. He had not been long in possession when news came of the old chief's death. He had died in France of wounds received in a duel. His daughter was still at Kintraid with her kinsman Sir Alexander Mathieson and his lady. They were an old couple, with none of their own children living, and so all the more pleased to have her company.

When the first rent-collecting came round Locharn got his rents safely enough, for the Scorry people stood in great fear of him; but not long afterwards he got the information that a second rent had been taken up for Miss Isobel Maclean, and that she had sent every penny of it over-

seas to a cousin of hers in France for the Jacobite cause. When he heard that, Hugh knitted his brows in vexation and perplexity, and he considered the thing and sent word to his factor to raise the rents all over the Scorry estate. That was done, and if the hearts of the people were dark to the new landlord before, they were now darker.

When the time for the next collecting came round, Sir Hugh's agent came to him. "Locharn," said he, "I hear that there are men going about Scorry taking up a rent again for Miss Isobel Maclean."

The chief required no time to consider the thing on this occasion. "Tell the people," said he, "that the rents will be raised again if that is done."

When this word came to Scorry, Locharn was cursed for a black tyrant, and yet so great was the love of the people to their own chief's daughter that they starved and scraped and paid the double rent as before, hoping to keep the thing so secret that it would not leak out. It did that, however, and when Sir Hugh heard of it he ordered his horse and rode off straight to Kintraid.

Sir Alexander Mathieson was from home when he arrived there, but Locharn was received courteously enough by his lady, with whom he had some slight acquaintance. When he asked for an interview with Miss Isobel, however, she was surprised, and told him frankly that it would be useless to ask for such a thing. "For you cannot but know," said she, "that my cousin has some cause to feel unfriendly towards you for what seems to her the harsh measures you have taken on the Scorry estate, and also she took the changes that have come and gone very ill, as you may understand."

Sir Hugh sat silent for a few moments looking out of the window that was beside him, and then he turned and spoke to Lady Mathieson in a way that greatly astonished her, and with so much power of persuasion that she was considerably moved by it, and the end of it was, that although the old lady was doubtful and reluctant enough, she brought him to a small room furnished as a drawing-room, where Miss Maclean sat at her embroidery, and left him there at the door, which stood a little ajar. He pushed it open and took a step into the room and stopped, for the sight of the girl engaged in so peaceful an occupation, and the difference between her appearance now and the circumstances in which he had seen her before, somewhat affected and embarrassed him. Her dress, too, was now so different as to make a considerable change in her, for she wore a rich gown of a blue colour, and over her shoulders a white kerchief, and there was a gleam of jewels in her hair. At the sight of the visitor she had, she let the embroidery slip from her fingers and stood up, a hot flush of anger on her cheeks and a look on her face that inquired the meaning of the intrusion.

"Miss Maclean," said Loch-

arn quickly, "I ask pardon for disturbing you, but I have come on a matter of business, and what I have to say can only be said to yourself."

He came a few steps farther into the room as he spoke, and rested his hand on a small table that was between the girl and himself, and that was covered with the silks used in her work. She did not ask him to be seated, but stood looking at him, and he began speaking of the tenants on the Scorry estate and the double rent they had raised for the last two years. An indignant light kindled in the girl's eyes.

"It is strange, Sir Hugh," she said hotly, "that you would come to me to mention how hardly you have used them."

"Who else should I mention it to?" said he. "You are the only one that can soften the hardship. I know that for these two years there has been a double rent taken up, and I know where the one that is given to you has gone, and I have come to say that I will have no revenue going from Scorry to France to support the cause of Rebellion against his Majesty's Government, and I have made up my mind that if needful I will raise the rents on the land till there will be no possibility of such a thing being done."

Locharn spoke quietly and courteously, and yet he left no doubt in the girl's mind that he meant what he said, and that he was prepared to carry it out.

"Those are jealous for their rights that have small claim to them," she cried in a hard voice. "Do you think Scorry is yours because you paid a few poor thousands for it? Yours, forsooth! It has been ours for centuries, and we gave men's lives for it,—ay, and for the Stewart cause; and now it seems we must stand aside and see it stolen from us, and its rents go to a usurper and the cause of a usurper."

She spoke with a passion of feeling, and Locharn's face paled a little. "Madam!" he said in a low voice, "if you would believe it, I never wished to take Scorry from you. There has been small show of kindness between us, I know, but when I bought Scorry it was with the hope that I could give it back to you."

Isobel looked at him with the same surprise and inquiry and resentment with which she had greeted his entrance. "What do you mean?" said she angrily.

"I mean, that if you would give me the chance I think I could win you for my wife," said Hugh.

"You will never do that," cried the girl indignantly. "It is trifling to speak of such a thing."

"It is not that to me," Locharn answered her, "and I think the time will come when it will not be that to you."

Isobel gave him no more than a look of impatient scorn. "I think you are the loyal man for George," she cried mockingly. "You would not let one rent go to King James's cause, and now it seems you

would give me all the rents if I would take them, and where would I send them all but where I send them already?"

'But Hugh cried out that he thought more of her than that, and he bowed low and left her, for he saw that she could stand no more of his company. And indeed no sooner was he gone than she bent her head on the table and began sobbing like a child overwrought.

After this Miss Isobel went riding on her pony among the people on the Scorry estates, and told them what Locharn had said about the rents, and that it would be useless for them to impoverish themselves in the future. "We must have patience," she said to them with her brave smile and her gallant air,—"it may be that our day will come again"; and the people stood looking after her when she rode away, and many a man among them had the mind to put a dirk in Locharn.

"I will win her for my wife," said Hugh to himself in these days, "if it takes me twenty years."

Time went by and the West country was still very unsettled, so that hardly a month passed without the rumour of a new Jacobite plot. By way of making things more secure, the Government took to disarming the Highlanders, and offered a good price to the people for all the arms they gave up; but the clansmen were wily, and brought old broken muskets by the score, and with the money they received for them bought good new ones from France, so that before long they were better prepared for rebellion than they had been before. Among others the story went that Miss Isobel Maclean kept a correspondence, in the interests of James, with a cousin of hers in France,—one Captain Archibald Maclean, who should have been heir to Scorry. It was said she was so hot a Jacobite as to affect the loyalty of Sir Alexander Mathieson himself, who, though professedly a friend to the Government, was of so peaceable a disposition that so long as he was left undisturbed it was much the same to him whether James or George was king. But indeed there were so many rumours in these days that it was difficult to know which to believe, and Isobel, with her great beauty and high spirit and quick wit, as well as her sufferings for the Stewart cause, was likely to be spoken of, for she made a gallant picture of a lady in the eyes of the country. Portionless though she was, she had suitors in plenty, but would have nothing to say to them, seeming to have more love for the cause of King James than for any of them. Rumour had it that she was betrothed to the cousin in France, and Locharn heard that report with the rest, and also that there was a talk among some of her friends of buying back Scorry on her behalf, if the present owner could be persuaded to part with it.

