

simplicity of this poor girl, when, after breakfast, he found her busily engaged in getting her painting materials on deck.

"Beautiful—beautiful," said he, glancing around. "Ye will make a fine picture out of those mountains, and the mist, and the still sea. What an extraordinary quiet after last night's rain!"

And perhaps he was thinking how well this picture would look in the dining-room at Denny-mains; and how a certain young hostess—no longer pale and fragile, but robust and sun-browned with much driving in a pony-carriage—would take her friends to the picture, and show them Ulva, and Loch-na-Keal, and Ben-More; and tell them how this strange quiet and beauty had followed on a wild night of storm and rain. The world around us was at this moment so quiet that we could hear the twittering of some small bird among the rocks in there at the shore. And the pale, wan, dream-like sea was so perfect a mirror that an absolutely double picture was produced—of the gloomy mountain-masses of Ben-More, amid silver gleams of cloud and motionless wreaths of mists, of the basaltic pillars of the coast nearer at hand—a pale reddish brown, with here and there a scant sprinkling of grass; of that broad belt of rich orange-yellow seaweed that ran all along the rocks, marking the junction of the world of the land with the water-world below. An absolutely perfect mirror; except when some fish splashed, then the small circles widened out and gradually disappeared, and the surface was as glassy as before.

The Laird was generous. He would leave the artist undisturbed at her work. Would not his nephew be better amused if a bachelor expedition were fitted out to go in search of the seals that abound in the channels around Inch Kenneth? Our hostess declined to go; but provided us with an ample lunch. The gig was lowered; and everything ready for the start.

"Bring your shot-gun, too, Howard," said the Laird. "I want ye to shoot some skarts. I am told that the breasts of them are very close and fine in the feathers; and I would like a muf or a bag made of them for a leddy—for a young leddy."

Mary Avon was busy with her work: how could she hear?

"And if the skin of the seals about here is not very fine, we will make something of it. Oh, ay, we will make something of it in the way of a present. I know a man in Glasgow who is extraordinary clever at such things."

"We have first to get the seal, uncle," said his nephew, laughing. "I know any number of men who assure you they have shot seals; but not quite so many who have got the seals that were shot."

"Oh, but we'll get the seal, and the skarts, too," said the Laird; and then he added, grimly, "Man, if ye cannot do that, what can ye do? If ye cannot shoot well, what else are ye fit for?"

"I really don't know, uncle," the Youth confessed modestly, as he handed down his rifle into the gig. "The London solicitors are a blind race. If they only knew what a treasure of learning and sound judgment they might have for the asking; but they don't. And I can't get any of the Scotch business you were talking about, because my name doesn't begin with Mac."

"Well, well, we must wait, and hope for the best," said the Laird cheerfully, as he took his seat in the stern of the gig. "We are not likely to run against a solicitor in the Sound of Ulva. Sufficient for the day. As I was saying, there's great common sense in what William Dunbar wrote—

Be blythe in heart for any adventure,
For oft with wise men it has been said aforow,
Without Gladness available no Treasure.

—Bless me, look at that!"

This sudden exclamation sent all eyes to the shore. A large heron, startled by the rattling of the oars, had risen, with a sharp and loud croak of alarm, from among the sea-weed, his legs hanging down, his long neck, and wings, and body apparently a gray-white against the shadow of the basaltic rocks. Then, lazily flapping, he rose higher and higher; he tucked up his legs; the great wings went somewhat more swiftly; and then, getting above the low cliffs, and appearing quite black against the silver-clear sky, he slowly sailed away.

The silence of this dream-like picture around us was soon broken. As the men pulled away from the yacht, the lonely shores seemed to waken up into life; and there were whistlings, and callings, and warnings all along the cliffs; while the startled sea-birds whirled by in flashes of colour, or slowly and heavily betook themselves to some further promontory. And now, as we passed along the narrow Sound, and saw through the translucent water the wonder-land of seaweed below—with the patches of clear yellow sand intervening—we appreciated more and more highly the skill of John of Skye in getting us into such a harbour on the previous night. It is not every one who, in pitch darkness and in the midst of squalls, can run a yacht into the neck of a bottle.

We emerged from the narrow channel, and got out into the open; but even the broad waters of Loch-na-Keal were pale and still; the reflection of Eorsa was scarcely marred by a ripple. The long, measured throb of the rowing was the only sound of life in this world of still water and overhanging cloud. There was no stroke-oar now to give the chorus

A long, strong pull together
Ho, ro, clannamen.

