

Colin turned and pointed to the sheep-fold. Then he said in a solemn voice:—

'It iss God's truth that when the old laird made yon burial ground into a sheep fank, that Elspeth Fraser—who was Miss M'Iver's nurse and iss still livin'—told his doom. 'Fergus Duff,' she said, 'the day will come when the table will be spread for ye; but ye will never again sit down to it.' And I hef been told that her curse came true.'

'Weel,' replied Davie, looking towards the M'Lean Arms, 'ye wad gie ane the cauld shivers wi' a' yer gruesome tales o' ghaists, an' graveyards, an' sic like awesome things; but gin ye wad come into the change-hoose, we might hae a dram thegither.'

To this suggestion Duncan Black raised no objections, and Colin Grant was not sorry to enjoy another half-hour's respite from his wife's tongue.

The three men had not been long ensconced in the back parlour of the M'Lean Arms when Torquil M'Iver passed through South-an on his way to Fas Ghlae. He sat heavily in his saddle, like a weary man, while black care sat yet more heavily within his heart.

Poor man! his face had brightened with an almost youthful gladness when he saw Fiona happy with Waldegrave. The worst bitterness of life was past. The worries that had so overshadowed his own declining years would not fall on his daughter. Only let him live to see Geoffrey return, and his child's future reasonably secure, and he would be ready to sing his *Nunc Dimittis*.

And yet not unfrequently when alone he wondered how Nial Mor would receive the news about Fiona and Waldegrave. For though they had conducted themselves with much discretion before the servants and work people, the rumour had soon gone abroad that they were lovers, and would be married when Waldegrave returned. What was not definitely known was shrewdly conjectured. Besides, it was not exclusively feminine curiosity and love of gossip that kept Jessie Macdougall dodging their steps, listening at key-holes, and peeping beneath window-blinds, and then, with marvellous developments, de-

tailing all she had heard and seen to Lachlan M'Cuaig. And what common rumour had spread, Torquil M'Iver, with his simplicity and truthfulness of character, made no attempt to explain away or deny, when Nial Mor returned home and put the question directly to him.

He had feared that the young fellow would be very angry and vindictive; but it was apparently otherwise. Nial was strangely calm though he declared that he was dreadfully cut up at the blighting of his own hopes. And when he turned away, Torquil M'Iver was genuinely sorry for him. He had always liked him, and if he could have lightened his disappointment he would. But Fiona had made her choice, and she was a girl who must decide her own destiny; and he was glad to think that the rejected lover harboured no revenge. So effectively were Nial's real feelings hid, that even Fiona was deceived, and thinking that his downcast and averted countenance was due to the grief of disappointment and bereavement, she was specially gracious and sympathetic whenever they met.

But now the sky was overcast again. As the weeks passed and no letters came from Waldegrave, Torquil M'Iver's surprise merged into perplexity, and then into bitter disappointment and anger. To him there was but one possible explanation—the young stranger was not the man they had taken him to be. Back among his old friends, and under his mother's influence, he had been persuaded to exercise the freedom Fiona had insisted should be his, and had quietly dropped all correspondence. It was, no doubt, hard to believe that they had been so deceived, and that Waldegrave was capable of such ingratitude and fickleness; but what other explanation was possible?

And the disappointment was all the greater that it came at a time when his own financial affairs had taken a less hopeful turn, and the suspicion had begun to dawn on his mind that the remarkable magnanimity of Nial Mor might pretend anything but quiet acquiescence in his disappointment. Might he not only be waiting until he could strike a blow that would be decisive and final?

Thus Torquil M'Iver saw the clouds gathering darker and thicker than ever over his own life. Nial Mor would not be likely to again renew his suit, and even if he did, Fiona would not listen to him, for with a woman's unreasoning tenacity she still believed in Waldegrave. There was nothing for it except prepare for the worst. Fortunately there was little that Nial Mor could do, so long as the interest on the bonds was paid. So M'Iver's first care was to be ready. With that object he had been away at a large sale of Highland cattle, etc., where he had disposed of a number of valuable horses and a quantity of prize stock, and was now returning home with a sum of money that would meet all present demands, and tide him over the next year.

Riding slowly along the deserted road, lost in his own painful meditations, he was within a few hundred yards of Bronach Water when he found himself confronted by Nial Mor. The latter briefly explained what had occurred, referred to the impossibility of reaching Fas Ghlae that night, and then cordially invited the old laird to become his guest.

'It is very kind of you,' replied M'Iver, touched with the heartiness of the offer, yet anxious to reach home; 'but I must try and push on; Fiona will be expecting me.'

Native Races Not Dying Out.

The rapid increase of the indigenous African races under British rule (the Zulus,

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for instance, having more than doubled in a quarter of a century, and the Basutos having quadrupled in the same time) affords theme for serious thought. In the light of this outlook, the question of the treatment of these and their neighboring races assumes an almost terrible interest, and it can not now be shelved, or inefficiently dealt with, without the deeper wrong of adding to the racial antipathies which also in the future will have to be grappled with. Any and all attempts to elevate these peoples without the everlasting foundation of the Gospel of Christ must necessarily fail, and it is for the Christian Church to day to emphasize this in every possible way, especially by the practical development of missionary work.

The Phonograph Discovered by Attention.

"I discovered the principle by the merest accident," says Edison, the great inventor. "I was singing to the mouth-piece of a telephone, when the vibration of the voice sent a fine steel point into my finger. That set me to thinking. If I could record the actions of the point over the same surface afterwards, I saw no reason why the thing would not talk. I tried the experiment first on a strip of telegraph paper, and found that the point made an alphabet, shouted the words 'Halloa! Halloa!' in the mouthpiece, ran the paper back over the steel point, and heard a faint 'Halloa! Halloa!' in return. I determined to make a machine that would work accurately. That's the whole story. The phonograph is the result of the pricking of a finger."—Thomas A. Edison

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