Scorry, if the people would but admit it, was not suffering under the new proprietor.

There were improvements here and improvements there, and what with new roads and new houses the Macleans had opportunity of earning money such as they had never the memory of before. Locharn was rich, and he had brought new ideas home with him from over-seas. But the Macleans saw no good in any of his ways, and they hated him the worse for every improvement he set agoing. "There was never the heed of these things in the old times," said they. "And is it not all done, too, with Miss Isobel's money?"

Hugh Campbell had set himself a hard task when he vowed to win a Maclean bride, but he put his mind to it with a good will. By hook or by crook he contrived to see the lady more frequently than might have seemed possible; and as the months went past, the appearance of the young Whig laird ceased to be unfamiliar to her. Locharn had a fine soldierly air and bearing, as became a chieftain, and his face was the face of an honourable gentleman, yet she never saw it without the old bitter memory of her father's treachery darkening her mind to the living and adding something more painful than sorrow to her remembrance of the dead. Often as he saw her, Hugh never found her twice in the same mood. At one time she was carelessly cold, at another openly hostile, or again she made him the butt of a wit that was as graceful as it was biting. Yet Locharn, who was proud and hasty-tempered and inclined to be harsh in his judgments, had a hundred excuses for her, and through all her moods he pursued that fair image of sweet womanhood he was persuaded he had seen in her. As for Maclean of Scorry, who was dead and gone, he found it harder to forgive him the blow he had dealt his daughter than all else beside.

Before long it began to be rumoured in the country-side that Sir Hugh Campbell of Locharn was among the suitors for Miss Isobel's hand, and many were the comments on the idea, which seemed a strange one, considering all that had come and gone. If others had been unsuccessful in winning the favour of the lady, no one doubted that Locharn would fare no better, and altogether the rumour seemed an idle tale. Old Sir Alexander Mathieson was by no means averse to the idea, however, for he saw that it might bring a short and cheap way out of the difficulty of the Scorry estate,—and, moreover, Isobel was somewhat too daring a rebel lass for a peaceable man like Kintraid to have in his house. "There's never a day passes," said he ruefully to his lady, "but I'm expecting to see a Jacobite rising at our doors,—what with the clans being so unsettled, and Isobel so hot for James, and half the gallants in the country wild to do her bidding. Faith, she'd have myself out to disturb the peace with my sword, only that I am getting too old to dance to a lassie's fiddling."

There was one who was far from pleased when he heard the rumour, and that was Mr James the Preacher, and he spoke very plainly about it to Sir Hugh himself, for he thought the match would be most unsuitable even if it could be brought about. The lady was Hugh's open enemy, stirring up bitterness against him by every look and word among the Scorry people, and, moreover, Mr James had such horror of the Stewart cause that he feared to see Locharn drawn into any sympathy with it. But Hugh, although now a man over thirty, was as headstrong as a boy of twenty, and he would not so much as listen to him. "I am obliged for your kindness toward me," said he, "for I have good reason to remember it, but I think we need not speak of this again." So the Preacher held his peace, but he was sad to see how Locharn's mind was set on one thing, and that was to win a Jacobite lady for his bride.

It was in the spring of the fourth year after the Rebellion that Mr James came with the chief to Scorry, and as the castle had been unused since it had changed hands, they put up, as was their wont, at the house of Mr William M'Pherson, Locharn's factor. Sir Hugh rode the next day to Kintraid, having business with Sir Alexander, but Mr James was so set against anything that took him there that he would not keep him company. So the Chief went alone, and made a formal proposal to Kintraid for Miss Maclean's hand, and Kintraid told him he had no objections to him in any way, and at the same time he had no great authority over the lady, and he told him to go to herself and take his good wishes with him. Hugh felt he had need of them all when he came into her presence, for her manner was cold and distant, and so far from encouraging that he could not but feel himself to have come upon a fool's errand. He conducted himself with a kind of awkward formality that had no great warmth in it, and although the lady was now very composed, and showed no personal ill-feeling to him, she told him plainly that she would have nothing to say to one she regarded as supporting the cause of a usurper. "I will marry no time-serving Whig," she cried, "but a loyal gentleman, if ever I marry."

"Am I, then, to understand," said Locharn, "that you have no objection to my suit, except that I do not follow James Stewart?"

The girl's eyes flashed. "That is so great a one," said she, "that I will put no other beside it."

Locharn rode back to Scorry somewhat downcast and disappointed, and yet not altogether discouraged. It seemed to him more hopeful that she had not shown the personal anger and indignation against himself that she had displayed to him before. Could it be, he thought to himself, that there was no more between them now than the Stewart

cause? He rated himself for the grim, awkward figure of a lover he had made, and thought it little wonder she would have nothing to say to him; and he called to mind every look of hers, and every tone of her voice, till he began to jeer at himself for the way he loved her and the folly of it.

From the cottages by the way the Macleans glowered darkly at the man they hated; but the sun was in his eyes as he rode, and he took no note of them. When he came to the factor's door Mr James was standing there, speaking with a certain Sandy Campbell, skipper of a smuggling vessel that made great trade among the islands,—a wild, reckless man, but very loyal to the Chief. The factor came out to meet him, and from his face he saw that he had news.

"Well," said he, dismounting and glancing from one to the other, "what is it? I see there is something."

"There is that," Mr Macpherson made answer in a cautious voice, and giving a look about him, "and by your leave, Locharn, Mr James will tell it to you, for it would not be wise to let Sandy Campbell be seen speaking to you, seeing he brought it." Sir Hugh saw the news was important and serious, and he nodded and gave a passing greeting to the smuggler, who was known to him, and went into the house and Mr James after him. They came into the living-room which was empty, and Mr James made the door fast, and looked even to the window to make sure there was no one within hearing. Hugh appeared anxious and uneasy.

"Well," he said, standing before the fire, "what is it? What is all the precaution about?"

"It's bad news for the country," said the other, speaking low, "if it's true; and Sandy Campbell has the thing so circumstantial that I cannot doubt it. There's another rising plotted, and so many ships and men promised from Spain, and Captain Archibald Maclean is to land at Kintraid to-morrow night with papers and instructions for a man that could do more for James, if he chose, than any other in the country."

"Who is that?" said Locharn sharply, and very much staggered by the news.

Mr James came close to him and said the name below his breath. The Chief gave an exclamation—"The Marquis!" he repeated in a whisper, and stood staring.

"Just himself," said the other, "so you may judge if the thing is serious. And his lordship is to be at the inn at Kintraid to-morrow night, and Captain Maclean is to come to him there."

"Do you say so?" cried Hugh, and was silent a moment with astonishment. "Well," he said, "I have had my suspicions of him. I knew all along that he was no true friend to the Government, and yet he is so wily

that one could not be sure of him one way or the other. And yet I am amazed that he would commit himself. He is not the man to take any risk if he can help it, and he must be very sure of success if he is going into a rebellion. Man! this is a serious business."

