CIHM
Microfiche
Series
(Monographs)

ICMH
Collection de
microfiches
(monographies)

Technical and Bibliographic Notes / Notes techniques et bibliographiques

The Institute has attempted to obtain the best original copy available for filming. Features of this copy which may be bibliographically unique, which may alter any of the images in the reproduction, or which may significantly change the usual method of filming, are checked below.

L'Institut a microfilmé le meilleur exemplaire qu'il lui a été possible de se procurer. Les détails de cet exemplaire qui sont peut-être uniques du point de vue bibliographique, qui peuvent modifier une image reproduite, ou qui peuvent exiger une modification dans la méthode normale de filmage sont indiqués ci-dessous.

- ☐ Coloured covers/ Couverture de couleur
- ☐ Covers damaged/ Couverture endommagée
- ☐ Covers restored and/or laminated/ Couverture restaurée et/ou pelliculée
- ☐ Cover title missing/ Le titre de couverture manque
- ☐ Coloured maps/ Cartes géographiques en couleur
- ☑ Coloured ink (i.e. other than blue or black)/ Encre de couleur (i.e. autre que bleue ou noire)
- ☐ Coloured plates and/or illustrations/ Planches et/ou illustrations en couleur
- ☐ Bound with other material/ Relié avec d'autres documents
- ☐ Tight binding may cause shadows or distortion along interior margin/ La reliure serrée peut causer de l'ombre ou de la distorsion le long de la marge intérieure
- ☐ Blank leaves added during restoration may appear within the text. Whenever possible, these have been omitted from filming/ Il se peut que certaines pages blanches ajoutées lors d'une restauration apparaissent dans le texte, mais, lorsque cela était possible, ces pages n'ont pas été filmées.

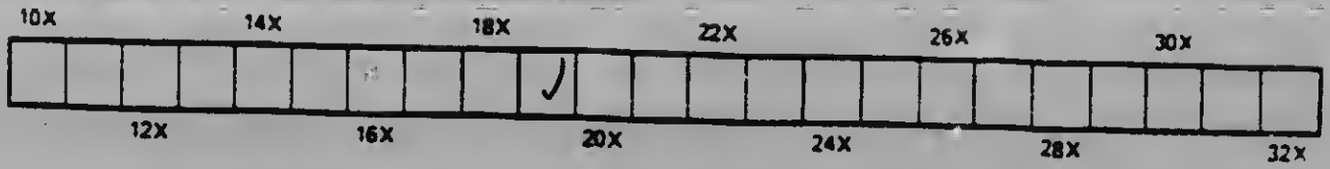
- ☐ Coloured pages/ Pages de couleur
- ☐ Pages damaged/ Pages endommagées
- ☐ Pages restored and/or laminated/ Pages restaurées et/ou pelliculées
- ☑ Pages discoloured, stained or foxed/ Pages décolorées, tachetées ou piquées
- ☐ Pages detached/ Pages détachées
- ☑ Showthrough/ Transparence
- ☐ Quality of print varies/ Qualité inégale de l'impression
- ☐ Continuous pagination/ Pagination continue
- ☐ Includes index(es)/ Comprend un (des) index

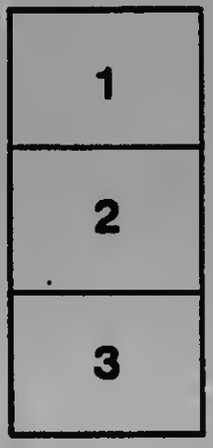
Title on header taken from:/ Le titre de l'en-tête provient:

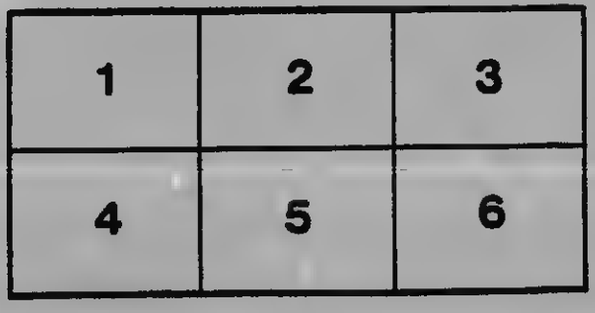
- ☐ Title page of issue/ Page de titre de la livraison
- ☐ Caption of issue/ Titre de départ de la livraison
- ☐ Masthead/ Générique (périodiques) de la livraison

☐ Additional comments:/ Commentaires supplémentaires:

This item is filmed at the reduction ratio checked below/
Ce document est filmé au taux de réduction indiqué ci-dessous.







DONALDA

A Scottish-Canadian Story

BY

ELIZABETH S. MacLEOD

Authoress of
"Carols of Canada," "For the Flag," etc.

"Faith, Hope and Love now dwell on earth,
And earth by them is blest;
But Faith and Hope must yield to Love,
Of all the graces best.

TORONTO
WILLIAM BRIGGS
1905

THIS BOOK

IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED TO

"Uncle Graeme"

AND, ALONG WITH HIM, ALL OTHERS WHO HAVE

ASSISTED IN THE

UPBUILDING OF THIS GREAT AND GLORIOUS

DOMINION OF CANADA.

CONTENTS

DONALDA

A SCOTTISH-CANADIAN STORY

CHAPTER I.

DRIFTING APART.

It was early in the fifties. In a chastely furnished boudoir in one of those elegant and substantial dwellings on the principal street of the modern Athens, a lady is seated before her mirror, while her maid is busily engaged in brushing out the luxuriant golden tresses which adorn the shapely head. Watching the movements of the practised fingers sits a small, dark-eyed child, who has, unobserved, stolen into the chamber, and is quietly, but most interestedly, regarding operations from her corner on the sofa.

A slight tap at the half-open door, with a response from the mistress of the household, and a handsome yet grave-looking man enters the apartment. The lady glances around, shakes back the flowing tresses, and, addressing her maid with that inborn politeness which usually induces cheerful obedience, requests her to withdraw.

"So you insist upon going to the ball. I had hoped that you would remain at home to-night."

"Oh, Wellesley! I must go. I wouldn't miss it for anything; all Edinburgh will be there."

"What is all Edinburgh to you or to me?"

"Not much to you, perhaps, yet a great deal to me. Why should you wish to deprive me of this very special occasion for enjoyment? Would you have me to be buried alive? Besides, I promised to go, and when Lady Keith calls for me, what excuse could I make for having changed my mind?"

"Is it not excuse enough that I prefer your remaining at home? I have no wish to deprive you of a reasonable amount of pleasure, but this constant frittering away of the years in senseless gaiety is more than I am able to endure. We are both getting older—"

"Pooh! older!" and the lady took one satisfactory glance in the mirror before her. "Time enough to think of age when we see the first grey hair. Again, who asks you to endure it? I leave you most evenings to the quiet perusal of your newspapers and your books, which, you must acknowledge, suits your taste fully as well as the womanly gossip with which I should entertain you."

A smile overspread the hitherto serious countenance of the indulgent husband.

"A wilful woman will have her way," he answered, "and I suppose, Evelyn, you will have yours this evening also. And, as you say, home

suits me better. It does in more ways than one; for, to tell the truth, dear, I have not felt so well lately."

"Not so well! It seems to me that you were never looking better. It's the worst thing in the world to give way to imagination. I never do. However, we're wasting time. You ought not to reproach me if our tastes differ, more especially since I am so often compelled to go out unattended by my husband."

It had come to this at last. During nine short years of extravagance and indulgence in pleasure the devoted husband had vastly suffered, both in health of body and in weight of purse, while the beautiful wife, the pampered darling of society, had but blossomed into more wondrous beauty and into more determined self-will.

Getting impatient of delay, Mrs. Graeme began restlessly fingering over her dressing-table, and her husband, feeling that further protest was useless, and that, from his wife's latest remark, he was somehow deserving of blame, arose and left the room. The lady, apparently relieved by his absence, raised a small silver bell wherewith to summon her attendant, when her eyes fell upon the tiny figure on the sofa.

"Why, Alda! Were you there all this time?"

"Yes, mamma. Oh, mamma, dear! do not go out to-night. Papa is so vexed," and the child got down, and, crossing the floor, looked up with tearful, beseeching eyes into the flushed face of her mother. This was too much for the lady's patience.

"Oh, dear! shall I never get away!" she exclaimed. "What do you know about 'vexed,' you little silly! But there—don't cry. I didn't mean to hurt your feelings, only I'm in such a hurry now. Kiss me 'good-night,' and run up to the nursery. You're just in the way here." And with a hasty kiss and a gentle push outside the door, opened to admit her maid, the child was dismissed.

Any slight uprising of conscience on the part of Mrs. Graeme was quickly crushed in speedy preparations for the ball and in anticipating the successful results of the same.

Richly caparisoned horses tossed their superb manes before the entrance hall, and a liveried footman sprang from the dicky and let down the carriage steps. Then Sir Charles Keith descended, handed in Mrs. Graeme to a seat by her fashionable friend, and, after exchanging compliments with Mr. Graeme, followed the lady into the carriage, the footman closed the door, remounted to his seat behind, and the glittering wheels rolled gaily onward over the smooth, grey causeway.

Mr. Graeme, taking one sad look after the departing equipage, drew a long breath, and, re-entering his now silent abode, passed the public rooms on the first floor and ascended to the seclusion of his library, in which he was now accustomed to spend many a lonely hour. Drawing a chair toward the writing-table, he sat down, and, leaning his head upon his hands, gave way to a bitter sigh.

A slight sound and a gentle touch upon his arm interrupted his reverie, and as he turned a loving smile irradiated the hitherto gloomy countenance. A tiny figure, clad in a long, white robe, stood at his elbow, and gazed up with a wistful expression into the face which smiled a welcome.

"Well, little one! Where did you start from? I fancied that you were in bed ere now."

"So I was, but I couldn't sleep. I kept think—thinking. I often do after getting into bed at night. Then I heard the carriage, and got up to have a peep out of the window at mamma going off. Then I wanted to come beside you, and—I may stay just a little while, may I not, papa, darling?"

"Yes, dearie. Although nurse will wonder what has become of you," and he tenderly raised the child upon his knees, and took the two small feet in his broad, warm palm.

"She'll never miss me, papa. She came downstairs before I did. There's always lots of company in the kitchen evenings, so Wellesley says, playing cards."

A shadow crossed the father's countenance. The kitchen, and more especially cards, ought not to be familiar objects to his children. Still, what could be done? If the heads of a household pursue one certain kind of amusement, the dependents may surely be allowed to choose another.

"Now we are all alone, papa, won't you sing to

me?" and the child nestled up closer, and made herself comfortable, prepared to listen.

Mr. Graeme coughed to clear his throat, then made the attempt. But in vain.

"It's no use, Alda. I cannot sing to-night."

"Why can't you, papa, dear? Are you angry with mamma?"

"No, my darling. I am never angry with mamma, merely sorry for her."

"Sorry for mamma! Beautiful, lovely mamma! who goes everywhere and is always so happy. Why should you be sorry for her? She's not sorry for you when she goes out and leaves you alone."

"That may be, little one. But she is a good deal younger than I, and enjoys herself so much in company. I would rather spend my evenings at home."

"When I grow up you will never need to stay by yourself alone. Nurse says that mamma ought not to—"

"Hush, Alda! You must not mind what nurse or any one else says about your mother. Always be kind to her, and, my darling, if I should not live long enough to see you grow up—"

The child shuddered. "Oh, papa!"

"Well, well, dear! I should not have said that. And I know that my beloved daughter will always love and protect her mother."

"I cannot love her the same as I do you. She won't let me."

"Won't let you! Whatever causes you to think so?"

"I don't think it, I know it. When I want to kiss her, she often tells me to keep away and not muss her gown, and when I go to her chamber to watch her dressing for a party, though I keep ever so still she tells me to go to bed, I'm only in the way. I'm never in your way—am I, papa?"

Bitterly as the loving father felt for his unappreciated child, he must withhold expression of his sympathy.

"Your mamma was likely very busy when she spoke thus. Try to forget these little things."

"I can't forget them. Then, too, I heard her say to Lady Keith, 'Wellesley is a real Clinton, but poor Alda is very plain-looking; I can't imagine who she takes after.' As if I could help being dark and ugly. Mamma is as beautiful, every bit, as those angels in the picture; yet, if they'd treat me as she does, I don't want to go to heaven."

"This is really too bad! You are not ugly, my darling. And you take after one of the most beautiful and also one of the best women that ever lived, my own sainted mother. You have her splendid dark eyes and glossy hair, and, thank God! you possess her noble, unselfish spirit also."

Gently smoothing back the clustering curls, he kissed the white forehead, and tenderly folding the child in his arms, carried her up to the nursery. Kneeling and clasping her small hands, she softly

repeated "Our Father," etc., and "This night when I lie down to sleep," ending up with "God bless papa and mamma and Wellesley—and please make my mamma stay home evenings." Then, getting into her crib, the tired one, with a contented smile upon her lips, closed her eyes, and soon God's precious gift of sleep took the silent form into its keeping, when the small hand released its grip of the larger one, and the sitter-by arose and descended to the lonely room below.

