

"Miss Alison's far too comfortable where she is, thanks!" Bel interposed with her deliberate drawl. She had settled herself on a low rock and sat dreamily watching the river, elbows on knees, chin cradled in her hands. Without changing her attitude, she glanced up at Sir Mark and her smile seemed to link them in completest understanding. "If the necessity for silence becomes too overpowering I can always go to sleep. I'll be as good as gold, Harry dear——" She shifted her gaze to Miss O'Neill's resolute, rebellious face. "And I think Sir Mark can be trusted not to let me fall into the river!"

The upward jerk of Harry's head implied wholesale distrust of the species; but finding herself cornered she surrendered at discretion. "Well, Mr. Lenox," she said, "since it's a case of obeying orders, we must make the best of each other. This way, I suppose?" She strode on before him up the narrow, stony path; and Maurice, with an abortive grin at Mark, followed in her wake.

Keeping well ahead of him, she toiled on indomitably till trees were dwarfed to bushes and the primeval splendour of the high moors came suddenly into view. Before them, and upon either hand, the heather and the heavens were all. It was as if they stood upon the shore of an amethystine sea, studded with islands of granite and juniper, and shadowed only by slow-moving continents of cloud. For Maurice, with the blood of Eldred and Quita Lenox in his veins, such a vision was among the rare things that could smite him to silence. He drew a great breath and stood very still, his young, expressive face glorified by the artist's pure joy in colour, and the Scot's love of the land.

Miss O'Neill, a townswoman by taste and habit, would have preferred a throng of human faces, any day, to the sublime emptiness around them. Hot, breathless, and in a ferment of anxiety, she sank