"It is a serious business," Mr James repeated, with a grave look on his merry face.

Sir Hugh leaned his arm on the mantel-shelf, and stood staring out of the window. It was now growing dusk, and the room was shadowy, so that Mr James could not see his face very distinctly, though he was watching it with considerable anxiety, for he knew that Captain Archibald Maclean was cousin to Isobel, and that on the mother's side the Marquis himself was a far-out friend to her, and he thought it more than likely that the lady had a hand in the contrivance of this meeting between them.

"How did Sandy Campbell come by the information?" Hugh asked abruptly.

The Preacher told him, and went over every word of the smuggler's story, and Locharn could not but admit that the truth of it seemed plain enough.

"There is one thing I am sure of," he said, "and that is that the Marquis would be very slow to commit himself, unless he saw success very sure, and it is my belief that he will keep some loophole of escape open to the last." He began pacing back and forward between the window and the fireplace, thinking and making a remark now and again in a low voice. "This is a very serious thing," he said again. "The clans are better armed now than they were in '15, and the country is in a dissatisfied state, and more inclined to the Stewarts in my belief than it was then, and if the Marquis was to head a rising——" He paused, and continued his pacing without saying more. At last he stopped beside Mr James. "I can see only one way to do," he said, "and it's risky enough, but I can make no better of it. We're here, as you may say, alone, and although the Marquis will come very quietly, no doubt, and bring few with him, yet the Macleans would be up at a hint, and I think it would be useless for us to try force at the present, even if we had the power."

The Preacher leaned forward in his chair till his face came into the light of the fire, that was now as strong in the room as the daylight.

"What way is that?" he asked.

Locharn told him in a few words the plan he had made, and Mr James nodded approval to it. "As you say, we cannot do better," he said. But he was not satisfied, for he had seen Hugh very merry and hearty when he had worse risks to face than this one, and his voice showed he was not that now. Indeed his face came into the light so gloomy

and dark that the Preacher was seized with a kind of anger at the sight of it, for he knew very well where the trouble came in.

"Man!" said he, "will you not take my advice and be done with it? The lassie is a rank Jacobite, and it's my belief she's at the bottom of this new mischief, and she's no wife for a Campbell, Hugh—you know that very well."

He came to a stop, and getting no sign from the other, went on in more gentle tones. "Hugh," said he, "we've been through many a thing together, and you're to me like my own son, and if it wasn't for that and the right of my grey hairs I wouldn't come over it to you, but where have you been these last few years but just between your fancy for this lassie and your honour to King George; and where love and honour go not together, lad, it's a poor thing for any man."

"I think there is no need to question my honour," Locharn said harshly. "I think you might be assured of that. I am as willing to give proof of it as ever I was, and if you have a better way of meeting the Marquis I will be glad to hear it. As for the other thing, Mr James, it is my own affair, and I will not make a martyr of myself for any man."

He spoke hotly, but seeing the anxiety and affection that showed plainly on the elder man's face, he cooled down of a sudden. "Mr James," said he kindly, "there was no difference we had that ever came between us, and I hope this one will not." He hesitated, reddening like a girl. "For, to tell you my mind," he said, "there is no woman for me but this one, and if I can, I will win her yet."

The Preacher was deeply disappointed, for, as he said, Sir Hugh was as much to him as if he were his own son. "Well, well," he said, standing up, "you must go your own way, Locharn, but Providence may be against you for all that."

It was between nine and ten o'clock on the night after this that a boat, rowed softly by four oarsmen, came cautiously in to shore by the Kintraid rocks. A very spruce fine gentleman stepped out of it, and he was so gleeful to be on Scottish soil again that he began humming a snatch of a song, and stood humming it and adjusting his cloak and looking to his pistols till the boat was gone out of sight again on the dim stretch of water that was lit only by the stars. He knew the country-side well of old, and presently he turned and stepped briskly into the fringe of birch bushes that lined the shore. He was caught there like a rat in a trap, for Sandy Campbell and the crew of his vessel were waiting for him, and they had a plaid over his head and his arms tied to his sides before he knew what had happened to him. He had plenty of courage, but he thought his last hour was come when he was taken up helpless and carried like a sack of peats back to the shore and down over the rocks to the sea.

After that it was something of a relief to find himself hoisted, not into the water, but into a boat, and he lay in it struggling with the rope on his hands and raging at his ill-luck, till after a few minutes' rowing he was hoisted up the side of a vessel, and the plaid was taken off his head, and he saw light again in an ill-smelling cabin that he was to have the opportunity of becoming very well acquainted with in the next couple of weeks.

It was about an hour afterwards that the skipper of the vessel came out on the high-road, near the inn where the Marquis was having a weary wait for the man that was now cooling his heels in the cabin of the *Sea-Gull*, and found Locharn and Mr James looking for him impatiently. They were both on horseback, and wrapped to the eyes in cloaks, and at the first sight of Sandy Campbell the Chief called out in a muffled voice to know if all were well.

"Yes, indeed, master," answered the smuggler, "we have him safe and tight on board the vessel, and no harm done to himself or any other."

"Where are the papers?" Sir Hugh asked then, bending a little from the saddle.

"There's not one at all, Locharn," answered the other, and he lifted up to him a small bundle he was carrying. "There's everything there that he had, and not a paper among it. Look yourself, master."

The two horsemen gave an exclamation of surprise at that. "What have we here, then?" said Locharn, and he opened the bundle, and in the dim starlight he saw a queer collection,—a couple of pistols, a dirk, a purse of gold, one thing and another such as a gentleman might carry about with him, but no vestige of a paper, no scrap or scrawl even of such a thing as a letter.

"We have come to an end of the thing in that case," Mr James exclaimed, chagrined and disappointed.

"I would not say that altogether," said the other grimly, and gathered the things in front of him together; and as he did so his eye fell on a small miniature, and he peered at it with a sudden fierce jealousy, for something told him the face was Isobel's. "Here," he said, roughly, "take these baubles back to their owner, and see that none goes missing of them." He pushed them away clumsily, and the bundle spilled over the saddle, and the smuggler had to go groping for some of the contents under the horse's feet. Locharn took some gold pieces from his sporran and held them out to the man. "Put Captain Maclean ashore in France six weeks from now, safe and well, and come to me then for the rest," he said.

"I will do that, Locharn," Sandy Campbell answered, and he plunged back again into the bushes.

Hugh turned to the Preacher. "This is a precaution of the Marquis," said he. "He is too wily to trust himself to paper; but we will go on, for

I think we have the advantage of him yet."