The child's reasoning was correct. Alda (short for Donalda) never had shared so deeply in her mother's affection as did her sturdy and demonstrative brother, who was a rare type of the blue-eyed, fair-haired Saxon beauty, but by reason of that mysterious sympathy which so often unites the strong and the weak, the valiant and the timid, she wound herself closely round the father's heart.

He it was who first guided the toddling feet of his baby girl through the greening "Gardens"; and, after she could firmly walk, he would stroll with her, the small thin hand firmly clasped in his big strong one, up to the historic castle, and point out to her admiring gaze the great cannon, with the red-coated men who kept tramp, tramp continually beside; and, though Alda has crossed oceans and traversed continents and witnessed fleets and armies since then, none of it all impressed her as did that wondrous Mons Meg of old. As her understanding developed, he pleasantly enter-

tained her with simple stories of the fondly-remembered scenes of his youth, and of the bright, young mother who had so early left her children's home to rejoin her loved one in the skies; and ever happy was the father's heart in responding to his darling's favorite request of "More stories about grandma and the home far away among the hills."

CHAPTER II.

THE OLD HOME.

LET us go back to the beginning, ten years before.

The hoary mantle which had enveloped the mountains and veiled the green valleys below, had disparted into small, flaky cloudlets and floated afar o'er the red, rocky slopes of Cuchullin, and the golden glory of a noonday sun was streaming its genial rays over lake and mount and sky, when a light gig drew up before the once wayside inn of Kilmona. The sole occupant, a young man of some thirty-five years, sprang down from the seat, and, seeing no signs of life about the premises, led his horse round to the rear of the building, and fastened him to a somewhat dilapidated paling. Then he returned to the front of the house to try whether it were possible to gain admission.

But the inmates by this time were apparently alive to his approach, for the door was set open, and an elderly man, leaning heavily upon a stout, rugged staff, with difficulty moved outside and saluted the stranger by a touch of the Glengarry cap which crowned his silvered head.

"Kenneth, don't you know me?" asked the

gentleman, as the old man stood with his brown, bony hand in that of his visitor, though regarding him at the same time with a mystified expression.

"My eyesight is not as it used to be." Then, raising his voice, "Flora," he called, "come out and see if ye can name this man."

"Name him! That I can," and Flora, who by reason of better eyesight and of a long, scrutinizing gaze through the small window-panes, had made herself sure of the "man's" identity, at once came forward, and, with both hands grasping the proffered hand of the stranger, she fervently exclaimed:

"Och, och! what do I see but the gladsome face of the bonnie young Laird of Dunvalloch."

"Not the laird now, Flora."

"The laird once, the laird ever. There may be other 'proprietors,' but never another laird."

Their visitor, who had meanwhile entered the humble abode, smiled as he seated himself.

"Thank you sincerely, Flora. It does one's heart good to hear that our people, what are left of them, do not forget us."

"Forget you! No. While the mist overclouds the mountain and the rivers run to the sea, no Islander will ever forget your father's house—the house that clothed the naked and shared its last bite with the needy through the long, weary years of famine. Ah! what would the brave Colonel and his winsome lady have given had they lived to see ye here this day! Ochan, ochan! but ye were

the light of yere mother's eyes and the joy of her tender heart."

Was it marvel that a slight moisture bedimmed the listener's eyes?

"Tell me something of yourselves, Flora. What of your family?"

"Our eldest girl is married in the South; the next is serving at your uncle's, and Jeanie—do you mind of Jeanie, Laird, the lamb of the flock?—she's gone to a better home than we could give her. Yes, we missed her sorely, how sorely no speech of mine can tell. Still, our time will not be long; and heaven seems dearer to both Kenneth and me since our bairn will be there to welcome us."

"And the boys?"

"Malcolm, he was aye a spirited lad and fond of roving; went across the water last spring. He's doing well, and not neglecting his parents either. He'd like us to follow him, but 'old trees don't thrive by transplanting.' We've lived here all our days, my old man and I, and, please the Lord, it's here we'll die, and be buried 'neath the sweet, green sods of the old kirk-yard."

"The other son?"

"He comes North to put in a crop for us in the spring and then returns to the South. It's not for an able-bodied man like him to be half the time in idleness, and here he daren't catch a fish though the lochs were teeming, nor pick up a rabbit though they'd run in hundreds past his feet, nor shoot a

bird though the moors and the forests were full of them."

"It seems hard; still, law is law, and for those who feel aggrieved there is one great remedy—emigration.

"We had that offer and did not accept it, so we should not complain. After all, we ought to be well content; we have much to be thankful for. Were it not for Kenneth's rheumatism and the deer eating up our corn, we have nothing earthly to trouble us."

"I shall leave the horse and gig where they are till I return on my way back to uncle's."

"You are staying there now? He's one of the good, old stock; no talk of emigration on his lands. And Miss Marion, bless her bonnie face! She never passes but she steps in, and aye lets us hear when a letter comes from the other side, for ye may remember that my son went out to your brother in Canada."

"I may have heard and forgotten. I am going over the hills for a look at the old place. Is the footpath still in use?"

"Not many cross that way now, yet it's still there. Don't let the darkness overtake you before you return."

With thanks for the kindly caution the young man set out, and finding the narrow path he was in quest of, passed rapidly onward, until at length a turn in the winding route brought him full in

view of an open plain. Near the centre thereof stood a large stone edifice of the solid structure of centuries before, whose many turrets peeped out through the surrounding foliage of giant beeches and ancient oaks, beneath which the straggling rowan bushes and the gaily-fringed laburnum drooped heavy with their gold and reddening loads. No smoke ascended from the tall chimneys, and no sign of human life was to be seen; but as our traveller seated himself upon the overlooking height, one tiny rabbit emerged from his burrow and sprang quickly into a neighboring thicket, and two deer which had been placidly cropping the herbage upon the rim of the forest, raised their heads, sniffed danger, and bounded away across the open to the shelter of a distant woodland.

Mournfully mused the onlooker as he gazed upon this, the home of his childhood, and thence to the heath-clad mountains and sparkling rivulets of his native isle, the Isle of Mist.

Wellesley Graeme was the eldest son of the ancient Celtic house of Dunvalloch.

After the memorable retreat at Corunna, during which the brave general, Sir John Moore, and many of his gallant soldiers were sacrificed, Wellesley's father, the then Laird of Dunvalloch, imbued with the spirit of patriotism aroused by the presumptuous aggressions of the Frenchmen's demi-god, Napoleon Bonaparte, having procured a captain's commission, raised a contingent among his retainers and set out for the seat of war, where

he served under the new commander, the illustrious Wellington, during the remainder of the Peninsular campaign. His cheerful endurance and the unflinching fortitude with which the young hero led on his followers at the storming of Ciudad Rodrigo and at the cruel slaughter of Badajoz, so attracted the attention of his commander that promotion was speedily awarded.

But his valiant career was cut short by severe flesh wounds, and, still worse, by the loss of his left arm on the bloody field of Salamanca; and while Wellington advanced towards the deserted Spanish capital, Major Graeme gladly accepted the invitation tendered by a wounded Spanish officer to accompany him on furlough to his father's residence in the South.

The ardent soldier could not remain long inactive, and barely gave himself time to recruit when he hastened to rejoin the army. However, his period of service was, for the time being, well-nigh ended. The decisive victory gained by the allied armies at the battle of Vitoria, fought on 21st June, 1813, forever broke the French power in the Peninsula. In the following spring peace was proclaimed, and the six years' campaign came to an end.

Colonel Graeme returned to his native land. But he came not alone. He was accompanied by his young and beautiful wife, the Dona Isidora Farigo, sister of his former martial comrade, whose devoted attentions had wooed the soldier's

thoughts from his painful wounds while he convalesced in her father's castle on the banks of the Guadalquiver.

The patriot who has offered himself to his country cannot stand idly by when the drum beats for the battle march. Only two short years, and the brave Colonel once more buckled on his armor and followed his country's banner to the fateful field of Waterloo, where was forever down-crushed Britain's ablest foe.

Upon the return of the army to headquarters, the volunteer regiments were disbanded, and Colonel Graeme, among others, went back to his home and to the longing heart which there awaited his coming.

Several happy years, during which four baby faces came to gladden the hearth of Dunvalloch, and a dolesome day fell upon the household. The master, the brave Colonel, who had passed in comparative safety out of many a field of peril, was laid low on his own peaceful lands. An accident in the hunting-field, and the family vault was first opened to receive the bruised remains of the much lamented laird, and shortly thereafter re-opened for the interment of his youthful widow, whose health had long been drooping under the rigorous climate of the North, and who only required the bitter and unexpected blow experienced in the untimely death of her devoted husband to hasten her early departure.

At this period the people of the western isles

of Scotland, and in many districts of Ireland, were visited by premonitions of that famine which afterwards drove about seventy thousand persons from their homes in order to avoid certain starvation.

The Graemes contrived for a few years to tide over the seasons of dearth, and struggled to sustain the dignity and maintain the charities of their forefathers. But times continued hard and crops scant, while the reduced tithes accepted by Wellesley and his younger brother proved totally inadequate to meet the requirements of the family with its numerous retainers. So it was with profound sorrow that he resolved to part with the paternal acres and betake himself to regain fortune by going abroad.

Great was the consternation and unceasing the lamentation, when it became known that the old tie which bound the peasantry to their benefactors was to be severed, and the household of Dunvalloch broken up.

The younger brother, Donald, with his two sisters, taking along with them the few crofters whom they could induce to emigrate, proceeded to British America; while Wellesley accepted a liberal offer of partnership with his cousin, a planter in the East Indies.

Now we see him, after an absence of several years, on a return visit to his native isle and to his friends thereon.

CHAPTER III.

OVERRULED.

A HANDSOME, high-mettled steed, fit only for the curb of a strong, masculine hand, and which few young ladies would have attempted to control; but Miss Evelyn Clinton was the wilful, petted daughter of her widowed father, who indulged her every whim, and one of the most recent was to be the admired in Rotten Row as owner of the beautiful jet mare, Ebony.

Wellesley Graeme had reached London on his way to Southampton, where he purposed to embark on one of those floating palaces of the P. & O. Company, which duly leave that port for Egypt and the East.

Riding one morning in the suburbs, his attention was arrested by a thrilling sight. A runaway horse, with eyes dilated and foam-surging mouth, was fast careering down the highway. A lady kept her seat on the saddle and held firmly to the reins; yet it was evident that she could not much longer restrain the frenzied animal.

At a glance Wellesley perceived the situation, and quickly turned his own horse ere the other approached. Riding on alongside, he managed to

grasp the reins, and thus give a check to the flying steed, just in time to save the rider from imminent destruction. Quieting the excited animal by gentle speech, while restraining her with master hand, the young man assisted Miss Evelyn Clinton, for she it was, to dismount, and shortly thereafter, upon the attendant riding up, he consigned the now cooling down Ebony to his charge, and, leading his own horse, walked on with the young lady to the nearby gate of Clintonvale, the home of Evelyn, and the home of the Clinton family since the earliest days of the Tudor sovereigns, who had often carried the falcon within the lordly demesne.

The acquaintance thus romantically commenced was destined to ripen into friendship. Next morning Miss Clinton's brother sought the hotel wherein Wellesley Graeme for the time being resided, with the purpose of thanking the heroic rescuer of his sister, and of inviting him to dine at the family mansion, where the father would also have the opportunity of meeting and thanking him personally.

Wellesley Graeme was a good specimen of his race, lithe in his movements, erect in his bearing, and firm in his step. Much travel had brightened up his naturally quiet manner, leaving only that amount of reserve which tends to repel the intrusive and to inspire the considerate with respect.

Miss Clinton had just completed her eighteenth year, and had recently returned from a lengthened visit at her mother's early home, the baronial

castle of the De Herons of Normandy, where, under native tuition, she had perfected herself in the then fashionable dialect. In stature she was slightly over the average, fair in complexion and faultless in features, with soft, blue eyes and tresses like burnished gold.

Every young lady has her imaginary hero, although to few is it given to find their ideal. But to Evelyn in the first bright flush of life's morning hour had come the realization of her dreams. The glamor surrounding her knights of romance faded fast away before the courageous feat of the manly young Highlander.

As for Wellesley, though taking no credit for the prompt assistance rendered the young lady, he felt gratified in having afforded cause for thankfulness; and despite his apparent apathy, the persistent display of gratitude on the part of the Clinton family had its effect. The return to India was postponed, and day after day was spent in the company of her who seemed almost to live for his society. What though now and again would arise before him the vision of a calm, clear lake amid the mountains, upon whose flowery banks sat a young man and a maiden, chatting merrily of their childhood's days, while ever and anon the bright eyes drooped beneath the ardent glances of her companion. Yet, after all, Marion, though good and true, was only his cousin; he had never mentioned love to her, far less marriage. She would soon forget him and marry nearer home. And

with this soothing reflection conscience was lulled to sleep.

