

"Oh, no, but in our island home. That sweet mother of mine! There never was anyone like her. Fair and gentle and frail. I was the only daughter. My brother Donald came before me, and Charlie after—then she died. I was only eight years old, but I remember her as if it were yesterday. Her fair face, her sweet blue eyes, her tales of the Stuarts and of France, and the songs she sang."

Again Marie hummed, but it was a different tune, that of a French ballad.

"We are nearing the shore," said Jessie. "The *Transit*, too, is closer."

"I'll slip in here and we can step on to that little reef," said Marie.

In another minute they drew the canoe up the bank. Again Marie looked at the clouds. "They are not much nearer. I don't know but they are drifting to the south. We may get the shells, I think."

"Are you sure we shall have time?"

"I paddled straight over, and we can easily get back and over to the wharf again before Ned's hour and a half are up. Come along, Pussie, don't be afraid."

And with cat-like devotion Jessie hurried after her. In little over a minute they were there, "gathering shells on the sea-shore."

"What beauties they are, the little pearly things! I have a handful already. But we cannot stay another second. Those treacherous clouds have veered round. See how they are sweeping in. We must run, Jessie.