It was nearly two hours past the time that the Marquis had appointed for his meeting with Captain Maclean when Locharn and Mr James rode up to the door of the inn; and the landlord, seeing two men muffled, and having been warned that some one was expected, thought only that here was the man at last, and went very obsequiously to take the horses. The house was small and mean, and had an evil reputation; and the landlord was a Maclean and hot for James, and Sir Hugh took some risk on himself when he threw him the reins and dismounted and strode in at the low doorway, leaving the Preacher sitting still in the saddle. There were but two rooms in the inn altogether, one on either side of the door, and hearing great noise and laughter from the one, Locharn pushed open the other, and, entering, closed it behind him. The Marquis was sitting at a table in the middle of the room, and two gentlemen with him, and bottles and glasses before him; and at the sight of the visitor, whom he knew well for a staunch Whig, he gave a start and looked not a little taken aback. Hugh stood just within the door.

"My lord," said he, "Captain Maclean will be unable to keep his appointment with you to-night."

There was a little, fierce, fiery-faced man on the right of the Marquis, and he started to his feet. "My lord," cries he, "who is this gentleman? Perhaps he can tell us how the Captain was detained"—and his hand went to the hilt of his sword.

"Tuts! tuts!" said the other, in his own easy, indolent voice, with the hint of authority at the back of it, "I know the gentleman very well. Perhaps Sir Hugh Campbell will be good enough to tell us if any misfortune has happened to my kinsman, who was maybe unwise to venture home again at present." He addressed himself courteously to Locharn, who replied somewhat dryly that Captain Maclean was safe enough and, he believed, in good health.

"I am glad of that," his lordship continued, very self-possessed and easy; "and indeed, Locharn, it is something strange that it should be yourself who comes to bring word of him, for you are concerned with part of the business that we had to discuss. You may have heard that some of us were thinking of making you an offer for Scorry on behalf of the late chief's daughter. Captain Maclean, as you know, was the next heir, and he had something to say in the matter. It is late for business, but perhaps, as you are here, you would go over the thing with us, instead of glowering there, man, like a warlock behind the door."

He spoke with so much pleasantness and so graceful a familiarity that for a moment Locharn was staggered. He had kidnapped a man with

no trace of a treasonable paper on him, and here was a new complexion put on his meeting with the Marquis. It was but for a moment, however. The next, he saw how trivial was the explanation, and remembering the great issues that were at stake, he determined to risk something on the truth of Sandy Campbell's information. He came forward to the table, and the Marquis pointed to the glasses.

"Come," he said smiling, "I can offer you hospitality of a sort."

There was a full glass poured out, and Locharn took it up. "My lord," he said, "I will be franker with you. It is on account of no private business that Captain Maclean was kept from coming here to-night, but to prevent treason against his Majesty's Government."

The two gentlemen that were with the Marquis sprang up in consternation, and the great man himself changed colour, for he thought at once that Sir Hugh must have papers in his possession incriminating him. Hugh raised the glass to his lips and looked the Marquis in the face. "To his Majesty, King George," said he, and drank it off, and set it down, and left the room and the house, no one staying him, for those within never doubted that he had a company at his back. But out at the door there was only the Preacher waiting for him, and Hugh sprang to the saddle, and the two were away before the conspirators had time to recover themselves

Locharn found himself possessed of an unexpected memento of the night's work when he dismounted between three and four of the morning at the factor's door. Something went ringing down from the saddle to the cobble-stones, and when he picked it up and carried it to the light he saw the miniature that had been among Captain Maclean's belongings. It was Isobel's face that looked up at him; and as he stood scanning it his hot jealousy melted to something less unworthy, for here was the picture of the girl he had sought but never before seen. It was done when she was still a child, and was fresh as a rose, fair as a May morning. The lips were parted, the tangled curls seemed blown by a breeze, and from the eyes looked so sweet a gravity that Locharn's own grew moist as he gazed, and he cried out on the old ill feud that had lost him such a playmate.

CHAPTER III.

Mr James was by no means easy next day to find that Locharn was not leaving Scorry at once. Mr Macpherson, the factor, was most wishful to see him depart, seeing what had happened on the night before. "The Chief could not do better than to be going at the earliest," he said to the Preacher in the morning, "and I am surprised he does not see that himself.

If anything was to come out about the Captain, and Locharn here,—alone, as you may say,—I would not be surety for his safety, Mr James, for the people are hot against him already, as you know."

But Hugh did not take the same view of things himself. He thought his place was in Scorry, until all this breeze about a new rising was completely blown over; and he sent a son of the factor's to Locharn to bring back a company of Campbell men, fully armed, in case an emergency might arise. For himself, he had no sooner taken breakfast than he ordered his beast to be saddled, and asked Mr James if he were in the mind for a ride. The Preacher asked where he would ride to, and the other replied that it was to Kintraid, and he told him the reason, and took the miniature from his breast-pocket and showed it to him. Mr James looked at it without a word. Hugh's appearance was not very cheerful or happy, and he was concerned for him. "This may be my last visit to the place," he said with a kind of laugh, and put the picture back in his pocket. The other tried to dissuade him from going, at least for a day or two. He had a strong presentiment that trouble was coming, and he offered to ride himself to Kintraid with the packet rather than that Locharn should expose himself among the Macleans after what he had done the night before. But Sir Hugh saw no great danger, for he considered it to be the interest of the Marquis to keep the thing as secret as he would do himself. "Hoots, Mr James," said he, "do you forget the ride we had before Malplaquet? There was one with a spice to it." But the Preacher shook his head, for he felt himself getting too old to relish such spice, and yet he would not be content to stay behind, but ordered his horse feeling all the while a great depression and sense of coming calamity hanging over him.

At Kintraid the two had small satisfaction for their pains in going. Miss Isobel Maclean would see no one, and there was some coldness and constraint in the manner of Sir Alexander and his lady, so that Locharn could not but think they had private knowledge of what had happened the night before. He himself told as much of it as he thought right to Sir Alexander, but he found the old gentleman very incredulous and indifferent. He would not believe there was another plot brewing, and yet he seemed so irritated and annoyed at the mention of such a thing that Hugh could not but think he had more suspicions than he admitted. Locharn said nothing to him of the captain or of the miniature, but he left the packet with Lady Mathieson, and a brief letter saying it had come into his hands accidentally and that he believed the gentleman to whom it belonged to be safe and well.

It was just before the darkening that he left Kintraid with his companion. They rode out of the gate to the

bold, grassy top above the sea, where Sir Hugh and Miss Isobel had caught sight of the French ship on the night of Scorry's escape. There was some light lingering there yet, from the red glow of the sun setting at the horizon, and a gleam of it over the tops of the birch-trees showed the advances the spring was making. When the horsemen rode down the side of the hill into the bushes, however, it became very dusky all at once. Mr James had put aside his apprehensions altogether, the ride earlier in the day having been so quiet, and his thoughts were now taken up with the visit to Kintraid and the half-hearted character of Sir Alexander's loyalty. Yet, they were not half a mile from the house when he had cause to remember his forebodings. There was a little crackling in the bushes on the side of the road where Locharn was riding, and then, without more warning, there were two shots fired, and the Chief gave a cry and swayed in the saddle. He called out something to the Preacher, but Mr James's horse had taken fright with the shots, being a young beast, and was away down the road at the gallop. He had great difficulty in checking him, and when he got control of him again and came back to his companion, Sir Hugh had fallen forward in the saddle like one dead, the blood pouring from his face. There was no sound or sign of those that had fired the shots, and, indeed, Mr James had more to do than to think of them. He stanched the blood with his silk neckerchief, and Locharn came to himself at his touch and groaned and muttered some hot word of the cowards that had lain in wait for him, and went off again in a swoon. The Preacher saw there was nothing for it but to go back the way they came, and he turned the horse, with Sir Hugh lying forward on his neck, and led him slowly—his heart heavy and bitter—up the brae to Kintraid.

