

all their being was on edge to make up for the loss of vision, and they became as leaves stirred by the faintest air, he hoped the gloom of this lowering day that threw him in upon himself might send him stumbling on something.

That morning he had bathed in ice-cold water, thinly clad himself, but for the plaid, and eaten nothing—not a scrap! It was his father's plan.—“Aye, Ninian, be clean, and lean, and cold, and ravenous when big things are a-doing; then God will come to thee, and woe upon the foe!”

The death of Duncanson last night had been a blow. It was a fox gone into earth just when the grip was on him. And with him, too, had disappeared a hundred chances to find out his secret. No other body knew where Paul Macmaster died, nor how, and it was doubtful if he had left a scrap of anything for dog to fasten on. That had been Ninian's notion in the morning; he had grown more hopeful as it passed. For he had found out how, exactly, Duncanson had died. He had had no warning. There was granted him no time to trample out the embers of his fire the way Clan Alpine did in woods when they heard the *cailleach-oidhche* command a scattering. There had come to him a letter; he had read it standing, given out a cry, and fallen in a heap, to die ten minutes after.

In the suddenness of this was Ninian's hope that everything could not yet be destroyed; he was sure it was MacCaillein's letter, and at ten o'clock, when he went up to Drimdorran House by MacCaillein's orders to seal up Duncanson's repository, this letter was the first thing that he asked for.

What was his amazement to have the Muileach hand it to him yet unopened, the boar's head still intact on the red seal at its back!

“What's this?” said he. “There was another letter, then?”

And then he heard of Lovat's. A runner had come last night from Inverness, and it was a letter from