

HELENA GRAHAM,
—OR—
THE BRIDE'S SACRIFICE.

CHAPTER I.

The island lies nine leagues away. Along its solitary shore Of craggy rock and sandy bay No sound but ocean's roar. Save where the bold, wild sea-bird makes her home, Her shrill cry coming through the sparkling foam. R. H. D.

ABOUT six miles from the mainland of Scotland, with its rock-bound coast washed by the waters of the broad Atlantic, was an islet known in the days of which I write as Graham's Isle.

The island was small—about two miles in length and the same in breadth—but fertile, rough, and rocky. A deep unbroken silence ever reigned here, save when some gay party from the opposite coast visited the island to fish or shoot. Sometimes during the summer pleasure parties were held here, but in the winter all was silent and dreary on the lonely, isolated little spot.

The island had been from time immemorial in the possession of a family named Graham, handed down from father to son. The people of the surrounding country had learned to look upon them as the rightful lords of the soil, "to the manor born." The means by which it had first come into their possession were seldom thought of, or if thought of, only added to their reputation as a bold and daring race. The legend ran, that long before the union, came over a certain Sir Malcolm Graham, a celebrated freebooter and scion of the noble Scotch clan of that name, who for some reckless crime had been outlawed and banished, and in revenge had become a pirate, making this solitary island the place of his rendezvous. Here, with his band of dare-devils—all outlaws like himself—he held many a jolly carousal that made the old rocks ring. In one of his adventures he had taken captive a young Spanish girl, whose wondrous beauty at once conquered a heart all unused to the tender passion. He bore off his prize in triumph, and without asking her consent made her his wife at the first port he touched. Soon, however, tiring of her company on shipboard, he brought her to his island home, and there left her to occupy his castle, while he sailed merrily away. One year afterwards, Sir Malcolm the Dauntless, as he was called, was conquered by an English sloop-of-war; and true to his daring character, he blew up the vessel, and together with his crew and captors perished in the explosion.

After him, from one generation to another, the Grahams ruled as lords of the isle, and became in after years as noted for their poverty as their pride. A reckless, imprudent race they were, caring only for to-day, and letting to-morrow care for itself; quick and fierce to resent injury or insult, and implacable as death or doom in their hate. Fierce alike in love and hatred, the Grahams were known and dreaded for miles around. From sire to son the fiery blood of Sir Malcolm the Dauntless passed unadulterated, and throbbed in the veins of Oscar Graham, the late master of the lodge, in a darker, fiercer stream than in any that had gone before. At his death, which took place some two or three years previous to the opening of our story, his son Malcolm, a true descendant of his illustrious namesake, became the lord and master of the isle, and the last of the Grahams. Young Malcolm showed no disposition to pass his days in the spot where he was born. After the death of his father, Malcolm resolved to visit foreign lands, and leave Graham's Lodge to the care of an old servant, Nurse Allie, as she was familiarly called, and her son Evan, both of whom had passed their lives in the service of the family, and considered that in some sort the honor of the house lay in their hands.

Vague rumors were current that the old house was haunted. Fishermen cut casting their nets avowed that at midnight, blue, unearthly lights flashed from the upper chambers—where it was known old Allie never went—and wild, piercing shrieks, that chilled the blood with horror, echoed on the still night air. The superstitious whispered that Oscar had been sent back by his master, the Evil One, to atone for his wicked deeds done in the flesh, and that his restless spirit would ever haunt the old lodge, the scene, it was believed, of many an appalling crime.

Be that as it may, the old house was deserted, save by old Allie and her hopeful son; and young Malcolm, taking with him his only sister, spent his time in cruising about in a schooner he owned, and—it was said, among other rumors—in cheating the revenue.

Besides the lodge, or Graham's Castle, as it was sometimes called, the island contained but one other habitation, occupied by a widow, a distant connection of the Grahams, who, after the death of her husband, had come here to reside. The cottage was situated on the summit of a gentle elevation that commanded an extensive view of the island; for Mrs. Benington—or Mrs. Ben, as she was always called—liked a wide prospect at least, if nothing else could be obtained on the lonely isle.

The most frugal, the most industrious of housewives was Mrs. Ben. No crime in her eyes equalled that of thriftlessness, and all sins could be pardoned but that of laziness. Unfortunately for her peace of mind she was afflicted with an orphan nephew, the latest of mortals, whose shortcomings kept the bustling old lady in a fever from morning till night. A wild young man, sister of Mrs. Ben's had run away with a German fiddler, and dying a few years after, was soon followed to the grave by her husband, who drank more than was good for him one night, and was found dead in the morning. Master Fritz Freiburgh was accordingly adopted by his only living relative, and, as that good lady declared, had been "the death of her" every day since.

A young girl of sixteen, known only as "Jessie," was the only other member of Mrs. Ben's family. Who this girl was, where she had come from, and what was her family name, was a mystery; and Mrs. Ben, when questioned on the subject, only shut her lips and shook her head mysteriously, and spoke never a word. Although she called the old lady aunt, it was generally believed that she was no relation; but as Jessie was a favorite with all who visited the island, the mystery concerning her, though it piqued the curiosity of the curious, made them like her none the less. A big Newfoundland dog and a disagreeable, chattering parrot completed the widow's household.

Mrs. Ben's business was flourishing. She made a regular visit each week to the mainland, where she disposed of fish, which abounded about the shore of the island, and in return brought back groceries and such other things as she needed. Besides that, she kept a sort of tavern and place of refreshment for the sailors and fishermen, who sometimes stopped for a day or two on the island;

SEE NEXT PAGE.

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ONE CHARGE WILL SCATTER TO FRAGMENTS THE LARGEST BOULDER. WILL BLAST A ROCK IN WATER QUITE AS WELL AS IF DRY.

Quarrymen should use it.

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Conveyancers, Land, Loan, Insurance and General Agents, 4 Day's Block, Guelph.

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Money always on hand in sums to suit borrowers, on mortgages or good persons security. Notaries or extra charges.

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E. O'DONNELL & Co.

Have Coming in To-day

400 caddies of the Best Young Hyson Dollar Tea to be sold at 80 cents per lb, by the caddy.
110 caddies of Good Japan 75 cent Tea for 65 cents by the caddy.
75 caddies of Good Black Tea at 40 cents per lb. by the caddy.
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—ALSO—

1 car load of Lake, Trout and White Fish,

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Factory Chk Shirting.....	40	Black Lustre.....	18
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