There was great consternation there when the visitors returned in such fashion, and if Sir Alexander and his lady had been constrained and cold an hour before, they were now filled with distress and anxiety and kindness. Sir Alexander, indeed, was greatly put about to think that such a thing should happen to Locharn so near his own gates, and in the state of the country he felt that it reflected very ill on his own people, and in a manner on himself. He sent off post-haste to Inverara for a surgeon, and put his whole house at the disposal of Mr James, and was in such a fuss and agitation that he was of little use to assist the Preacher. Mr James was, happily, something of a surgeon himself, and he did what he could for the wounded man, and was very grave about it, for the two shots had struck him, one in the chest and one in the face, and when he saw the mischief they had done he had small hope of his recovery. He lay raving and muttering in fever, and the Preacher watched him

night and day, and at first would hardly take assistance from any one, so bitter was his heart against the Macleans and all belonging to them for the work their clan had done. Especially he was hot against Isobel, who had fanned the flame of hate in the countryside until this had come of it—until Hugh Campbell of Locharn had been shot down by a cowardly assassin in the dark of a wood. At first after coming to Kintraid he saw glimpses of the lady here and there without having speech of her, or, indeed, observing her greatly, so taken up was he with the Chief. Then one day he came face to face with her on the stairs.

"Have you any more hopes of him?" she asked in a strained whisper.

"I have not," he answered, and would have passed, but she prevented him.

"You will pray for him," she said in the same whisper. "You are a preacher, and God will hear you."

"Madam," said Mr James in a stern voice, "I do not need you to ask me that. He is dear to me as my own son." A wave of indignation almost choked his voice as he thought who it was that was speaking in this way. "I think you have need to pray for yourself," said he, "to ask forgiveness. If you had not stirred up the people, this would not have happened; and if he dies, as I think he will, I wish I could clear you of the blame!"

The girl was as pale as death. "I do not need you to tell me that either," she said, her eyes blazing, but her voice still whispering. And she let him pass.

When the surgeon came at first from Inverara, he had no more hopes of Locharn than Mr James had. A gloom hung over the house, and the Preacher himself could not complain of any want of care or anxiety or attention at Kintraid. Indeed he could not very well avail himself of all the attention that was offered for Sir Hugh, for the old man had another anxiety besides that of the Chief's condition. In his raving Locharn kept babbling of the plot and the Marquis, and Mr James was sore put to it how he was to keep things from coming out that should be kept secret. He would allow no servant into the sick chamber, and he sent to Scorry for Mrs M'Pherson, Mr William's mother, to help to nurse him, for she was a skilly woman, besides being of his own side and very stanch. He made the best excuses he could to Lady Mathieson, and took as little of her help as was possible without causing offence. Of all the household, it was Isobel he feared most, for if she came to know of the Marquis wavering between two causes and the papers he supposed Hugh to have, when there were no such papers, there was no saying what mischief might be done yet. He warned Mrs M'Pherson of the need of secrecy, and how she was to let no one into

the room where the wounded man lay, and he could but hope that his caution might suffice, for it seemed a risky thing to hear Locharn calling aloud what he would most wish to hide. It was an anxious time altogether for Mr James, and there was one day in particular that he lost all hope of the chief, the fever ran so high and had continued so long. In the evening, being exhausted, he was forced to take rest, and he left Mr William's mother keeping watch. He had not been gone long when Locharn became restless and excited, and began to cry out that he had broken the back of the conspiracy, and that the Marquis had lost his game. "I have lost something too," he muttered. "Do you know that, my lord? I have lost my love, — I have lost Isobel." He went over this many times, becoming more and more wild, and his tones louder, till the good woman was at her wits' end what to do to calm him. Then of a sudden the door opened, and Isobel herself came in, her face white as parchment. She took no notice of Mrs M'Pherson, but came straight across the room, looking neither to right nor left, and laid her hand on one of Hugh's.

"Oh, hush! hush!" she said in low soft tones, such as she might use to a fretful child; "I am here, — Isobel is here. You were calling her, and she is here."

Sir Hugh's eyes were bandaged, so that he could not see, and he did not appear to understand, yet in some way the girl's voice calmed him at once, and he sank back into the old low mutterings about the plot and the Marquis.

"Where are the papers?" he said. "There are none here, — there is nothing here but a picture. It is mine. I will not give it back to you."

The woman, watching, was alarmed and dismayed. She did not know what to do, but stood like one pushed aside, afraid to move or to speak, or to disturb the quiet that was falling on Locharn. The girl did not appear to be conscious of her presence, but bent over Hugh and began to croon a lullaby under her breath. It was slow and monotonous, and had but a few words to it, but she went over it and over again: it acted like some charm on the fever-stricken man, and the flush died from his face, he ceased muttering, and before long his breathing showed that he was asleep. Then the girl turned and went quickly from the room, and Mr William's mother sat staring after her.

When Mr James returned, he saw at once the change that had come to the chief, and that he slept peacefully at last; and when he heard Mrs Macpherson's tale he was divided between some gratitude and softening towards the lady on the one hand, and on the other alarm at what she had heard, and for the use she might make of it. Indeed, he was perplexed and rebuked and

suspicious all at once. He knew there was great compassion and kindness in the girl, for he had seen both in her, when he first saw her at Scorry alone with the body of the poor serving-woman; yet he had proofs enough of her bitter enmity to Locharn, and between the two he did not know what to make of her.

On the next morning the Chief awoke conscious, the fever gone, and some hope of him lifted a weight from the Preacher's mind. Later in the day he went in search of Miss Isobel, whom he found taking a breath of air in the walled garden on the sheltered side of the house.

"He is better!" she said, seeing the old man's altered air, and Mr James replied that he was,—that he hoped and believed he was.

"I have to thank you for your kindness to him," he said, with a little difficulty. "I have heard of it, and I believe, under God, it has been the saving of him."

There was a stone sun-dial in the middle of the garden walk, covered over with ivy save on the surface, which was kept clipped, and the girl leaned against it as if for support.

"I am glad he is better," she said, her lips trembling. But the Preacher was intent on his own thoughts.