But still we made good way. As we got further out, we came in sight of Colonsay; and further off still, Staffa, lying like a dark cloud on the gray sea. Inch Kenneth, for which we were making, seemed almost black; although, among the mists that lay along the Gribun and Bourg cliffs, there was a dull, silver-yellow light, as though some sunlight had got mixed up with the clouds.

"No, no," the Laird was saying, as he studied a scrap of paper, "it is not a great property to admeenister; but I am strong in favour of local management. After reading that book on London, and its catalogue of the enormous properties there, our little bit burgh appears to be only a toy; but the principle of sound and energetic self-government is the same. And yet it is no so small, mind ye. The Burgh buildings are estimated at nineteen thousand pounds odd; the furniture at twelve hundred pounds; lamps near on two thousand five hundred; sewers nine thousand pounds odd; and then debts not far from three thousand pounds—that makes our assets just about thirty-five thousand. And if the water-pipes in some places are rather too small for the steam fire-engine, we maun have them bigger. It was quite ridiculous that a thriving place like Strathgovan, when there was a big fire, should have to run to Glesca for help. No, no; I believe in independence; and if ye should ever live in our neighbourhood, Howard, I hope ye will stand out against the policy of annexation. It is only a lot o' Radical bodies that are for upsetting institutions that have been tried by time and not found wanting."

"Oh, certainly, sir," Howard Smith said blithely. "When you educate people to take an interest in small parochial matters, they are better fitted to give an opinion about the general affairs of the country."

"Small?" said the Laird, eyeing him severely. "They are of as much importance as human life; is there anything of greater importance in the world? By abolishing the Bigginshurn nuisance, and insisting on greater cleanliness and ventilation we have reduced the number of deaths from infectious diseases in a most extraordinary manner; and there will be no more fear of accidents in the Mitherdrum Road, for we are going to have a continuous line of lamps that'll go right in to the Glesca lamps. I do not call these small matters. As for the asphaltting of the pavement in front of John Anderson's line of houses," continued the Laird, as he consulted the memorandum in his hand, "that is a small matter, if ye like. I am not disposed to pronounce an opinion on that matter: they can settle it without my voice. But it will make a great difference to John Anderson; and I would like to see him come forward with a bigger subscription for the new Park. Well, well; we must fight through as best we can."

It was here suggested to the Laird that he should not let these weighty matters trouble him while he is away on a holiday.

"Trouble me?" said he lightly. "Not a bit, man! People who have to meddle in public affairs must learn to throw off their cares. I am not troubled. I am going to give the men a dram; for better pulling I never saw in a boat."

He was as good as his word, too. He had the luncheon-basket handed down from the bow; he got out the whisky bottle; there was a glass filled out for each of the men, which was drank in solemn silence.

"Now, boys," said he, as they took to their oars again, "haven't ye got a song or a chorus to make the rowing easy?"

But they were too shy for a bit. Presently, however, we heard at the bow a low, plaintive, querulous voice; and the very oars seemed to recognize the air as they gripped the water. Then there was a hum of a chorus—not very musical—and it was in the Gaelic—but we knew what the refrain meant.

O boatman, a farewell to you,
O boatman, a farewell to you,
Wherever you may be going.

That is something like the English of it: we had heard the "Phir a Bhata" in other days.

The long, heavy pull is nearly over. Here are the low-lying reefs of rock outside Inch Kenneth; not a whisper is permissible as we creep into the nearest bay. And then the men and the boat are left there; and the Youth—perhaps dimly conscious that his uncle means the sealskin for Mary Avon—grasps his rifle and steals away over the undulating shelves of rock; while his two companions, with more leisure but with not less circumspection, follow to observe his operations. Fortunately there is no screaming sea-pyot or whistling curlew to give warning; stealthily, almost bent in two, occasionally crawling on all fours, he makes his way along the crannies in the reef, until, as we see, he must be nearly approaching the channel on his left. There he pauses to take breath. He creeps behind a rock, and cautiously looks over. He continues his progress.

"This is terrible work," says the Laird, in a stage-whisper, as he, too—with a much heavier bulk to carry—worms along. From time to time he has to stay to apply his handkerchief to his forehead; it is hot work on this still, breathless day.