A two weeks' acquaintance, then a proposal of marriage.

Believing that his daughter's position by right of birth, added to her exceeding beauty, ought at the least to have gained her a title, the Squire ventured to raise some objections to the contemplated union. But his objections merely stirred up his daughter's determination. A good deal of pouting, a small spice of coaxing, and, above all, an earnest appeal to her "dear papa's sense of gratitude," overcame all worldly scruples and completely won the day, and with tears in his eyes the fond father patted the golden locks and bestowed upon her his fervent blessing.

A vast profusion of congratulations, of presents, of finery and of flowers, a glittering pageant before the altar, a full choral service, a few murmured responses to the officiating clergyman, a benediction, and the hearts' union is consummated by seal of church and state.

And several weeks thereafter, away in the distant Highlands, a grey-haired father reads aloud the announcement of the marriage of "Cousin Wellesley" to a high-born English lady, and a sweet-faced daughter steals noiselessly out of the room, passes up the staircase, and, kneeling by her bedside, buries her face in the coverlet and sobs out her sorrow to her God. But the sunlight crept up over the mountain and slanted its tender

rays over the bowed head, and the hum of busy industry was wafted in from the fields, for nature rejoices and mankind must labor though hearts may break; and the motherless mourner arose, crossed the floor to her writing-desk, which she opened, and stood for a moment regarding the small package of foreign letters contained therein. Then, slipping from her finger the rich opal ring, she placed it in the wrapper which already contained a lock of ebon hair and a few withered sprays, and closing her desk, passed out to her household duties, therein to outlive the tragedy of her short, pure life.

Comparatively secluded as the newly-made bride had hitherto been, it was only to be expected that one naturally cheerful and gay should embrace the opportunity which her marriage presented of entering more fully into society, and with an uneasy mind Mr. Graeme was fain to yield and to content himself with beholding his youthful wife take a leading part in the giddy rounds of fashion. Forcibly was the cruelty of separating the young bride from the associations of her childhood discussed in the presence of her devoted husband, so forcibly that the idea of returning to his former post was again and again delayed and finally abandoned.

During the three years succeeding the establishment of a home in London came the blessing of a fine, healthy son, to whom the exultant father gave the same distinguished name which his

martial parent had so proudly bestowed upon himself.

Mr. Graeme began to pine for a scent of the heather, and probably imagining that a total change of surroundings, added to the grave responsibilities of motherhood, would wean the beautiful wife whom he so fondly cherished, from her extravagant propensities and persistent pursuit of pleasure, he suggested removal to the North. It was with satisfaction not unmingled with surprise that he received a ready acquiescence in his proposal. Mrs. Graeme had often heard of the wondrous beauty of the mountain-land, and possibly she was beginning to taste of the *ennui* of pleasure, or the bondage of fashion, and thus the more willingly grasped at the change.

Accordingly, her husband sold out his partnership in India and removed with his family to Scotland's principal city, in which they are first introduced to our readers.

CHAPTER IV.

SEVERED.

AFTER a residence of several years in Edinburgh, Mr. Graeme removed with his family to the ancient borough of Arbuthnot, whence he had contracted to extend a branch of railway along the coast.

Now came the dark days for Alda. Her father absent most of the time and her brother in school, she, poor child, was left pretty much to her own resources. Often, in her solitude, she would wander down to the cots of her father's workmen, where she found that unstinted flow of sympathy which the lowly are generally well supplied with. And very proud were the hard-working women to offer the cushioned seat in the ingle-nook, or the choice bowl of pea's brose to the "Maister's bonnie bairn."

Mrs. Graeme knew nothing of house-work, therefore was not fault-finding, and always pleasant in manner and lavish with the means which came to her so easily, was a decided favorite, not only in fashionable circles, but with her own domestics. As for her children, her imaginary duty to them consisted in seeing that they were well attended to in the matter of food and clothing.

Those were gleeful days for Alda when she heard, "Father's coming!" The little feet pattered and the little tongue gave no peace till she was arrayed in her favorite dress and her beaver hat with its scarlet cord and tassels, the pride of her youthful heart. Then quickly she sped to the railway station, picked her path along the crowded platform, and pounced upon that big man who, busily engaged in conversation with a fellow-passenger, had not observed the slight figure of his darling. He starts, stoops for the expected embrace, is taken possession of, and hand-in-hand the two go merrily homeward.

This evening the train was behind its time. Intending passengers were impatiently drawing forth their watches to compare them with the station clock, and some were hinting at an accident, when suddenly a rumbling sound, and soon after a decided shriek, proclaimed to the anxiously listening child the approach of the train which would bring her beloved.

With the customary happy greeting, Mr. Graeme had taken the hand of his little daughter, and was setting off homeward, when the engine began to puff, and the wheels began to move. Both turned.

"Mamma! mamma!" called the child, and she stretched forth her hands towards the receding cars. But the train had passed through the tunnel, leaving behind it nought but a cloud of smoke, and was fast speeding on its way to the South.

"It was mamma, after all. I didn't see her face

before, and so wasn't quite sure. She had a new cloak and bonnet on, and when I went near them she turned away. She was talking to a gentleman —I think it was Sir Charles Keith."

A cold wave passed over the heart of the hearer. Selfish and pleasure-loving as his youthful wife had been, he had never distrusted her affection. For the first time it occurred to the faithful husband to connect suspicion with her of late frequent visits to her former friends in Edinburgh. Yet he nerved himself to answer in accordance with his remotest hope.

"You likely mistake, Alda. It might have been some lady who resembles your mother."

"No lady resembles my mother. You know there is none so lovely."

Well he knew it. That loveliness which had bewitched him from all his ambitious schemes and had procured for its possessor the hurtful homage of the worldly throng, had been the bane of his married life.

"Do not make any noise about mamma if she is not in the house when we enter," charged Mr. Graeme, as he opened the front door of his dwelling.

The caution was not required. He had but hung his hat and top-coat on the rack when a housemaid crossed the hall and handed him a note.

"Missis told me to give you this when you came home. She was obliged to depart by the night express for London."

Her master, much to the girl's astonishment, showed no surprise, but thanking her in his usual pleasant manner, took the letter and passed into the dining-room. Alda, having removed her wraps, soon followed.

"What does mamma say? Is there anything wrong at grandpa's?"

For answer Mr. Graeme put the note which he had been reading in his pocket.

"Do you hear me, papa? Is any one ill that you look like that?"

"Any one ill—no."

"Then what could have taken mamma away? Why didn't she wait till you got home, instead of going away without bidding us good-bye?"

"We must have patience till we hear further. Be my little housewife to-night, and pour me out a good cup of tea."

As Mr. Graeme exchanged his boots for the slippers which were warming for him inside the fender, the table-maid set down some dishes and then brought in the tea-pot and hot-water urn, and stood waiting to serve.

"That will do, Mary," said her master, "you needn't attend us to-night. Just touch the bell for Wellesley, please; he couldn't have heard us come in."

Why should Mr. Graeme wince under the eye of a mere domestic? Ah, why! Have you ever tasted of trial so bitter, sorrow so sacred that you would fain bury it deep out of the prying inquisi-

tion of human ken? Still, to his dear ones he must endeavor to act and to appear as of old. Through him no shadow must darken their bright young lives.

The little girl proudly seated herself in her mother's chair at table and prepared the tea, then jumped up to choose her father a nice piece of toast and to remove the cover from the cheese-dish.

Mr. Graeme smiled at Alda's display of activity.

"Eat something yourself, dear," he urged, "and then get away to bed. No wonder that Wellesley is so tall and stout; he takes ever so much more sleep than you do."

As the sharp eyes were remarking her father's utter want of appetite, the nurse tapped at the room door and signed for her charge.

"It's getting late," she apologized. Then, using the freedom of a privileged servant who had nursed the mother in her childhood, and had afterwards nursed that mother's children, she enquired if all was well at her former home, the residence of Squire Clinton.

"I hope so, Martha. I have learned nothing to the contrary. Should Mrs. Graeme not return for some time I can depend upon you for the housekeeping?"

"Certainly, sir."

Though appreciating the important services rendered by this untiring guardian of his children, her employer had little idea that much of the home

comfort which he had of late years enjoyed was the result of her careful and unflagging attention.

Mr. Graeme paused until the sound of his children's footsteps had died away, then drew forth and read again the cruel words: "If we lived together for one hundred years we could never understand each other. I go from bondage and discontent to freedom and happiness. Do not attempt to recall me. Be happy with your books and your children."

No expression of regret for the wealth of love cast aside, nor of sorrow for the injury inflicted. She had acted through no hasty impulse, but evidently after due deliberation had renounced the glory of true womanhood, and for what?

There are woes worse than death; yea, woes with which human sympathy dare not intermeddle, unconquerable, incurable woes.

Except that the household retired somewhat earlier in the evenings, and that the door-bell pealed less often than before, there was slight change in the outward aspect of the family arrangements. The contract into which Mr. Graeme had entered required his constant attention for some time to come, and his journeys up and down the railway line, for supervision of the work, were continued as before.

When the soft, western breezes of a genial spring blew over the fresh, green meadows and the kine stood knee-deep in clover, the little daughter was permitted to accompany her father

on his shorter journeys; and it was a novel sight to witness the fairy-like form of the white-robed child tripping contentedly along by the side of the "Maister," as he moved up and down among the workmen, the roughest of whom seemed to soften both in speech and manner under the refining influence of her presence.

"Papa, dear! there's a poor man outside asking for work."

"It seems to me, Alda, there's always some one asking for work when you're about. Let him speak to the foreman."

"He has done so, but Mason doesn't want more men at present."

"Well, we can't help him, then."

"Oh, yes, you can, papa. I promised you would. He says that he has walked a great distance, and has a wife and a lot of small children. If I were hungry and you wanted work—"

The father smiled.

"I know exactly what's coming," and turning, Mr. Graeme gave orders to summon the foreman.

"The poor man comes from Skye. He walked all the way from Greenock."

"He had a long walk. And he comes from Skye—that must plead for him."

"Why can't we go to Skye? I should love to see the hills you climbed when a little boy."

"So you shall, some day. But here comes our Highlander; I must think up my Gaelic."

The man approached, and was gratified by a

hearty hand-shake and a greeting in the familiar tongue.

"Find him a job, edge him in somewhere," called the "Maister" to the foreman; "but first make sure that he gets a good, square meal at the cook-house. We'll have a chat by-and-bye," he added, addressing the stranger who, making his obeisance, smilingly moved away after the overseer.

CHAPTER V.

TREASURED MEMORIES.

DAYS passed into weeks, weeks merged into months, still the mother returned not to her family. The children, perceiving that the subject was painful to him, refrained from questioning their father concerning her; former friends also gave up making enquiries, and Martha sought and obtained leave to curtail the household expenses by the dismissal of all the servants save herself and a stout maid-of-all-work, who was assisted in any superfluous labors by Mrs. Mason, the active wife of the railway foreman.

It was a bright, cool morning. The streets, which had previously been covered with slush, were now white with the keen hoar-frost, and Alda, warmly shod and well mantled, stood ready to accompany her father. Smilingly he took the warm-gloved hand, and with a cheery "Good-bye, Martha!" away went the happy-hearted child, freed from the monotony and the dool of a motherless home to exult in the bracing outside air and in the joyous atmosphere of a kindly father's sheltering love.

"And how are ye, Miss Alda? I ken na but it's guid luck brocht ye here this day," was the genial

greeting of Mason, the foreman, as Mr. Graeme and his little girl approached to where he was earnestly remonstrating with some of the workmen.

His employer, suspecting that trouble was brewing, beckoned Mason aside. There was trouble, sure enough.

"Ye ken, sir, we expeckit to feenish the road in aboot three weeks' time; and noo, some of thae guid-for-naethings are lyin' drunk in the public-hoose."

"That's a bad job, Mason. Can't you employ other hands?"

"Easier said than done. Were the tawtie diggin' all ower I micht get some men frae the country. But noo, if thae doitards could be kept frae the drink—"

"I'm afraid they'd all go off in a body if I attempted to close the dram-shop."

Alda, who had, unnoticed, been listening to the discussion, now broke in.

"Oh, no! they wouldn't go. Not if I asked them to stay."

Her father shook his head.

"Send down the line and collect the gangs together, and I'll make them a proposal," he said to his foreman. "I can do no more."

"Now, my men," began Mr. Graeme, when all, save a few who were reported absent "on the spree," were assembled before him, "I have always acted fairly by you."

"That's sae," spoke up a big, burly fellow, who appeared to be one of the ringleaders in the contrary faction, "yet the weather's gettin' unco cauld, an' we canna weel hang on all day withoot a drap o' the cratur."

