

quietly making her own keen observations of the man who wanted to take her boy away.

He had a somewhat stern look, and an abrupt manner of speech, which, however, were only the sheath of a truly kind heart. His eye softened as it took in the whole aspect of the room ; its sweet wholesomeness and simplicity seemed to reflect the entire character of the folk who dwelt in it.

"There cannot be much wrong with a man reared in this environment, Bremner," he observed, as Mary slipped out of the room to find her husband and bid Robin make haste.

"I thought it would please you. They are the salt of the earth here—the old folk, I mean. Don't forget the young man is only an adopted son, that their blood does not run in his veins."

"Still, he has known no other influences or surroundings, and they should tell," observed the captain ; and no further speech was rendered possible by the opening of the door. It was Robert who entered, and the captain, before he spoke a word, eyed him keenly. Rob bore the scrutiny well, though Mr. Bremner observed him grow a little pale.

"I had better leave you to discuss the matter privately, Captain," he said, rising. "I daresay I shall find Mrs. Fletcher in the kitchen. Pray, take your time. There is no hurry, and we shall have a fine moon to walk back by."

So saying, he went out and closed the door.

"So it seems you have ambitions, young man," said the captain, gruffly. "Come over here, and sit down. Do you know anything about the Irish character, sir? There is nothing Scotch about it—nothing steady or slow or sure, d'ye hear?"