"When you saw him," he went on, "he was not in his senses, and, as you know, there is no trust to be put in a sick man's ravings. Yet there may be some truth, and I know Locharn has that on his mind which he would not wish to be spoken of at this time,—matters where you and he are on different sides. Perhaps you heard him come over them yesterday, and seeing his condition, and how he may not recover, I would ask you to extend your kindness so far as to consider them sacred."

Mr James looked gravely at the girl as he spoke, and she flushed hotly. "Do you think me a spy?" she cried, and turning away from him, she bent her head over the dial and began weeping wildly. "Oh, you are hard," she said passionately, "you are hard."

Mr James put his wrinkled hand on one of her small white ones. "Poor lassie!" he said in a softened voice, that was still puzzled and perplexed. "We have need to be gentle with one another these days. I have been more a man of war than a man of peace all my days, and I spoke too hardly when I saw you last. I have been thinking that. I am sure you never wished his death, and now I think God will be good to us. You will pray for him as well as I, for there is none more unworthy to be heard than myself, Preacher though I am."

But Miss Isobel did not look up or speak, and at last Mr James went away and left her, vexed with himself for his harsh thoughts of her, and yet not understanding her very well either.

Locharn was hardly recovered so far as to be out of danger when the rumour came, first of a new Jacobite

rising, and then, on the top of that, of how it had come to naught. The Spanish ships that Sandy Campbell had brought news of were reported to have been sunk or damaged by a storm in the Bay of Biscay. Two vessels, indeed, driven separate from the others, landed on the coast to the north of Scorry, but few of the clansmen were ready to join with those on board of them, and the Marquis had nothing to say to them, having but a few days before their arrival made choice at last of his side, and taken office under the Government. A few regiments dispersed the rebels, and the whole thing served only to take the heart out of the Jacobite party, and show them the hopelessness of their cause. The news affected those at Kintraid very differently. Mr James rejoiced, thanking the Almighty for a new deliverance from the danger of Stewart rule. Sir Hugh, weak with illness, heard it apathetically. Isobel, the only hot Jacobite in the household, took it quietly, and yet went about with flushed cheeks and eyes that held a little spark of indignant fire in them. The Preacher took occasion in those days to assure her of the safety of her cousin, Captain Archibald, for he had heard the rumour of her being betrothed to him. There was now no great secret to keep in regard to the plot, seeing it was over and done with; and indeed he suspected that she had been acquainted with most of it from the beginning. To test her, he mentioned the Marquis, and she fired up at the word.

"He is a traitor," she cried. "He has betrayed the cause."

"Madam," the Preacher said gravely, "it is a bad cause. If you had the experience I have had, you would know that."

"Is that the reason he turned his back on it?" she said scornfully. "No — but because it was weak, and he was afraid; because the other side had more to offer him; because it seems men care more for their own selfish gain than for anything else. Oh, I would I were a man, when I see how everything must be lost for lack of one!"

The old man regarded her with some admiration. "Nay, madam," said he, "I think you have judged the Marquis rightly; but he is only one. I know a man who had nothing to gain by opposing the Marquis, yet he opposed him because he believed his own cause to be the right one. He had no followers with him, and yet he took the risk of going to him at the Kintraid inn and telling him he was discovered. I believe," he added with a laugh, "that he had the folly to drink King George's health in his presence, and when he came away there was no one waiting to back him but an old Preacher who should be done with such things altogether."

"It is good to have courage," said the girl, her eyes shining.

"That man had nothing to gain," Mr James continued. "I believe he thought he had something to lose."

Isobel was silent, turning away her head.

When Locharn began to recover strength, a new trouble almost took the heart out of him. The surgeon told him that in all likelihood he would find his sight gone when his eyes were unbandaged. The shot in his face had touched them both, and he had little hope of anything but blindness for him. This news was a great shock to the Chief. To him, who was hot for life and action and the stir of events, such an existence as he saw before him seemed worse than death; and now at last, when he thought of Miss Isobel, he believed Providence to be against him, as the Preacher had said. He saw that his love and his will and his perseverance could not do everything after all, — that they could not do anything, indeed, in the face of such a calamity as was likely to befall him. At first, being weak still, he did not take the thing very well, but brooded over it by the hour, and became so gloomy and irritable that he would be ashamed of himself, remembering what kindness he received from every one. He spent much of his time in the small drawing-room, where he had once spoken with Miss Isobel of the Scorry rents, and sitting there with the bandage on his eyes, he was served by all with a willingness that showed him constantly how he was become an object for their pity. And of this nothing reminded him so painfully as the change in her whom he had known of old in so many moods, — of anger and of defiance,—for now she had for him but one unvarying mood of gentleness.

Spring was now past, and the summer had come very warm and sunny and dry. Mr James went away to Locharn on the chief's business. Lady Mathieson was something of an invalid, and Hugh was left to the company of Sir Alexander, and, oddly and yet naturally, to the care of Isobel. It was strange indeed to him to sit by her in peace and to ask her for this and for that, and to speak with her of little trifling things. At times he did not look beyond the hour that was passing, but was more happy and content in her company than he had ever been in his life, but again he was stabbed to the heart by her level kindness, because it seemed to set him apart from others, as one whom it would be cruelty not to pity. At such times the very sound of active life seemed to madden him,— the clatter of horses' hoofs at the gates, the running of hasty steps, the noise of a sword thrust in the sheath. He was hot to be away from Kintraid — to be away from Isobel. He was tempted to anger her, so that she might answer him hotly like an equal, and not as the poor broken thing he had become. As he was minded to be off, who should turn up one day but Captain Archibald Maclean, back again from France almost as soon as Sandy Campbell had landed him there, and

fuming with rage at Locharn for what he had done, and how, as he told his cousin, he had brought the cause to ruin by preventing the meeting with the Marquis, on whom all had depended. It was no little surprise to him to find the very man himself at Kintraid, and, as it seemed, high in favour there. There was a stiff enough meeting between them: had it not been for Hugh's bandaged head, it would have been stiffer on the captain's part, and perhaps more cordial on Locharn's. The captain was in a very ill humour. He was wild over the lost cause, and the defection of the Marquis, and the hardships he had suffered himself when he was stranded a full month in the Lews, while the Jacobite plot was going to pieces. And now to see the very man that had wrought the mischief receiving kindness from Miss Isobel was enough to anger any man. He would have picked a quarrel with him, and brought their differences to the sword's-point, before he had been a day in Kintraid, had Locharn been able to meet him on equal terms. As for Hugh, he made up his mind that Isobel was betrothed to her cousin — a thing he had never taken into consideration till the time he found the miniature among the captain's possessions. He took a great distaste of the man, for though he could not see him, there was something in his laugh and in the gay flippant tones of his voice that he did not like.

