

cerned with Islay's business. In none of the drawers was a single document of any interest to the searcher.

It was more hopefully he opened up the flap at the top of the 'scretoire and looked at the pigeon-holes within, hut, even there, was nothing to reward his curiosity. Bundles of letters and receipts docketed on their backs brought Islay's business down to some weeks ago, among them Æneas's acknowledgments of fees paid for his tutoring of Will Campbell.

Such desks had always in them nooks and slides, with what had long become a mere pretence at secrecy; Ninian pulled at the fluted thick partitions in between the pigeon-holes, and drew out upright drawers that were empty—all but one, and that the last he came on, slyly fastened with a spring it took him long to find.

There was in it a silver snuffbox, tarnished, and a strand of a woman's hair tied up with a piece of tape.

He put the hair back where he got it, and stood up to examine the box a little closer to the candle. When he opened it and saw a portrait on the lid inside, he started. At first he thought it was Margaret, or her mother, but it was neither, and yet the face, in a dim way, seemed familiar.

"*Tha i agam!*—I have her!" said he at last. "Macmaster's wife!" and he slipped it in his pocket.

Beyond this he found nothing with the slightest bearing on the former owner of Drimdorran.

He went along the shelves that lined the room; took out more business books and looked at them: at the back of the topmost shelf he found a plan of the estate, a list of farm stock, and a letter of Paul Macmaster's, all tied together in a roll. The letter he read with interest, and pocketed.

On the desk and on the chamber door he put a seal, and it was afternoon when he went home, his business finished.

To the food which his daughter put before him he did little more than give a stirring on the plate; he fed on cogitations. It was not till she told him Æneas and his