"Well, hold on a bit," replied the master, smiling in spite of his annoyance. "I'm just coming to that. Some of you, I am glad to learn not all, are not contented with a 'drap,' but drink far more than is good for you—or for me, either; for what injures my employees injures my own character. I have undertaken to deliver over this line in a completed state within the next three weeks. To accomplish this it is necessary to make up for lost time by putting on relays for day and night work. Now I wish to make a bargain with you. If the foreman supplies each of you with a dram at noon and another at midnight, and as much tea or coffee, along with good bread and butter, as you desire, all at my expense, will you promise to quit the public-house until the work is finished?"

There was a short demur. Some of the men began to consult with each other, and several silently looked down as if ashamed of their own unworthiness.

Suddenly a dainty figure moved forward from the "Maister's" side.

"Papa promised," she timidly but bravely said, "and I know that you won't make him tell a lie."

Magical seemed the effect. Instantly a hundred heads were bared, and Tam o'Shanters and Glen-

garries swung high in the air, while a hearty "Hurrah for Miss Alda!" went pealing along the acceptance of the Master's proposal, and illustrating the Scripture truth, "A little child shall lead them."

Now that a season of idleness was in prospect, Mr. Graeme had taken time to pay more particular attention to the fact of his increasing ill-health. The pain which had again and again before his wife's desertion caused him uneasiness had returned more frequently of late, and the doctor had imparted the usual advice after failure of medical aid, complete rest and change of air.

"Waiting for me, are you? Well, let's have supper in at once," and as the children took their seats, Mr. Graeme, giving a rub to his hands before the glowing grate, followed their example.

That evening was one long to be treasured in the memories of the brother and sister. Their father was in a peculiarly happy mood. After supper he sang to them several of their favorite songs and entertained them with stories of the olden days; then disclosed to them his intention of first taking them to visit the Highlands and afterwards his relations in Canada.

"I feel sorry to remove you from the Academy, Wellesley," he said, "as I learned to-day that you are doing well in your studies and also behaving yourself, as all boys should who mean to succeed in after life. As for Alda, our baby—she's getting to be a big baby now—she'll miss her governess.

Still, after we're settled in a new home you'll both make up for your loss, I dare say."

Wellesley brought in his books, and for a short space applied himself to his lessons, while Alda coaxed her father to a game on the checker-board. But the minute hand for the second time went round the face of the clock, and Wellesley, after a frequent pausing and an irrepressible yawning, resolutely arose, laid aside his books, and kissing "good-night" to his father and sister, quitted the cosy apartment for still cosier quarters wherein to rest.

"And now, little one, you'd better say, 'Our Father,' and betake yourself upstairs also."

"Yes, directly, papa. But I can toast my toes for a while. Martha's so busy these days; she won't be up in the nursery yet," and the self-asserting one turned her seat round to the fire and bestowed her feet upon the fender rail.

"Well, well! Have your own way as usual. Are you too sleepy to sing me that new hymn?"

"The one I learned at Sunday School? I don't know it all, only three verses."

Drawing herself up straight, and clearing her throat with a slight, preparatory cough, the child commenced:

"No tie so strong or sweet below
Which time will not dissever;
But when we meet in heaven above
We'll part no more forever.
No parting there, no parting there,
No parting there forever."

"The air is beautiful, though the words are too sad for such as you."

"Oh, no, papa! I think they're just lovely. Don't you want me to sing any more?"

"Yes, dear. I could listen to you all night."

With a happy smile the tones again swelled forth:

"Our cords of joy are snapped in twain,
Not one remains unbroken;
But yet kind Heaven shall join again,
For so the Lord hath spoken.
No parting there, no parting there,
No parting there forever."

A brief pause, a look for approval into the father's placid countenance, and again:

"Why mourn we gaps which years have made,
Why grieve for the departed?
Shall Christ not reunite in heaven
And heal the broken-hearted?"

Quietly and unseen of the young singer, the listener held his breath and pressed his hand upon his side, as if to stifle the pain. Then, gently to his ears was wafted the chorus:

"No parting there, no parting there,
No parting there forever;
In heaven above, where all is love,
We'll part no more forever."

"No more forever," came musingly from the father's lips, and leaning forward he tenderly

stroked back the clustering curls from the smooth, white forehead and gazed wistfully into the love-lit eyes.

"My darling," he said, "I would like to speak to you of many matters, but it would only make you sorry. This world is full of sorrow, and I wish you always to remember what you have now sung to me, that 'In heaven above, where all is love, there's no more sorrow there.' If God spares us together, Alda, we may see happier days; if not —when your mother comes back, be kind to her."

"Oh, papa! are we not going with you? You are not meaning to leave us behind when you go to Canada?"

"Certainly not. I shall never leave you as long as I live; still, in case of—"

"In case of what? If God takes you away from us, then I will not care to live any longer."

"Do not speak or feel like that, my darling. I know it is not always an easy task for us to submit to God's will; yet I have managed to do so, and you will also, in time. It may be God's will," he added, "that my little Comfort may live to comfort others beside her father. She may grow up to be a good and useful woman, such as her father would be thankful for even in heaven itself. But now we must really say 'good-night.' I feel somewhat tired, and—here comes Martha. She'll see you to bed."

"Good-night, dear papa, and pleasant dreams," and with a kiss on the bent-down forehead, the

little girl jumped up from her low stool and hastened away after the retreating form of the housekeeper-nurse.

Next morning the breakfast-table stood in readiness, and although Wellesley had taken his morning meal and started for school, and Alda had flitted discontentedly about the lower rooms for nearly an hour, there were no signs of the earliest riser of the family.

"Alda, dear!" said Martha, who had waited in vain for the appearance of her master, "won't you knock at your father's chamber-door. Perhaps he doesn't feel well this morning."

The child sped upstairs, Martha meanwhile hearkening at the foot of the steps. She heard "Papa!"; then louder, "Papa!" but no answer. Softly the door was opened, and a few whispered words reached her ears. A hasty step crossed the room, then a piercing shriek and a sound of something falling heavily upon the floor.

Only a moment, and the landing was reached. There, through the open doorway, was presented the saddest sight which the faithful servant had ever been called upon to behold. Upon the floor, pale and still, lay the stunned, grief-stricken child, who had for the first time met with the dread enemy in this most sudden and most appalling of visitations, while upon the couch above reclined the calm, undreaming sleeper, whose peaceful expression betokened a painless departure from this nether world of strife.

CHAPTER VI.

ORPHANED.

THE shadows were falling over the cottages of the workmen, and the busy housewives were lighting the candles and setting the table for the home-coming of the "gudeman" after his day of toil on the railway.

"Look, will ye, if yere father be comin' up the lane," called Mrs. Mason to a young urchin who was amusing himself and his pet kitten also by dragging an empty spool over the broad slabs of grey stone which composed the kitchen floor.

"Yes, mither," replied the child, who had been happier over his old spool than many an heir of fortune over his costliest toy.

Getting up from his play, he raised the door-latch and peered forth into the gathering gloom.

"I dinna see him yet, but I hear his tread," and with that he set out to meet him, whilst the mother gave a finishing stir to the porridge-pot preparatory to serving up that worthy ingredient in the building up of both brain and muscle in many an able-bodied son of Old Scotia.

"Keep out o' the way!" and Tommy, perceiving that his father's arms were full, at once obeyed.

Passing his astonished wife with scant ceremony, Mason pushed open the door of the small chamber adjoining the kitchen, for the house could boast one extra apartment beyond the usual "but and ben" of the ordinary workmen, and deposited his blood-stained and bedraggled burden upon the bed, calling, as he did so, "Sprinkle her face wi' cauld water till I rin for the doctor."

It required no injunction upon Mrs. Mason, whose husband had so long acted as foreman to Alda's father, to cause the good matron to use, as speedily as possible, all restoratives within her reach, and by the time her husband returned with medical aid the child was restored to consciousness.

The surgeon gave a start when he raised the candle to inspect the wound.

"What! my little Alda!" for he at once recognized the daughter of his deceased friend.

The child opened her eyes and faintly smiled.

Handing the light to Mrs. Mason, "Now turn your head this way," he said to the injured one.

"'Tis not a dangerous cut; a trifle deeper and the consequences would have been fatal."

Having made the necessary preparations, "You must try to be patient, my lassie," he said; "I shall pain you as slightly as possible. There!" and in a few moments the unsightly gash was drawn together and neatly bound up.

"How did this happen?" enquired the doctor, as he picked up his hat to depart.

"It was just at the end o' the bridge. Since

their father died the poor bairns have been sair negleckit. Not that Martha disna treat them weel, but she canna attend tae everything. The mither was aye fond o' the laddie, though she never set muckle by Alda. Not so wi' the father; the wee lassie and he were sae bound up in each ither that the very music o' her heart seemed stilled afore his early death. She's unco fond o' the guidwife, and when anything by ordinar fashes the wee dawtie or when she feels eerie, for the braw hoose is but an empty hole when the sunshine o' her life is oot o't, she just taks her ways doon here whaur she's aye welcome tae the best we can offer her. Weel, sir," as the doctor seemed uneasy to be off, "as I ettled tae inform ye, she was dootless on the road doon here when, crossin' the line, she saw the trolley comin', and tryin' to get oot o' the way her foot slipped and she fell stunned on the spot whaur I picked her up."

"Puir, wee darlin'!" put in the sympathetic wife and mother, "she shall crave for neither bite nor sup as lang as Dawvid an' I hae a roof aboon oor heids."

"That's sae," moralized Mason, "mony's the penny their father gied me; may they never ken want."

"It's nice to be here," spoke the faint voice from the bed, "at home it's all the while scolding Wellesley, who keeps fetching noisy boys about. Then Martha's head aches, and she sends me out with Bella—"

Here the speaker seemed quite overcome. She closed her eyes and lay perfectly still.

Should Martha depute her nursery work to the lately hired general assistant, Bella, who was the envied possessor of a red-coated follower, the usual programme was for said Bella to hurry Alda off to bed as early as she could manage, and, hanging up a black robe inside the white-painted chamber door, approach the child's bed and warn her to keep "awfu' still, wi' her head below the blankets, else the devil would be sure to catch her." Prolific of speech, her customary entertainment of the young listeners was some most graphic relation of ghosts and witches, with the agreeable variation of body-snatchers or will-o'-the-wisps, or Blue-beards and the like, and instead of taking Alda a healthful airing, as directed, the crafty girl would contrive to drag her into some low habitation, where she could keep tryst with her soldier boy.

The fear that most atrocious threatenings would be carried into effect prevented Alda's informing Martha, but she often broke away from her tyrant and generally found refuge in the hospitable dwelling of her humble friends, the Masons.

Mrs. Mason put the heap of stained garments to soak; then lifting the hissing kettle she infused some tea, and while David and his young hopeful were enjoying their frugal meal, she cut, buttered, and jellied besides, one of the softest rolls, which with a real delicate china cup filled with her favorite beverage, she placed on the quaint mahogany stand by Alda's bedside.

"Noo, dearie! haud up yere head a wee," and putting her motherly arm around the child, she adjusted the pillows and drew forward the stand. "Noo, my bairn," after she had propped her up into a sitting position, "try to swallow this."

A lengthened fast had caused the feeling of hunger to triumph over that of pain, and to Mrs. Mason's delight her patient contrived not only to swallow the tea, but likewise the whole roll along with it.

Leaving the child in good hands, we enter another abode, whose large brass signal plate has long been a respected landmark to the inhabitants of the ancient borough.

Dr. Warren looked around upon his well-cared-for family as, after a comfortable evening's repast, he seated himself by the glowing fire and opened out the *Guide*.

He read a space, then paused and rested the paper on his knees as, with a heavy sigh, he gave himself up to earnest meditation.

"Don't you feel well, or are you over-tired?" asked his wife, raising her eyes from the stocking which she was darning. "You've had too much to do lately," she continued, "you must really engage an assistant."

"It's not that, Helen," answered the kind-hearted but far-seeing man, "the work doesn't hurt me. I'm good for several years yet, at least until Joe is able to take his share of the burden. What troubles me is a sore sight which I this even-

ing beheld—the little daughter of my late respected friend, Graeme, who had narrowly escaped from a cruel death, lying wounded among strangers in a navvy's cot. I'd no idea that matters were so bad in that household."

"It was a great mistake on your part not to comply with the father's request as to taking oversight of his children. For all his religious pretensions, Finlay is a man whom I greatly distrust. You ought to see him at once and insist upon his making arrangements for the well-being of those orphans."

"I cannot insist, but I shall call at Finlay's office and advise for their future comfort."

Dr. Warren was as good as his word. His plans on behalf of the Graeme children were soon carried into effect. Martha, the long-suffering exile, was released from her charge, and returned, with the savings of many a year, to end her days in her English home; while Wellesley and his little sister were entered at a boarding-school in the neighboring seaside village of Glenmore.

CHAPTER VII.

SUNRISE.

