

'Afraid! of what?'

'Afraid lest the news would not be pleasant to you. I wanted to see for myself. I thought if I saw your face I would know.'

Sheila did not ask what he thought now.

'It is five years, Sheila, since I went away,' he said at last.

'I thought it ten,' Sheila said simply; and Fergus's hand moved a little, till his fingers touched her arm. But still he feared to speak.

'May I get down, Fergus? I should like to walk a little. O no, thank you.'

She had vaulted lightly from the saddle before Fergus could lift her, and, fastening up Rob Roy's bridle, she let him wander off at his own sweet will. He was a discreet beast, and accustomed to all his young mistress's vagaries of mind. So they walked on a little way in silence,—a silence embarrassing, though passing sweet. Love's barrier was in the way. In the depth of his strong feeling Fergus could not find words to bridge it.

Presently Sheila looked round, and gave a little exclamation. 'Oh, just look at the light on the loch!'

It was indeed a fairy picture; the silver sheet gleaming in the broad white moonlight under a deep blue starlit sky, the dark hills encompassing it like a watchful guard.

'It is not cold, Sheila; will you stand a little at this gate?' said Fergus, after a moment; and Sheila stood still, with her round arm lying on the upper bar, and her face turned towards the Glen. Fergus, looking at it, thought the sweet outline more sharply defined, and saw a weary curve about the mouth which stabbed him to the heart. Sheila had not been happy in Dalmore any more than he in Canada. But he had yet to learn why she was not happy. He dared not believe that it was on account of him. 'I have come back, Sheila, as I said I would,' he began, in full, earnest, manly tones. 'When I went away, I said a great deal about coming back wealthy, and with something to lay at your feet. I have nothing except a clean record for five years. In that time I have honestly tried, with God's help, to live as He would have me live, and as *you* would like me to live. I have tried to live so that the