

"If he be living, he will come to me," she said; and in this hope they rested.

On Mr. Irrian's will been opened, it was found he had made provision for the disappearance of his son; in this case or in case of his death, all he possessed was left to Mary. He seemed also to have had a prèscience of the manner of his death, for he desired that when he died, there he might be buried; then followed the strange request that, if his death took place at Langarth, he should be laid, if possible, in the grave of the Crusader—his ancestor who had died in the darkness, chains, and anguish of a Langarth dungeon.

This request startled Estrild greatly, as did also the assertion that the Irrians were descended from the same stock as herself. Then Mary told her the traditions preserved at Trame, and, piecing these with the story filtering through the centuries at Langarth, they grew together into a history of cruelty, wrong, and wrath.

Dividing the abysmal past from all its surge and froth, it appeared that the prisoner of tradition, before joining the Crusades, had been with the king in the North fighting the Scotch. Here he had loved a girl of the yoeman class, and, hiding his real rank, wedded her under the name of Irrian, or, "Wanderer," and had departed for the Holy War without divulging the secret of his marriage. Years passed; news from Palestine was scant; but pilgrims returning reported him dead, and his brother held his lands. Suddenly, alone and at night, the Crusader arrived at Langarth, claiming his home, and told the story of his marriage and that he had a son.

This sealed his fate. The usurper might have born his return, but could not endure the prospect of his own children being dispossessed of home and lands, and thrust into poverty without hope of inheritance. The Wanderer had ridden alone to Langarth; none knew of his coming; he was flung into a dungeon secretly, and the story of his wrongs, his sufferings, and his death floated in the air around Langarth with whispers of the vengeance he had threatened and fortold. From the sea-coast, through days and nights of weariness, he had taken horse from post to post, and, looking for love, had ridden alone to Langarth to find cruelty, suffering, and death. Well, again and again for ever he would take that lonely ride to Langarth and bring death with him.

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