On the north-east coast of Scotland, where the cliff-born streamlet, which has meandered through the lovely Perthshire valleys, broadening and deepening into the majestic Tay, sweeps its mighty volume of waters into the German Ocean, stands the picturesque hamlet of Glenmore.

One giant mountain of yellow sand guards, sentinel-like, the river's mouth, followed up by a long breastwork of lesser hills, extending from which, like a huge bow, half-circling the bay, are the cots of the seafaring and fishing population.

To the right, upon that grassy knoll, you see the village church, with its manse, surrounded by great beech trees, and stretching all along the brow of the hill are the villas of retired naval and military officers and other potentates, who in this secluded spot can show to the utmost advantage on very limited means. That palatial structure which towers above the others, as a gorgeous peony-rose amid a bed of violets, is the expensively-constructed residence of a mushroom aristocrat. But a stigma attaches to the owner's wealth. Mr. Bonner had long conducted business as a merchant, and at

length took to chartering vessels for the West India trade. One after another of his highly-insured ships became water-logged, and went down when only a short distance from port, and, owing to this suspicious fact, his reputation at last became so notorious that no mariner from the locality could be induced to venture in any of his vessels. Nevertheless, as the star of Plimsoll had not then arisen in the sailor's heaven, he could go on entrapping to destruction the unwary brave and honest man.

Away to the left is the deep ravine from which the village derives its name, with its "burnie" bubbling over its pebbly strand till it loses itself in the vast abyss.

Over the heights to the back of the village you can see the smoke curling up through the tall trees, whereon the noisy rooks keep up their incessant "caw." There stands the castle, in which resides the lord of the manor, the Rt. Hon. the Earl of Glenmore, along with his widowed mother, who is owner by inheritance of the broad farming lands of Stratheden.

Peeping over the high sand hills, near the mouth of the noble Tay, is the round, white tower of the lighthouse, which is in charge of a government pensioner, who owes his much-coveted position to the influence of the Earl. He is a native of the place, but does not fraternize with his former associates, who have never been able to reconcile their principles with the idea of a man carefully

instructed in the "fundamentals" marrying as he did a foreigner "wha maks the sign o' the cross before a graven image."

Mr. Aiken, to whom the orphan children of Mr. Graeme were entrusted, was a man of sterling uprightness, if of strict, methodical plans, while his wife was one of that easy-going class of mortals who are content to take the world as it comes to them, and who, usually by retaining a peaceful mind, live to enjoy a green old age.

Three individuals alighted from the southern train which had just steamed into the wayside station of Glenmore. These were a pretty, fair boy of some ten or eleven years, a pale, dark-eyed girl of seven, attired in a black crape bonnet and dress trimmed with the same material—a sad-looking garb for such a youthful wearer—and a young man, who had been spared from their guardian's office that he might escort the children to their new quarters.

The boy walked bravely along the platform, and taking his sister's hand, conducted her through the gateway, where they awaited the coming of their guide, who had first to attend to their luggage.

Everything around seemed so strange and uncouth in its rough country aspect, especially to the little girl, who clung, with a half-frightened, half-bewildered expression on her face, most firmly to her brother's hand. Soon, however, Mr. Finlay's clerk made his appearance, and, rejoining the two, they walked along the one wide street

of the village, with its narrow sidewalk and its few merchant shops, till at last they turned down a rather sandy road spanned by a railway tunnel.

As they neared the gate of the school-grounds the younger child looked up with a pitiful glance into her brother's face.

"Aren't you afraid to go in, Wellesley? What if they won't be kind to us?"

"They'd better be kind to you, or—"

"Oh, Wellesley! you mustn't say anything rude to strange people. They might do something dreadful to you."

"What could they do, Alda? There are no giants or Blue-beards nowadays to kill and eat women and children. I can look after myself all right, and—if any one touches you—" Here the young protector put on such a look of fierce determination that it had at least the desired effect of calming the fears of his timid companion.

But in a cheerful tone came down the garden path, with a big, hearty man behind it, "So you found your way! If I'd known when you were coming I'd have been at the station to meet you. Come in, children, come in!" and the gate was swung open for their admission.

The good impression made upon the new arrivals by this kindly greeting was one never to be effaced, and it also paved the way for a more cordial meeting betwixt the Graeme children and the family of Mr. Aiken, of whom there were three—two sons and one daughter about a year older than Alda.

As one year in childhood makes quite a difference in point of importance, Alda was forthwith taken under Annie's special patronage, much to the chagrin of Archie, her younger brother, who had hitherto almost entirely appropriated his sister's services.

Youth does not retain its sorrows long, and as the months flew past, the orphans not only became accustomed to, but contented with, their changed condition and plainer mode of living.

The seasons fled, with little to awake from monotony save an occasional shipwreck, with a sea-soaked cargo strewn amid the tangled masses on the shore, or the advent of some health-seeking visitors, who, taking kindly to the pure, bright atmosphere and agreeable surroundings, would sometimes prolong their stay until the winged songsters of the summer piped in their company for southward flight.

Who that has sat therein does not remember the dear, old village school, with its nearby sheltering grove of variegated green, its solemn bell tolling its monotonous tone, and its dusky window-panes, through which the cheering sun illumined the face of the diligent student poring over his task, or of the careless idler happily content to be dunce in his class. There, too, are the venerable desks upon which, rudely carved though they be, are those initials which fetch up to our yearning hearts sweet memories of the long ago; of those now resting in the peaceful shades of the near churchyard, or of

those now toiling under the ardent sun of a distant clime.

Then the annual examination. What a day! And what preparations were made for it. Such dusting of benches and such collecting of shrubbery and flowers; for no wreath for the brow of an ancient conqueror was ever woven with greater zeal than were those garlands wherewith to decorate the walls of the ancient building.

It was the eve before examination day. Alda was here and there, adjusting and proposing, and as now one of the advanced pupils, her opinion was readily deferred to. She was full of glee, for to-morrow she expected to receive two prizes, while her hero, Wellesley, had secured the silver medal yearly presented by His Lordship the Earl.

To-morrow came. Up with the lark, and arrayed in their Sunday "braws," were they, full two hours before the opening one. But ten o'clock came at last, and with it came the minister, the nobility from the castle, the neighboring gentry, and the public at large, from "Money-bags," *alias* Mr. Bonner, to Eppie, the hard-working widow, who had taken a day's idleness in hopes of admiring her son Geordie's display of grandiloquence, and who looked forward with pardonable pride to the time when said Geordie should boast a spotless necktie and "thump a poopit Bible wi' the best o' them."

First of all, Rev. Mr. Somers drilled the scholars in the Shorter Catechism, Bible History, etc. Then

came English in all its branches, French, Latin, etc., etc., till, most important of all, came the prizes.

The medal and the books are duly passed to His Lordship, who occupies the principal seat on the platform; and as the name of each happy recipient is proclaimed he moves forward, and, after making his bow, receives the token of success, then edges himself away to regain his composure among the less fortunate of his fellows.

CHAPTER VIII.

UNSATISFIED.

COME with me to a southern clime.

The balmy breezes rippled the bright waters of the Mediterranean and fanned the pale cheeks of many a resting traveller in that winter home of the health-seeker, beautiful Nice, as down the broad quay walked a goodly pair—a pair who, by their distinguished appearance, attracted observation even among other high-sphered visitors to this famous resort.

Sir Charles Keith and the partner of his flight had, according to precedent, made their exit from society by betaking themselves to the Continent. where, in a perpetual round of pleasure-seeking and moving from one gay centre to another, they had contrived to while the period of fully twelve months away. The short, southern winter was reaching its final limit, and even from the bleak northern climes came whispers of a nearing spring.

The countenance of Mrs. Graeme, though still peerlessly beautiful, bore evident traces of discontent; and it was with rather an ungracious air that she accepted the seat which her escort had chosen. Raising her eyes, however, to gaze out over the

sunlit waters, her expression gradually softened, a dreamy look came into the large blue eyes, and with slightly quivering lip she averted her head.

"I am sorry, Evelyn, for having spoken so rudely last night; though you must allow that you exasperated me. I'd had annoyance enough over my bad luck."

The lady neither stirred nor seemed to pay any attention.

"Don't you hear me? If there's anything I hate it's women making a scene; especially over trifling matters."

"Was it a trifling matter," she calmly replied, so calmly that her hearer was struck with surprise, "to tempt me from my comfortable home, my good husband, and my dear, young children? Do you consider it a trifling matter to neglect me in a foreign land, or to cause me to feel contempt at myself for having been the silly dupe of a drunkard and a gambler—"

"Hush, Evelyn! You are unjust. If I do imbibe rather freely and have lost quite a small fortune at cards, there are others far lower in the social scale than I."

What did the onlooker behold in the vast expanse before her that so riveted her attention? What, save the picture of a cosy home in a far distant land, with a cheery fireplace, by which sat a handsome, earnest-minded man, whose dark eyes rested with earnest, honest affection upon the perfect type of womanly grace opposite. Ah! how the

wounded heart longed for that formerly unvalued homage now.

"Do not look so sad, Evelyn. Lady Keith will probably soon enter an action for divorce; then we will be free."

"And then?" enquired the now seemingly aroused listener.

"Need you ask? We would at once get united by the farce called marriage, and retire to my country seat at Langside, whence we could return to take our proper places in society. I should then do my utmost to reform, and you would reign as one of the loveliest dames in the world of lovely women."

The well-meant compliment passed unnoticed.

"I have been thinking," she said, and paused.

"What?"

"That you are tired of me—indeed, that we are —each tired of the other."

Roue as Sir Charles Keith had doubtless been, he was, nevertheless, quite unprepared for this apt presentment of what he now felt to be very near the truth, so refrained from making immediate answer.

The dancing wavelets reared their snowy crests on the further blue and plashed in gentle measures on the wall beneath; but the troubled minds of the sin-laden responded not to the appealing voices of nature, nor to the beauteous aspect of the same.

"Don't you think," at length went on the calm, low tones of the lady, "that we had better part?

My love for you has been slowly dying out for these last few months—dying the cruel death of disappointment. Last night it breathed its last."

"Oh, no! It can be revived. The old song says, 'The heart that has truly loved never forgets—'"

"Then I never truly loved—not you, at least; for I certainly mean to forget you. Lady Keith is a generous woman; she may love you enough to forgive and take you back."

Sir Charles bit his lip. Variable and captious as he had lately found Mrs. Graeme to be, he had never heard her speak with so much cool decision before. Her reference to Lady Keith set him thinking. After all, was the prize for which he had wrecked the happiness of two homes worth the sacrifice?

"I cannot answer for Lady Keith," he replied, "Possibly she might, to save further scandal, 'take me back,' as you term it, but you—I may have been careless and unwittingly cruel, still, I am not entirely destitute of honor. The world would overlook my faults sooner than it would yours—"

"What do I care for the world or its opinions! I'm sick of them both."

"Then your friends. Your father, who does nothing by halves, has declared that his doors are forever closed against his daughter and disgrace."

"I should not crave mercy at his hands. You will, perhaps, accompany me towards Castle de Heron, wherein, with my grandmother, I shall find shelter until I can cross the Channel and throw

myself at the feet of the only man who ever truly loved me."

Despite his attempted self-control, Mrs. Graeme's companion drew a long breath and regarded her with an uneasy expression.

"God knows I am sorry for you, Evelyn," he said. "We will think over the subject before coming to a hasty decision. Meanwhile, let us return to our hotel."

"Not yet. I wish to settle matters at once. When can you attend me on my journey to Normandy?"

"When you will. Though, before we set out I ought to tell you something."

"Then tell it. Nothing you can say will much affect me. Is it of my husband?"

"It is. I have carefully guarded you from the news as long as I possibly could."

"Has he entered a plea for divorce? I cannot imagine him doing such a thing; my good and patient husband."

"Oh, no! nothing of that kind. But—let us go indoors."

"I tell you that I shall not move from this spot until I hear all. Answer me truthfully. Is he ill?"

"He—will never be ill any more."

"Good God!" shrieked the stricken woman, "he is dead. Oh, Wellesley, Wellesley! And I murdered him—murdered my noble husband, who loved me better than his own dear life."

The man who sat beside her had never tasted of actual grief, and even if he had, before such awful outpouring of anguish what could mere human sympathy avail?

Sir Charles, after striving in vain to offer words of consolation, placed his hand upon his companion's arm to lead her away. But, with an angry and impatient gesture, she freed herself from his touch, and hastily passing onward, without one word of warning, stepped up on the low parapet which bordered the pier, and plunged thence into the glittering waves below.

CHAPTER IX.

THE DAWN OF LOVE.

Busy at work in her flower-plot and humming a simple lay was our Alda.

Leaning upon the low gate-post stood a lad of about seventeen summers, intently watching her persistent efforts with his earnest, brown eyes.

"Have a rose?" she asked, as, raising her head, she descried in the onlooker one of her former schoolmates. "This is Wellesley's corner of the garden; he left it in my charge, so I'm trying to keep it nice against his return," and she broke off from its parent stem a beautiful blush rose and passed it over to the new-comer.

