

## CHAPTER XXXI.

## THE MAN FROM GUNNA.

THE castle, when they passed, was mournful dark, with no light in it—at least that could be seen. Its evening rooms looked to the courtyard; outwardly its walls rose blank, expressionless, below the star-bright curve of night. A breeze fanned through the ivy; stirred the laurels. The low town, crouched beyond it, lent it height: the tower would seem to lift gigantically. Bats were abroad; at times they gave a cheep. To the east, on the Cowal hills, was a fleece of cloud that hid the risen moon.

The two men and the horse were on a private way that took them through the policy; between them and the walls was but a garden border, and they spoke in whispers. It was as if they feared to spoil MacCailein's sleep.

"Rats at nibbling, MacCailein! Rats at nibbling!" said Ninian. "The wonder is to me Himself can sleep, even in a turret, with so many crannies for the rat in Scotland."

Alan-Iain-Alain Og put in his horse at the back of the land where he had a stable; left a man to groom it, and took Ninian up the stair with him to find a supper ready. All Annabel said to her man was, "There you are!" and pinched his elbow. She took from him the wallets.

He pulled her ear. "Ah!" said he with a smile, "what a fine enduring woman! Many a wife left to