Captain Maclean remained at Kintraid only two days, and he had a fencing-match of words with Locharn in that time. The two chanced to be left alone together, and at first they were silent,—the captain playing with the strings of Miss Isobel's guitar, and Sir Hugh standing inactive, his arm on the mantel-shelf, and no wish to exchange pleasantries with a man he had no fancy for. The other seemed to be of a different mind, however, for he soon began to speak on trifling matters, and presently he came round to Sandy Campbell and the time he spent with him in the Lews—his tones touched with a light mockery that was like a travesty of Isobel's.

"I trust you were as comfortably lodged as could be expected," said Locharn, coldly enough.

"Indeed," the other replied, "I cannot say much for that. It was the fortune of war, however, and I must not complain—though I think it was something unofficial too. One would not think much of it if it came after a fair fight."

He spoke with a light insolence, and Hugh was angered. "Captain Maclean," said he, "you did not come fighting—you came plotting."

"Have you the proof of that?" the other returned coolly. "Have you a scrape of the pen that would show it?"

"I have proof enough," said Hugh, but he knew that, as far as papers were concerned, the other was right.

"I should like to see the

proof, Sir Hugh," cried the captain. "I should like to see it. I do not think the thing was very creditable altogether, since we are at it, and it's a strange thing that what I was robbed of by your followers was not a treasonable paper, but something very far different."

"Robbed!" said Locharn; "you have a strong word there, Captain Maclean."

"It's a true word," replied the other, "for I was robbed of the picture of a lady, a miniature that was of considerable value, and I cannot think that very creditable to your clan."

Sir Hugh restrained his anger with difficulty. "You use your words very unadvisedly, Captain," said he, "for the picture you speak of is in the possession of your cousin, Miss Maclean, and has been since it came by an accident into mine."

The other was a little taken aback, for Isobel had not mentioned the miniature to him. "I do not know about that," said he, recovering himself. "Whoever has it now, I should like to know why it was taken from me. It was a queer accident that brought it to you."

Locharn's hand went by the force of old habit to his side, where the hilt of his sword should have been, for in those days there was only the one foolish method of settling a dispute or replying to an insult among gentlemen. But with the action came the remembrance of his helplessness, and at the moment Isobel returned to the room. Her look went from one to the other,—from Locharn flushed and angry, standing up very straight by the fire, to her cousin sitting playing with the guitar-strings, a little malicious smile curling his lip.

"I think, Archibald," she said, laughing, and her eyes flashing a little, "you are not a very good nurse."

"I never had much practice in the work," said he.

"And I do not need it," Locharn added to that, somewhat roughly and ungraciously. "I have been too long a burden on your kindness, and I must not trespass on it much longer."

"It is no trespass," said the girl quietly.

She went away with her cousin, and Hugh saw no more of her that day, and he raged at himself for his surly rudeness and ingratitude. Next morning the Captain was gone. It appeared he had business in another part of the country, and when that was done it was his intention to return to France.

Locharn was all impatience to be gone also. He only awaited the return of Mr James, for blind as he was it was not easy for him to go a journey without a friend. The hope came to him one day that his sight would not be lost altogether after all, for though he suffered pain still and could not bear the light, yet if at any time the bandage was removed for a moment, he saw no wall of blank dark-

ness before him, as he had feared.

He spoke to Miss Isobel about the miniature after the Captain left, and asked if she had received it safely. She replied that she had, and that it had been her father's, and the Captain had brought it home from France to her. She spoke with seeming difficulty, and passed at once to talk of other things, and Hugh was left to turn over in his mind the ideas her words started. The Captain had spoken as if the picture was his own, and now it seemed it had been her father's. It might be possible she was not betrothed to her cousin, as he had thought. Yet again, he called to mind the Captain's words and tone, and how he had been constantly with Isobel while he was at Kintraid, and he said to himself that if it had been her father's before, it might be her cousin's now, and that, whether or no, it could make little difference to him.

Locharn could not but see, since his coming to Kintraid, what a great gulf he had been seeking to bridge over, when he sought to win the love of Miss Isobel. There was the old enmity between Scorry and Locharn, — the ancient bitter tales that had been taught, like nursery rhymes, to himself and the girl; there was her father's black treachery to her in the matter of the letter; there was the Rebellion that had brought them first face to face in anger; there was the trouble about Scorry; and, last of all, there was the strange fate that made himself the man to overthrow the last hope of the Jacobites in the West. He could not but see the madness of the suit that would have crossed so many streams, — assailed so many barriers; and yet he knew it was none of these that had put a stop to it. It was the girl herself, with her compassionate kindness; it was the Providence he could not combat, that was like to put a dark wall between him and all the life Isobel loved,—the life of stir and movement, of brave men and gallant deeds.

He had one thing to speak about, however, before he left Kintraid, and that was the Scorry estate, and before long his opportunity came. He found himself left a long time alone one evening, and being weary of his idleness and impatient of his helplessness, he went stumbling out of the house by himself, trusting to his staff to guide him. No one encountered him or spoke to him, and he went on cautiously over the hill-top and into the wood, and there threw himself on the moss under the birch-trees. The sound of the waves below the rocks was loud there, and the scent of the greenery about him strong and fresh. In the peace of the place he began to think with shame of the poor coward he had been when he looked out to the life that was before him. He saw himself like a petulant boy, angry and peevish because he could not get the thing he wanted, and he called on him-

self to be a man at least, though he might be a blind one. He had been a considerable time alone without disturbance, thinking and struggling with himself in this fashion, when there came the sound of a voice calling him. It was Isobel's,—not very loud, and with a little anxious note in it that was to him so bittersweet that he could not bring himself to reply to it, but lay and listened and hoped for it again. She called several times, and still he did not answer, but listened and listened again, and at last he heard her footsteps come near, and he shouted out to her. He heard her give a little cry, for she saw him at the same moment.

"You are there," she said, her breath coming hurriedly, as if she had been running. She asked if he had heard her calling, and he answered shamefacedly that he had heard her. "You did not answer," she said, and he knew from her voice that she was angry. "I think you might have taken the trouble to answer, Sir Hugh."

"Do not be angry," he said, stumbling to his feet. He felt a strange pleasure in having roused her at last from her pity to something like his old knowledge of her. "Forgive my foolishness, Miss Isobel. It pleased me to fancy you called in kindness for me, and I was fain to hear you call again."

"And I think," she said hotly, "that you did very unkindly. We had some reason for concern for—for any one coming here to the rocks blindfold, and I think you might have answered,—I think at least you might have answered."

"Forgive me," said he; "it is always my ill-fortune to offend you." The girl did not reply, but he could feel that she was still disturbed. "I have something to say to you," he went on, "since we have the opportunity, and if you will have the kindness to listen. I have heard there is a proposal to buy back Scorry for you, and I wish to let you know, before I go, that I will put no difficulty in the way of that. Heaven knows, I would gladly give it to you if you would accept it from me; but at all events I will be agreeable to whatever terms your friends are willing to make for it."

"I do not want Scorry," said the girl petulantly.