"Thank you. But your fingers are badly scratched. Let me fasten up those branches for you."

The amateur gardener nodding assent, the youth entered the gateway, mounted the step-ladder, and tacked the rosy burdens to their places against the wall.

"There now," as he sprang lightly down, "I must be going. There's lots of work awaiting me, and if I'm not home by nightfall, mother will set about it and make herself sick again."

"And I—I almost forgot, have to write out my French translation. But see! you've dropped your rose. Wait!" and balancing herself against a projecting boulder, the gracious donor leant forward over the wall and pinned the gift securely into the top buttonhole of her late assistant's jacket; the lad meanwhile gazing down upon her with a half-bashful, half-pleased expression. He was gone, and "Alda! Miss Alda!" accompanied by a rough pull from behind, brought both body and mind to earth once more.

"Come intae the hoose, this vera minnit! I'm fair affrontit tae see ye conversin' wi' low trash o' laddies like that. What would the Maister say tae yere giving awa' the flowers in that reckless mainner tae the riff-raff o' the toon?"

"Let me alone, will you, Jean!" retorted the impulsive young lady as, in the vigor of her newly-aroused wrath she gave the interfering Abigail such an impressive push as sent her sprawling right into the comfortable centre of a prickly briar bush, whence issued forth yells loud enough to summon both master and mistress upon the scene.

Warm-hearted as Alda was, there had long existed a bitterness between her and this officious serving-maid, Alda resenting the unjust treatment of the latter toward a much-prized pet kitten whose mirthful life was hastily extinguished by being wrathfully thrown over the baluster; and Jean being equally resentful because her cruel conduct had been complained of by Alda.

The cherished kitten had been the valued gift of her humble friend, Mrs. Mason, and along with a colored miniature of her father, beautifully executed upon porcelain during Mr. Graeme's residence abroad, was the only treasure which she craved as accompaniment upon leaving Arbuthnot.

"Alda! Jean! What is all this noise about?"

It was the voice of Mr. Aiken, who had suddenly been aroused from the enjoyment of a profound ethical study to the palpable proof of very commonplace morality.

His attention was first given to the suppliant, whom he assisted from her unenviable position, not, however, without a few scratches upon her bare arms and a few disfiguring rents in her outer garments. Quickly recovering her breath, she gasped out:

"Oh, maister! it's a' that wee, ill-tempered jade. Joost think! 'cause I came out accordin' tae orders to fetch her inside tae her lessons, and found her gabblin' wi' that low-bred, licht-hoose laddie."

"Alda!"

Already smarting under injury, his high-spirited pupil could not meekly endure the reproachful tone, neither was she the one to willingly submit to false accusation.

"No, no! it was not that; although, for all, I didn't intend to hurt her. But she had no right to say such things—that he 'was low trash and that you'd be angry at me giving away the flowers,'

when he was Wellesley's dearest friend, and the one rose I gave him was plucked from Wellesley's tree." And quite overpowered, the wrongfully accused could restrain herself no longer, but burst into a flood of tears.

"Weel, Maister! I kenned that ye wouldna wish her tae tak up wi' Papists like that half-Spanish callant. I can a'most see the mark o' the beast on his forehead."

"Hush, Jean! Don't display your ignorance."

"It's a fack, sir. Still, I needna blame the lassock when I think o' her forebears and her ain mither forbye; for thae English kirk folk are no michty better, rattlin' ower their written doon prayers like a wheen rats galloping ower a barn floor."

But the zealous, though murky-minded, servitor was wasting her eloquence upon the empty air, for Mr. Aiken, with "Come, Alda! I partly excuse you on account of the provocation; still, you must try to control your temper," had led his charge submissively into the house.

"I do declare! She's fair spoilt. He thinks as muckle o' her as he does o' his ain bairns," muttered the much aggrieved damsel, as, composing her raiment, she prepared to follow.

The mountain born exults in the freedom of the hills; the native of the woodland rejoices within shelter of the forest eaves; the children of the lowlands bask tranquilly in the serenity of the cultured vale; while the nurtured at the seaside can

scarce know contentment apart from the voices of the billows.

More especially is this magnetism observed in the influence of the ocean. Visit the coast and you will find that almost every cottage within hearing of the waves sends forth its quota of devotees to the watery shrine; and wander where you may, over the burning sands of an African desert or by the grass-grown paths of a Western prairie, the exile from the seashore will invariably entertain his guest and enliven himself by recalling bright visions and familiar scenes of his youthful days associated with warm eulogies of that very element which bore him so far beyond their reach.

During the previous holidays, Wellesley Graeme, whose exploits had hitherto been confined to a row in the fishermen's cobble, a boat sail on the bay or a trip down the "burnie" on a school-boy-constructed raft, felt inspired with romantic notions of accomplishing similar feats on a larger scale, and engaged himself to go to the East Indies upon a ship which formed part of a fleet employed in the importation of jute, and which hailed from the neighboring port of Dundee.

For the second time in her short life Alda experienced bitter grief, for the two, who had never before been parted, were doubly precious to each other because of their loneliness. Those who have enjoyed the felicity of growing up to maturity beneath the loving shelter of the parental roof, cannot possibly comprehend the immense difference of a

training among strangers, more especially to children of acutely sensitive temperament. However lenient the system of the latter may be, not only is the mind of the child too early aged thereby through compulsory mental exercise preventing the full draught and duration of unembarrassed enjoyment which is its due, but there is also, in many cases, a wide and impassable gulf betwixt a guardian and his charge.

In this case her teacher came nearer to Alda's appreciative affection than his amiable partner, who was far from acquiescing in her husband's expressed opinion, that in point of intellect his own children were somewhat inferior to their orphan companions.

Alda had no one now to sympathize with her in her various grievances, or to shelter her from petty annoyances, and as it never occurred to her to impart her griefs to, or to crave sympathy from, Mrs. Aiken, her usual resource in her troubles was to seek the privacy of her own little room, where, safe from intrusion, she could give way to her wounded feelings in a refreshing shower of tears and in many reflections, wicked ones, doubtless, to the pious untried, as to why a good God could have taken the father whom she loved so dearly to himself and left her behind among strangers.

CHAPTER X.

THE SHIPWRECK.

"JOHN, my boy."

"Yes, father," promptly replied the lad as, laying down his pencil, he prepared to obey.

"You'd better attend to the lamps. It blows hard," he added, "we're likely to have a stormy night."

The lad ascended and adjusted the lights.

"Father," he called, "come up. If I'm not mistaken there's a ship on the banks."

The father at once complied. By aid of their powerful telescope they could plainly descry a small vessel, but a very familiar one, stuck fast upon a sand-bank in the mouth of the river and swaying to and fro at the mercy of the waves.

"'Tis His Lordship's yacht," exclaimed the lighthouse-keeper. "I heard that he had gone southward acruising with his visitors."

"What can we do?"

"Do! Haste along to the fishermen and seek their assistance, while I untackle the life-boat. None else would stand this heavy sea."

"Father, it is useless there to seek aid. The whole fleet left for the North a few days ago."

The keeper's face turned pale.

Pausing at the bottom of the smooth, spiral staircase, "Maria," he called to his daughter, who stood looking out over the darkening prospect, "run quickly along to the East Haven and enquire if any of the fishing fleet have returned. If not, call at the coast-guard station."

The daughter of the lighthouse-keeper sped quickly along the sands, but only to meet with disappointment.

The cheerful women toilers, who had passed the former part of the day in setting of nets preparatory to the expected home-coming of fathers, brothers, and sons, every now and again raising their eyes in quest of the white speck on the horizon which would betoken their return, had witnessed with alarm the clouds begin to lower and gusts of wind, with eerie sough, sweep down the glen and toss up countless whirligigs of sand along the furrowed shore. Now they were grouped in one common bond of anxiety, each one seeking for some grain of comfort in the suppositions of the other.

Returning by the coast-guard station, Maria learned that the two preventive officers had just before left, having been detailed for a suspected smuggling case.

Leaving the trusty collie in charge of the premises, Mrs. Arnold set out across the heights, whither her husband and son had preceded her, and joined the party on the beach as her daughter appeared from the other direction.

"Oh, father! the waves are lashing over her. I fear we are too late."

With united effort they launched the boat into the angry deep. No use in his wife's objecting. Arnold had a will of his own. She handed him the life-buoys, one of which he attached to his own person and another to that of his son.

"Let me go," pleaded Maria, "I can take the helm."

"In this sea! No, my daughter. Stay with your mother. It may be she'll need your company," and the lips of the courageous man quivered as he turned his head to conceal his emotions, and quickly sprang into the boat.

The mother and daughter knelt upon the strand to implore the help of Omnipotence.

They could perceive the boat approach the yacht, then a heavy sea would strike upon and beat it off. Again it comes nigh, and this time the rowers have succeeded in casting a line to the figure on the shrouds, who has apparently made it fast.

The swell has lessened; the boat is returning with two added to her number.

"*Non nobis Domine! non nobis; sed nomine tuo da gloriam!*" fervently ejaculated Carlotta, as she arose from her knees in readiness to afford what assistance she could to the returning party.

. . . . . .

Lady Glenmore aroused herself from the short snooze that she had been enjoying in the depths of her easy-chair, which had of late years been

wheeled somewhat nearer to the glowing fireplace in the French-tiled chimney-corner.

Rich and powerful as the Countess was, existence had not been altogether for her "a bed of roses." She had realized what it was to be orphaned at an age when the fact of her being an heiress brought her slight compensation for the loss of a mother's love; her noble husband had died in his prime, and her only son remained unmarried in middle life. She was very lonely, despite the affectionate attention rendered her by that filial son.

Rising, Her Ladyship touched the bell-pull, then walked across the room to where the last faint rays from the western heavens were casting their subdued light upon the rich gobelin tapestry which lined the ancient, ebony-framed folding-screen.

"It looks fearfully wild out on the open," was her mental comment as she stood by the wide Gothic window which commanded an extensive prospect of the village below and the long line of seashore beyond.

"Did you ring, ma leddy?"

"Yes, James. Fetch in lights; and be particular in seeing that all the doors and windows are secure. From the sighing amid the trees I deem we'll have a stormy night. Stay!" she called, as, wiping her eye-glass, she raised it. "It appears to me there's a crowd on the beach. Look! you may discern better than I."

James did as directed, but he "was not quite sure," he'd "find out" for Her Ladyship.

"Do so. I hope it's not a ship in distress," reflected the compassionate woman as she resumed her seat. "I ought to be thankful that my dear ones are at present on shore."

"You surely didn't tell her" in a loud whisper from the hall startled the Countess to her feet.

"James!"

The butler reappeared.

"What has happened?"

"Nothing. That is—ma leddy—" but the faithful retainer could proceed no further.

The housekeeper entered the room. "We were unwilling," she commenced, "to alarm your Ladyship. A messenger has arrived from the lighthouse. The Earl—"

"What of him?" and with blanching countenance the bewildered mother sank upon the adjacent lounge.

"Tenez! Stand out of de vay, vill you!" burst forth Victorine, as she showered the contents of an eau-de-cologne bottle over her fainting mistress. "Mon Dieu! but her hands are froid—cold. Vous sot! vous viper, vous avez her tué—killed!" and she poured forth a torrent of abuse upon the head of the faithful servant, who would have died rather than do his employers the slightest injury.

"Stop yere foreign jingle, will ye, and attend to yere lady; she's coming to again," urged the

housekeeper. "The Earl is safe, your Ladyship," she continued; "he was rescued from the sinking ship and is now at the lighthouse."

"Thank God! I shall go to him at once. Send the messenger up."

Upon more explicit information a closed carriage was hastily prepared. Lady Glenmore, along with her maid, was carefully seated therein, and the messenger mounted beside the coachman. Rapidly as two well-fed horses could bear them onward, they were driven over the sandy beach and into the grounds of the lighthouse, where, alighting, the widowed parent was soon inside and clasped in the arms of her beloved son.

"Where are Clarence and your cousins?" she enquired, an uneasy expression overspreading her countenance.

"Mother, be comforted. *I* had a very narrow escape."

The Countess, beginning to divine the situation, asked no more.

His Lordship had telegraphed from the port of Leith to the effect that he and his fellow-voyagers intended driving up to Edinburgh, there to spend a short period in sight-seeing; but, having changed their minds, the party set sail for home.

A stiff breeze overtook them as they were rounding the Fifeshire coast. The captain, hoping to anticipate the threatened storm, gave orders to set full sail and make for the Frith of Tay. Well used to the navigation of the river, he was

astounded when they struck upon a sand-bank, although he entertained no very grave apprehensions, as the tide was rising, which would soon again float the vessel.

But the yacht, meantime, settled in the sand, the sea rose, the storm increased, and finding all their own efforts unavailing, the hapless company hung out signals of distress. Perceiving no response, they preferred to risk their lives rather than await certain destruction, by launching and boarding the jolly-boat.