And at last we, too, get down to the edge of a channel—some hundred yards lower than Howard Smith's post—and from behind a rock we have a pretty clear view of the scene of operations. Apparently there is no sign of any living thing—except that a big fish leapt into the air, some dozen yards off. Thereafter a dead silence.

After waiting about a quarter of an hour or so, the Laird seemed to become violently excited, though he would neither budge nor speak. And there, between two islands right opposite young Smith, appeared two shining black heads on the still water; and they were evidently coming down this very channel. On they came—turning about one way and another, as if to look that the coast was clear. Every moment we expected to hear the crack of the rifle. Then the heads silently disappeared.

The Laird was beside himself with disappointment.

"Why did he no shoot? Why did he no shoot?" he said, in an excited whisper.

He had scarcely spoken when he was startled by an apparition. Right opposite to him—not more than twenty yards off—a black thing appeared on the water—with a glistening smooth head, and large, soft eyes. Then another. We waited for the whistle of the rifle-bullet. The next instant the first seal caught sight of the Laird; raised its head for an instant at least six inches higher; then silently plunged along with its companion. They were gone, at all events.

The Youth came marching along the rocks, his rifle over his shoulder.

"Why didn't you fire?" his uncle said, almost angrily.

"I thought they were coming nearer," said he. "I was just about to fire when they dived. Mind, it isn't very easy to get on to a thing that is bobbing about like that, with a rifle. I propose we have luncheon, now, until the tide ebbs a bit; then there may be a chance of catching one lying on the rocks. That is the proper time for getting a shot at a seal."

We had luncheon; there was no difficulty about securing that. But as for getting at the seals—whether we crawled over the rocks, or lay in hiding, or allowed the boat to drift towards some island, on the chance of one of them rising in our neighbourhood—it was no use at all. There were plenty of seals about; a snap shot now and again served to break the monotony of the day; but that present for Mary Avon seemed as remote as ever. And when one is determined on shooting a seal, one is not likely to waste one's attention, and cartridges, on such inferior animals as skarts.

The silver-gray day became more golden; there was a touch of warm purple about the shadows of Staffa.

"Come," said the Laird at last. "We must go back. It is no use. I have often heard people say that if you miss the first chance at a seal it never gives ye another."

"Better luck next time, uncle," said the Youth; but his uncle refused to be comforted.

And the first thing he said to Mary Avon when he got back to the yacht was—

"We have not got it."

"Got what?" said she.

"The seal-skin I wanted to have dressed for ye. No, nor the skarts I wanted to have made into a muf or a bag for ye."

"Oh," said she, promptly, "I am very glad. I hope you won't shoot any of those poor things on my account: I should be very sorry indeed."

The Laird took this as one of the familiar protestations on the part of women, who wouldn't for the world have poor things shot, but who don't object to wearing any amount of furs and feathers, to say nothing of having innocent sheep sheared and harmless silk-worms robbed in order to deck themselves out. She should have that dressed seal-skin, and that muf of skarts' breasts, all the same.

Nothing of stupendous importance happened that evening except that—after we had caught three dozen of good-sized lithe and returned to the yacht with this welcome addition to our stores—there was a general discussion of our plans for the next few days. And our gentle hostess was obviously looking forward to Angus Sutherland's coming back to us with great pleasure; and we were to make our return to suit his convenience; and she would write to him whenever we got near a post-office again.

Mary Avon had sat silent during all this. At last, she said—apparently with some effort and yet very deliberately—

"I—I think you are a little cruel to Dr. Sutherland. You are forcing him to come with you against his better judgment—for you know, with his prospects, and the calls on his time, he cannot afford such long idleness. Do you think it is quite fair?"

The woman stared at this girl, who spoke with some earnestness, though her eyes were down-cast.

"He would do anything to please you," Mary Avon continued, as if she were determined to get through with some speech that she had prepared, "and he is very fond of sailing; but do you think you should allow him to injure his prospects in this way? Wouldn't it be a greater kindness to write and say that, if he really feels he ought to return to London, you would not hold him to his promise? I am sure he would not be offended; he would understand you at once. And I am sure he would do what is clearly right; he would go straight back to London, and resume his work—for his own sake and for the sake of those who count on a great future for him. I, for one, should be very sorry to see him come back to idle away his time in sailing."