"Ah, but I know you do," Locharn went on. "Since we first met, Miss Isobel, circumstances have forced us into disagreement. Now that I have received so much kindness at your hands, I hope there will be no more ill-will between us. When I bought Scorry, it was not for myself,—it was, as you know, because I was foolish enough to think that the day would come when I could give it back to you. Well," he added, "it will be given back now, though not in the way I hoped."

"What way was that?" said Isobel.

"Ah, you know that very well," Hugh answered.

"I have a bad memory at times," said the girl.

Locharn thought she was still angry, and now he thought it was she who was unkind. "I thought I could win you for my wife," he said in a low tone. "There is no need to speak of that now."

For a moment Isobel was silent, and when she spoke her voice was changed. "I have something to say too," she said tremulously. "I vowed I would not marry you. I was angry and wild against you. I would not stop to think. I set my people against you, and they were all for revenge, and I was for revenge. Ah," she cried passionately, "do you know that if you had died it would have been my fault?" Hugh cried out that she was not to say that, or to blame herself. "Blame myself!" said she, her voice breaking,—"I will never cease to blame myself."

Locharn began fumbling at the kerchief that was tied over his eyes. "If I am to have my sight," he cried fiercely, "I will win you yet."

He tore the linen away, and now the light blinded him, and he was forced to cover his eyes with his hands.

"Oh, what have you done?" said the girl. "Do you want me, then, after all? Do you mean that you want me after all?"

Locharn gave a great cry and turned towards her, half blind as he was, but even as he did so he checked himself. "You shall not marry a blind man," he said huskily. "I was forgetting — I am not sure—I will pray God——"

But even as he spoke the cloud began to lift from him. In the cool green place the mist was clearing from his eyes, and he began to see more and more distinctly the face of the girl he loved. He felt very lightsome and happy all of a sudden, and yet he could hardly believe he had a reason for it. "Do you mean," he said in a whisper, "that I have the chance to win you still?"

But Isobel cried "No" to that, and then, "Oh, my dear!" she said, "my dear! You have all the heart I have—this long time."

And at that Hugh gave a great sob, and caught her in his arms, calling her such names as lovers use.

"So it has come to this after all," he said. And now he laughed out like a boy.

. . . . . .

So there was the end of the feud, and once the thing was settled it was strange to see how even Mr James took it with a good grace. And of all the douce Campbell ladies who came to Locharn, none, they say, was so beloved among her people as the gay, gallant Jacobite lass who was Sir Hugh's wife. And even the clans came to some peace in time. Yet the rumour goes that there was a good Whig house in the West in those days, and when toasts were drunk and some one cried "The King!" the master of it drank to George of Hanover, but his lady crossed her glass over the water.

THE SUNDARBANS.

BY EDMUND CANDLER.

THE great delta of the Ganges east of the Hughli, from Diamond Harbour as far as the Haringhata, is entirely river and jungle. Four thousand square miles of forest are intersected by six hundred or more channels which are big enough to have names on a 4-inch-to-the-mile survey map, and perhaps ten times as many channels which have escaped nomenclature, and yet are big enough for a ship's jolly-boat, though the trees

"High overarched embower."

The Forest Department have divided this huge tract into many thousands of sections, and each section when it has been depleted of its timber is left alone for forty years. These statistics are more eloquent of the stillness and tranquillity of the Sundarbans than any descriptive writing.

There is a sameness about all great rivers which makes a few days on a launch more monotonous than a month in the open sea, where strange fellowship and a clean horizon give one a spurious sense of freedom, and even of conquest. But in estuaries the yellow water and the glare and the far-away fringe of trees are always the same, whether in the Menam, the La Plata, or the Hughli. Here breadth of view affects us, not illogically, with a sense of restraint, and it is good, if one has command of the wheel, to escape from the estuary which makes us feel confined through its perpetual vista of limitations and the suggestion of unexplored margins, which may or may not have a character of their own, into channels where one can recognise the vegetation on either bank.

In the Sundarbans these give place to narrower channels, which in turn are connected by creeks barely accessible in a dinghy, every one of which reveals the same feature—a low bank of mud haunted by the slothful mugger, and overrun by red and brown crabs and mud-fish always plying between one another's burrows on the same earnest business of love or hate or greed, and making assignations as resolutely and disastrously as more evolved creatures. The banks are slotted with the feet of unseen things, tiger and cheetah, the hunter and hunted, which move in some mysterious way through the thick tangle, which is so congested that the roots have to send up shoots for air, —brittle, slimy things that crackle under the feet of the intruder.

Seeds fall all day long, and germinate at once in the mud, and spring up and choke one another, and writhe and struggle for light and room. The banks are thick with the

fern-like *hental* palm, whose leaves turn golden, and the *golpatta*, that sends up great palmate fronds which are always tumbling over with their own weight, leaving a *débris* of roots broken off and sticking in the mud like inverted clubs glistening red and yellow in the attenuated sunlight, until they are lifted out of their bed of slime by the rising tide and borne through a labyrinth of fronds out into the broad stream seawards.

Could one cut a path through this teeming forest one would find there was no truce or respite in it till the jungle ends right in the sea, where the matted red roots of the *goran* and mangrove are left naked by the breakers in a ruddy tortuous tangle that is like nothing on earth but the dwarf rhododendron forests of Sikkim and Nepal.

Yet in some places on the coast, known only to the "Jungly Sahib" and the shell-gatherers, the forest which keeps its secret so darkly opens into more communicative glades. Through the sunken land, where the dying and stag-headed *sundri* puts out branches covered with fungi and the green orchid-like parasites, there penetrates an unexpected glimmer of sky. Here the mud ends, and the *sundri* and *keora* trees drop their seeds in unresponsive soil.

Along the coast extend the sand dunes, a line of smooth breast-like hummocks and soft depressions, where the tiger stretches himself and sleeps after his hunting. The barrier is grown over with the tall elephant grass, whose white crests, always stirring with a faint breeze from the sea, dance and glimmer like a mirage. Between the dunes and the jungle lies the salt marsh, the stag's pasture-land, where the grass stretches in streaks of colour from citron green to dull brown according to the variation of the soil. The marsh is intersected all over by a maze of deer tracks, as beaten as footpaths leading through homely meadows to a farm. Here I have watched the herds step warily into the glade at dawn.

The features which give the glade its threefold charm make it a perilous place for the herd. Inland, along the definite line where the sand forbids encroachment, stands a resolute bank of *keora* trees; towards the coast stretches the shimmering line of dunes, and between these barriers the variegated grass land is broken here and there by natural dykes fringed by the alder-like *gingwa*. When the breeze is to the land, man or tiger may stalk along the edge of the forest; when to the sea, they may lurk in the cover of the sand dunes where the elephant grass and the murmuring of the breakers conspire with them against the herd; when it blows along the coast, they still have the shelter of the *gingwa* bushes which divide the glade into a hedged pasture-land. So when my forest friend took me to the place one still October