They had only proceeded a few yards from the ill-fated ship when the boat swamped, and all on board, save the owner and a young cabin boy, were engulfed in the treacherous deep.

These two had succeeded in regaining the yacht, and were clinging almost hopelessly to the shrouds, when a kindly Providence, by the hands of John Arnold and his brave young son, released them.

CHAPTER XI.

THE MINISTER'S MAN.

In many of the villages of Scotland there is a most important personage, who occupies the post of public crier, along with which he generally combines the office of sexton, or "minister's man."

With a solemn countenance this functionary may be seen every Sunday, dressed out in the sober broadcloth suit in which he was married, and which will probably serve him for best as long as he lives, proceeding up the church aisle to deposit the "poopit Bible" on the pulpit desk, then returning to the vestry to marshal the minister up the same path, till he sees him installed in the pulpit, when he reverently descends, with a responsible air, to his pew.

The minister's man is supposed to be well versed in all that is worth knowing. He is deeply interested in the fate of every individual inhabitant, having officiated at the baptism and marriage of many, and expecting to assist at the interment of as many more.

"What's the noos o' the day, Robbie?" quoth the brawny master of the forge, giving a side

glance at our specimen of the above-mentioned class, and going on with the shoeing of Farmer Hodge's horse.

"Noos!" and the accosted looker-on raised his left hand and commenced to excite the region of memory by a significant scratch among the few grey hairs which fringed his shining pate. "I have really naething worth the mentionin', were it no that report aboot the Aikens."

"What o' them?" and the smith set down the animal's foot with that air of satisfaction which implied that he had made a good job.

"Vera little, only it's gaun the roonds that they are thinking o' leaving the place."

"What say ye? Wha's gaun to leave the place?" chimed in the anxious voice of the guid-wife as she bumped down the water-stoups which she had been replenishing at the well.

"The Aikens."

"Losh keep a' livin'! Ye dinna say't?"

"Deed an' I do, though," retorted Robbie, wroth that his assertion should be called in question.

"Man! I'm no' dootin' yere veracity, but it sounds unco queer, nc'ertheless. Yet, since ye're sae positive it maun be the fack."

"I'll joost tell ye a' that I'm aware o', and then ye may judge for yersel'."

"Come awa' w't, then," invited the one auditor, while the other, drawing his pipe from his pocket, poked its contents with the tip of his finger, and having lit it by a thrust into the dying embers,

settled himself into a listening attitude against the wall.

"Weel, ye ken, Archie Aiken had blabbed something concernin' the maitter tae the ither weans, wha, of coorse, carried it tae their mithers; and Frank Kennedy, wha was lately given charge o' the mail bags, telled me that seeing a new-fangled kind o' envelope with the Glascy post-mark thereon, likewise jalousin' there was some truth in the report, he made bold tae venture the question tae the Maister himsel'."

"And what said he?"

"He neither spak yea nor nay, but joost gied ane o' his quiet lauchs as he made answer, 'There's some word o't.'"

"It's a' correck eneuch, ye may be sure, an' sorry I am tae hear o't, for ye'll gang a lang gate afore ye'll meet wi' his like again. The place will miss him sairly, I trow."

"It will," now put in the smith as, shaking the ashes from his pipe, he proceeded to refill it for Robbie. "But, Peggy, ma woman!" he continued, "ye hae surely forgotten that it's comin' on tae twel' o'clock, and I'll no yoke anither heat till aifter dinner."

"Oh, noo! Dae ye ken what Tammas is hintin' at, Robbie? The ither day, when the minister was gaun his roonds, he stappit intae oor hoose, and what do ye think! When I telled the gudeman, as genteelly as possible, seeing the company we were

in, to bide a wee, that I wished to hae some share in the edifying conversation, Mr. Somers turned aboot, and, says he, 'Margot! it would seem that ye are wantin' in reverence to your husband!' Then he fell tae tellin' me about Sairey in the Scriptures wha called her husband 'lord and maister.' Ye may imagine hoo I was tickled with the compairison. Still, my wits didna clean forsake me, as I gied answer, 'that grand style o' language micht very weel suit for a braw, michty man like Abryham, but for *me to ca' Tam Henderson lord and maister!*' Na, na! it has nae look on't, tho' I'se warrant I think as muckle o' my ain auld man as Sairey did o' hers."

"An' a hanckle mair, if a' be correck. I dinna see hoo the minister, wi' all his book lear, could haud up Sairey to ony respectable, honest woman like yersel', Margot. There's that ill-faured job aboot the heathen king, and that ither graceless behaviour when she was reprimanded by nane less than an angel for indulgin' in unbelievin' lauchter."

"Aye, an' that uncomely ack when she took the puir young lass, Hagar, wha mair than likely had a lad o' her ain, an' gied her to her auld man; and that wouldna do, for she had tae get jealous o' the freendless creatur' an' mak' Abryham turn her an' her wee laddie oot intae the wilderness. I just wonder wha was *lord* and *master* on that occasion?"

"That's sae, Mrs. Henderson. Though, after

a' the minister was richt in the main. Fine mainners are a guid recommendation, an' ceeveelity taks naething oot o' ane's pocket."

"For my pairt, I'd raither see less mainners and mair common sense, an' there's sic a thing as being senselessly ceevil, ye maun allow, Robbie."

"Noo," interrupted the smith, "layin' a' jokin' aside, let alone yere creeticizing o' the Scriptures and o' them that interpret them, what perplexes me maist is hoo we are tae manage at the kirk session meetins. There's that bigoted body, Samil Gibson, wha wouldna thole a word frae the minister himsel', he never contered ony o' the Maister's propositions, an' as for that thrawn auld cratur, Tailor Robison, wha threatened tae leave the kirk if we sang ocht ayond the Psalms o' Dawvid—"

"Weel, smith!" interrupted Robbie, "I raither agree wi' the tailor there. It micht fairly weel fit thae rantin' Methodys an' sic like tae be inventin' new tunes an' scraps o' verses, but it would ill become the sober Seceshes tae be overturnin' the ancient landmarks by piping over the raveled measures, composed as like as no by Robbie Burns or some ither ungodly reprobate wha seldom set foot within a kirk door."

"Deed, and I almost aver that ye hae the richt o't, Robbie," exulted the guid-wife, "forbye the unreverend way in whilk they gallop ower the notes withoot ony consideration o' takin' the breath oot o' ane's body in tryin' tae keep up wi' them. It's nae consolation tae hae weel commenced the line

and find yersel' left behint wi' half the congregation staring at ye an' giving ye nae credit for singin' wi' the heart if no' with the understandin'."

"But, bless ma heart," returning to the original theme, "I canna imagine what's takin' the pick o' the folks awa'. There's the Hills, wha went stravaglin' tae that unceeveelized contra across the water, full o' thieves and vagabonds and a' ither hairum-skairums, wha rin there dootless tae escape the gallows; and the Grays, wha's liberal offerin' the kirk missed sairly, 'twas a stoopid notion o' them tae set off to Austrelly, or India, or somewhere ayond the land o' the Pharohs, whilk they have as muckle chance tae come back frae as the man frae the moon."

"I'm no learned in geography, mairs the peety; still, as the Israelites were only too glaid tae get oot o' Phary's land, I'd rather no' risk mysel' in it. As for America, if it were a question o' choice, I'd sooner face the gallows themselves than hae the skin o' my head sliced off by thae coffee-colored Indians, or be devoured by wolves and buffaloes like yon we saw at the shows at fair time."

"An' ye gaed tae the shows, Margot! What would the minister say tae that, ma guid woman?"

"Were it no' for the sake o' appearances, I ettle that the minister, godly man as he is, would like brawly to tak' a peep at the shows himsel', Robbie," curtly responded the guid-wife, annoyed that, in her undue boasting, she had inadvertently betrayed the unchristian source of her superior knowledge.

Robbie perceived that his smart criticism had not the desired effect of overawing; therefore, as a politician worthy of the various positions which he so ably occupied, he shifted his tactics. Albeit he was the minister's man, he could not afford to dispense with such a powerful ally as Peggy, the demonstrative spouse of Smith Henderson.

"I will no' insist," he gravely acknowledged, "that the clergy are mair than mortal. When I was dustin' the vestry the ither day, I, stoopidly eneuch, upset the ink bottle ower some of the sermon papers, and, Losh keep me! as I should say't, but the minister was wroth, that wroth that he couldna weel express himsel'. Fearing that the holy man would burst with indignation, I considerately suggested that 'if he felt like swearin' alood, never tae mind me.' Yet, would ye believe it, even that freendly hint didna mollify him; he seemed as far off the straicht as ever."

There is no saying to what length the association of ideas might have spun out the web of interesting village gossip, had not "Mither, mither! the pot's boilin' ower, and Jean has burnt her fingers liftin' the lid, and—" accompanied by unearthly howls from within the dwelling abruptly brought the ever-stretching, never-ending palaver to a close, and caused Mrs. Henderson speedily to pick up her water-stoups and vanish from the scene, calling to Robbie over her shoulder as she did so to "come intae the hoose and tak' a bite o' dinner with Tammas."

CHAPTER XII.

THE HOUSEHOLD SALE.

THROUGH almost nine years of close application to her studies, Alda had acquired a fair education. And now the change so widely speculated upon was to take place; the Aikens were to leave Glenmore. The "Maister" had received an appointment as principal of a seminary in the city of Glasgow, therefore the young folk must prepare to leave the home of their childhood.

The whole village turned out to the household sale, and people came from every direction in order to purchase some memento, be it ever so small, of their friend and teacher.

Conspicuous among the crowd were the lights of the kirk, notably Elder James Forbes, who, although he resided fully five miles away, was always the first at service on Sundays and prayer-meetings on Wednesdays, and Miss Jannetta Peebles, who earned a scanty livelihood by cultivating her limited fruit-garden in summer and filling reels for the weavers in winter.

Said Miss Jannetta, even though she was held up by the minister as a perfect pattern to his flock because of her regular attendance at church ordin-

ances and her self-denying contribution of fourpence a month to foreign missions, was not above the weakness of her sex. Christian as she desired to be, she could not quite forgive her brother in the faith, Elder Forbes, since, at a tea in aid of the Sunday School, he had waxed eloquent over the recital of some bygone enterprise, and had, quite unthinkingly, alluded to "Sic anither auld woman as yersel', Jannet."

"Me an auld woman, Jeames!" shrieked the sorely-vexed and much-disheartened spinster.

"By no means, Miss Peebles!" hastily apologized the Elder, in his most persuasive tones.

But the apology came too late. The insult offered to her increasing age was more than Miss Jannetta's equanimity or even her Christianity could passively endure; more especially as it had been rumored that the well-to-do bachelor elder had been observed smoothing out his plaid over the hard back of the pew in which Miss Peebles sat, and had even actually walked home with her as far as her garden gate one evening after the "kirk spilled"; likewise, that he had taken an observant glance at the snug, white-washed cottage, with its honeysuckle-covered porch and its two small, shining windows and the carefully cultivated plot in front, and had been seen to nod his sagacious head in approbation of the same.

There also stood Shoemaker Thomson, a man whose complaisant countenance seemed only a lesser sunshine, and whose retentive memory had

been stored with an inexhaustible fund of anecdotes, which he was never at a loss to apply. Every one loved the veteran, although woe to the transgressor of the Decalogue, be his worldly position what it might, if the Soutar should hear of his conduct. No fable would be coined to furnish an effective moral, but such a certain looking for of judgment would be threatened that the miscreant would tremble even in success.

Miss Prophet, that would-be-young lady with the shimmering gown of amber satin, which, it was openly whispered, came out of the discarded wardrobe of the Countess when she assumed widow's garb, feels most acutely the contemplated departure, because, though her years scarcely number three-score, she is beginning to despair of making an eligible, matrimonial conquest, and with her attempted gentility finds it very difficult to make both ends of her scanty income meet. Mrs. Aiken had a delicate way of supplementing the lady's limited resources by sending her occasionally substantial articles of food in such a manner that the much-needed kindness was accepted as a favor on the part of the receiver. The worthy matron had been careful not to ruffle her friend's feelings since that day when the indomitable housemaid, Jean, had met the lady prancing along the highway, resplendent in all the glory of the afore-mentioned amber satin, and had at first delighted her by exclaiming, "Losh, Miss Prophet! the Lord is guid to ye." And upon the flattered one blushing

at the supposed compliment and smilingly asking, "How so, Jean?" the uncouth damsel, glancing up to the faded countenance and then down to the gorgeous yet incongruous attire, had cruelly demolished all the lady's "castles in the air" by the final, insinuating remark, "Because He has given ye naething tae be prood about."