And still Queen Tita stared at the girl, though their eyes did not meet. And she could scarcely believe that it was Mary Avon who had counselled this cold dismissal.

To be continued.

THE GLEANER.

J. H. LAZARUS, the artist, has returned with his family from Richfield Springs.

THE Pope has accepted the position of god-father to the expected heir to the Spanish throne.

THE hay crop of Cape Breton this season is the best for many years. All other crops are promising well.

WEEVIL has made its appearance in the wheat fields of Colchester, Nova Scotia, and is doing considerable damage to crops.

COMMUNISTIC pamphlets have been discovered in circulation in the German army; and the authorities are investigating the matter.

THE late Duches D'Otrante, of France, left to the French Academy a bequest of forty thousand dollars "for triennial prizes for good deeds."

THE Duke of Portland has had a site prepared on one of his English estates for a beaver village for a number of beavers imported from Canada.

A COMPANY with a capital of twelve millions is to erect in the gardens of the Palais Royal, Paris, a vast establishment in the style of the London Alhambra.

A WALTER RALEIGH memorial window, for which Americans have been liberal contributors, is soon to be placed in Canon Farrar's church at Westminster, London.

THE cross of the Legion of Honour has been bestowed on Mme. Jarretthout, cantiniere to the Franc-tireurs of Paris-Chateaudun, for exceptional courage and devotion in 1871.

LORD SALISBURY now speaks of Lord Derby in the House of Lords as "the noble Earl," instead of "my noble friend." Lady Derby is Lord Salisbury's stepmother.

Mlle. HUBERTINE AUCLERC, the French advocate of women's rights, has received a visit from the bailiff because she refuses to pay taxes without representation at the polls.

MR. GEORGE STEPHEN, President of the Bank of Montreal, has given \$5,000 to the Presbyterian Church in Canada, to be used for the benefit of Queen's College, Kingston.

MISS HELEN E. COOLIDGE has become a law partner with her father, who is an ex-judge at Niles, Mich., and the firm name is Coolidge & Daughter, attorneys and counsellors at law.

LORD HARTINGTON, the English Liberal leader, is a solid, unpretentious man, says generally what he means, and only makes long speeches when "time and the hour" appear to demand them.

Two daughters of Gen. Banks will soon cross the Atlantic—one as the bride of a young clergyman, who goes to a mission in China, while the other is bound for Paris, where she will study for the stage.

A MEDICAL authority says: "Laughter is one of the greatest helps to digestion, and the custom of our forefathers of exciting it at the table by jesters and buffoons was founded on true medical principles."

A HANDSOME girl of Indianapolis, Ind., who habitually used arsenic to improve her complexion, has not only nearly lost her eyesight, but her contemplated marriage with a wealthy and reputable physician is indefinitely postponed.

PRINCE LEOPOLD sent to Newport to Miss Elizabeth Livingston, the bride of Mr. G. Cavendish Bentinck, a bracelet of the finest gold, with his coronet worked in diamonds, and his initials in the form of a monogram worked also in diamonds.

THE last London society puzzle for the rich only:—Take four gold pieces and four silver pieces, and range them in a line alternately; then in four moves, moving each time two pieces adjoining each other, bring the gold and silver pieces together.

MR. GLADSTONE first became conscious that he was ill at a dinner party; he had to leave the table and lie down. Next morning he breakfasted in bed, and on rising and trying to work as usual was attacked with shivering fits. He tried to make little account of his misery, but his wife obliged him to give up work.

THE Viking's ship lately discovered at Sandfjord, in Norway, has been taken to Christiansna, and placed under cover in the university garden, near the old boat found at Tunoe some years ago. The damaged part is to be restored, and the colours, which rapidly faded in the sunlight, freshened up.

THE German African Society has at present six different expeditions travelling through Central Africa. The money for these expeditions is obtained from the German Government or through private subscriptions. Dr. Nachtigall is the President of the society.

WICKED FOR CLERGYMEN.

"I believe it to be all wrong and even wicked for clergymen or other public men to be led into giving testimonials to quack doctors or vile stuffs called medicines, but when a really meritorious article is made up of common valuable remedies known to all, and that all physicians use and trust in daily, we should freely commend it. I, therefore, cheerfully and heartily commend Hop Bitters for the good they have done me and my friends, firmly believing they have no equal for family use. I would not be without them." Rev. —, Washington, D. C.