There, also, we behold Thomas Crumbie, popularly designated Tam Crumb, the village Arab—for what community, however small, does not boast its proportion of waifs, who belong to everyone when their services are in request, but who pertain to nobody in particular when making appeal to public consideration or charity? Washed ashore from an unknown wreck, tightly clasped in the embrace of his dead mother, the child ought to have received a generous share of the sympathies of the villagers, instead of which, as no wondrous fairy extended her golden wand, and no human emblem of generosity offered to adopt him, he was entrusted by the parish authorities to the care of an elderly female, who really did "as well as she could be expected," considering the remuneration, by the young foundling.

Tom might well be an interested spectator, he who had seldom been known to exhibit any emotion or to shed any tears over all the kicks and cuffs peculiar to his position. Only upon one occasion had he visibly succumbed; that was when Mrs. Aiken, out of sheer benevolence, washed his face and placed him at the dinner-table, with the

charitable intention of filling the creature up for once in his life.

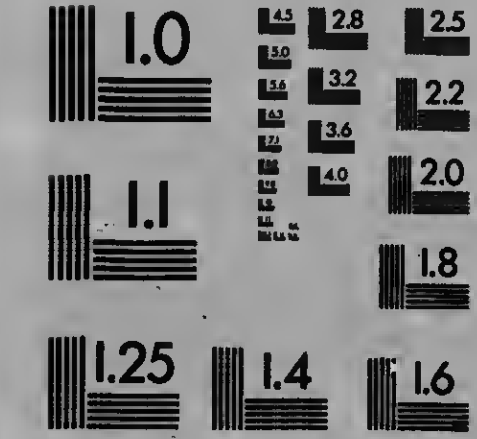
Tommy, who had never been afflicted with bashfulness, did full justice to the eatables; but at last he came to a standstill, and the tears commenced to glisten in his eyes. His benefactress, appreciating this unlooked-for display of gratitude, helped him to another slice of bread and butter, upon which the flood uncontrollably burst forth, and the big tears chased each other down his sunburnt cheeks. Then, in a paroxysm of discomfort, Tommy clasped his hands over his distended stomach, exclaiming, to the great amusement and uproarious mirth of the youthful onlookers, "Oh, dear! I canna haud ony mair. I'm ower foo'."

As for Mrs. Moneybags, alias Bonner, and the other magnates who graced the sale with their dignified presence, and whose slightest nod was preferred over half-a-dozen bids from the poorer proximity, we must not insinuate our intrusive remarks upon their aerial dignity; and as for the respectable middling class, and of those who haunt all sales, partly for curiosity, and principally with a thrifty intention of making a bargain, they are so precisely the pattern of the same class of persons everywhere that we will deal leniently with them and leave them without remark.

On went the sale, and as people in those days purchased furniture for a lifetime's service, long acquaintance had so drawn out the family affection that it seemed almost equivalent to exposing

MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART

(ANSI and ISO TEST CHART No. 2)



APPLIED IMAGE Inc

1653 East Main Street
Rochester, New York 14609 USA
(716) 482 - 0300 - Phone
(716) 288 - 5989 - Fax

the faults or deficiencies of old friends when the folding-table with the mended leaf, the odd china tea cups, and the long unused baby's chair were laid bare to the public gaze.

The fortitude of the "Maister" alone was equal to the occasion, and Mrs. Aiken avoided the painful sight by taking the younger members of the family off for a holiday.

CHAPTER XIII.

REWARDED.

"MOTHER, there is His Lordship's carriage," called Maria Arnold, as she rapidly descended from her labors of polishing the silver at the top of the tower, "a lady has alighted and is coming this way."

"It is the Countess," answered Carlotta, who descried in the near distance the sable robes.

"Wheel over the easy-chair, Maria. Here!"

They placed the seat by the low, latticed window, which was tastefully adorned with gorgeously colored and richly aromatic plants, the only luxury in which Mrs. Arnold seemed to indulge.

"Good afternoon, Mrs. Arnold! I hope the family are all well."

"Good afternoon, your Ladyship!" returned Carlotta, accepting the extended hand and ushering her distinguished visitor into the general living-room of the family.

The Countess affably seated herself in the chair which was shyly proffered by Maria, and began to conjure up some appropriate introduction to the purpose of her visit, but found herself at a loss for words in which to express her kind intentions.

It might have been that the genial lady, who was universally respected and heartily greeted in every village dwelling which she entered, felt somewhat chilled by the gravely polite manner of Mrs. Arnold, or maybe she entertained some apprehensions as to offending the sensitive nature which rumor had attributed to the wife of the lighthouse-keeper. The latter, though ignorant of the cause, perceived her caller's embarrassment, and at once relieved it by expressing, in very passable English, the pleasure she felt at seeing Her Ladyship able to be out again. This agreeably broke the silence, and afforded the Countess opportunity to unfold her message.

"Thank you, Mrs. Arnold," she began, "it is at the Earl's request, as much as by my own desire, that one of my first calls is at your residence."

Carlotta smilingly bowed her approval of the honor conferred.

"Ever since that unhappy day," resumed the lady, "which deprived me of my other beloved relatives, yet, thanks to your husband, under Providence, left me my cherished only son, he and I have consulted as to some method whereby to show our gratitude, and at the same time to partly recompense Mr. Arnold and his noble boy."

"Speak not of reward," hastily returned her listener, "we do not that sort of labor for payment."

Lady Glenmore perceived that her choice-worded prelude had been misconstrued, so she quickly

rejoined, "I know that right well. Still, we owe you such an immense debt of gratitude that it would be our happiness to do something in return. Will you oblige us by receiving, for the present, these slight tokens of our esteem?"

She produced a long silken purse, well filled with gold. "This is my handiwork. I hope you will favor me by accepting it, along with its contents, and this," Her Ladyship placed on the table a handsome morocco-covered pocket-book, enclosed in which was a valuable Bank of England note, "is the gift of my son, who will be much flattered should your husband accept of it."

"Arnold may speak for himself. As for me, Countess—take back your gold. I want for nothing."

Lady Glenmore, finding that explanation and entreaty were alike useless, complied with the request, but resolved to set aside the money, and present it as a wedding gift to Maria, who, it was reported, was soon to exchange the parental roof for a home of her own.

In rising to depart, the eye of the Countess was arrested by a rough though well-defined sketch which hung, encased in a simple, rustic frame over the mantel-piece. It consisted of the figure of a girl, who held in her hand a half-blown rose.

"Whose work is this?" she enquired, as, upon survey of the walls, she perceived similar efforts of the pencil.

"Ah! that is John's," replied Carlotta, evidently

proud of the notice which the talent of her son had attracted. Yet, unwilling to appear so, she added, "He wastes his time with such work; he is a big lad now and must go to learn some useful trade."

Dispirited by her unpromising attempt, the Countess re-entered her carriage, and turned her face toward the light of home and toward the sympathy of her ever dutiful son.

The Earl was on the outlook when his mother returned, and, going down, assisted her from the carriage and up the steps.

"And how did you get along?" was the first enquiry after Her Ladyship had taken her seat upon the balcony.

"Get along!" and the Countess related to her interested listener all that had transpired during her late call.

"My dear, disappointed mother!" exclaimed His Lordship at the close. "But we won't despair," he added, smiling at the relator's look of dejection, "we'll find some other way in which to recompense them; for, aside of our indebtedness, I have taken a particular fancy to that pretty boy of theirs, and mean to advance him in life."

"As you please, Philip, only—manage affairs yourself next time."

"I have it, mother!" exclaimed His Lordship, after a lengthened pause.

"Have what? To what do you refer?"

"To the subject we were lately discussing. Upon reflection, I conclude that your visit may bear

excellent fruit. A most feasible plan has been presented to me thereby."

"I shall be exceedingly glad if that is so."

"You spoke of the Arnold youth being an adept at sketching. What say you to my educating him for an artist?"

"Not a bad idea. I don't know, either. Few artists out of the many acquire fame—very few, indeed, make a respectable living; and even should they finally succeed, it is a toilsome, disappointing journey up hill."

"It need not be so in this case. If Arnold is possessed of talent, he is certain, with all the advantages which I can afford him, to excel, and in a short time to acquire both fame and fortune. As it is, I deem it merely fair to yield the young man the gratification of entering upon that course of study which his fancy directs."

Full of his purpose, the Earl, attended only by his faithful hound, Bruno, set out for the light-house immediately after dinner, and arrived thereat as the beacon from the lofty tower shot out athwart the darkening sea.

Getting no response to the light tap of his cane upon the outer door, he gently opened it, entered the family sitting-room, and surprised the artist in the very act. He had procured a cheap box of paints from the neighboring town, and was diligently coloring one of his latest productions.

"Engrossed in your labors?"

The lad, who had been so earnestly engaged at

his work that he paid no attention to the slight sound which ushered in his unexpected visitor, looked up, stammered forth a confused reply, reached forward a chair, and, begging His Lordship to be seated, prepared to summon his father.

"I will see your father later. It is yourself principally whom I wish to consult. Will you show me the picture which you were engaged upon when I interrupted you?"

John hesitated, abashed for a moment; then, crossing the floor, he lifted the paper from the table, and reached it to the Earl.

"I am a bit of a *connoisseur* in this line," remarked His Lordship, as he carefully scrutinized the drawing, the lad meanwhile keenly regarding him, to ascertain whether the work met with his approval.

"My errand here this evening concerns this."

The listener looked up in astonishment.

"How would you like to pursue your studies in this direction under proper guidance?"

His hearer paused for a moment. It was hard for him to realize the broad vista of intense satisfaction presented to him thus suddenly.

"If it were possible—"

"It is possible. As you do not object, I mean to ask the sanction of your parents to a project of mine—that is, to enter you as a pupil in the Edinburgh School of Arts."

John's heart was full; he could muster up no

language in which to express his appreciation of the liberal offer.

"Then we shall consider the matter as settled," concluded His Lordship, "so far, at least, as you are concerned. Do not be oppressed with gratitude. I owe you far more than I can ever repay."

Mr. and Mrs. Arnold, upon being consulted, gave most agreeable consent, and shortly thereafter their gifted son was transferred to comfortable quarters in the Scottish seat of art, where his noble patron surrounded him with all that was requisite to assist in the prosecution of his new career.

CHAPTER XIV.

ST. MUNGO'S.

THE residents in the western metropolis of Scotland are justly proud of their noble city. Not only is it distinguished by its many costly public buildings and elegant private residences, but it can also boast of as genial and charitable a set of inhabitants as are anywhere to be found, among whom exists little of that *caste,* or class distinction, which is so puzzling to the democracy of the newer world.

There are few cities with greater facilities for pleasure-seekers. What with its lecture-rooms, its concert-halls, its theatres and its art galleries in winter; its public parks in summer, and its magnificent river, upon which handsome and commodious steamships convey the tourist in a few hours to some of the most enchanting scenery upon earth, life to those in comfortable circumstances may be passed as in a fairy realm.

Only one monument of aristocratic ancientness does Glasgow possess—the stately St. Mungo's Cathedral, which, having survived the Reformation deluge of general destruction of all those beautiful and costly edifices which savored of papacy, is situated, along with the Necropolis, upon an eminence

to the north-east of the city, and is always an object of interest to the visitor.

The new abode of the Aikens was chosen upon the south side of the river, in delightful proximity to the Queen's Park; and though the surroundings seemed limited and lonesome to the country-bred family, Mr. Aiken's duties were to be lighter and the emoluments larger, and so all was done for the best.

Many, also, were the advantages afforded the juvenile members of the family. Walter, the elder son, obtained a position abroad, while Archie was entered in college, and marched off every morning in his many-tippeted scarlet gown to the old Alma Mater on the High Street. As for the young ladies, they were favored with more invitations to parties, balls, etc., than their worthy guardians had any idea of allowing them to accept.

Most enjoyable were those trips on the Clyde, from the old Bothwell Brig, of Covenanting fame, to the lovely Isle of Bute and the lofty crags of Arran; and no less delightful was the lengthier steamship passage which bore them to rapturous sojourns through the Emerald Isle.

But never a sunlight which dulled not to shade.

"Alda," said Annie Aiken, "father wishes to speak to you ere he leaves for school."

Her guardian looked very grave as he begged her to be seated.

"We were totally unprepared," he said, "for the unhappy news of this morning. Finlay, your

late father's trustee, is dead. It is reported that he died under very suspicious circumstances. However, what concerns us most is that the affairs of his clients are left in a most deplorable state; in fact, through bad management, or worse, he has contrived to do away with most of the means confided to his care. And you and your brother are, I fear, among the sufferers."

In this sphere of change, where it is impossible to view the end from the beginning, it is well that every one, however exalted his position, should be educated into preparation for untoward events. Had an earthquake yawned beneath her feet, Alda could not have been more surprised than when the announcement was made, that from being the heiress of comparative wealth she was reduced to the necessity of devising some means whereby to earn her own living.

Report had not exaggerated; what meant absolute ruin to some meant loss of greater part of their fortunes to the Graemes.

Justly incensed were the whole community to find that the widow and children of the man who had desolated so many homes were left amply provided for. Nevertheless, as there was no human law that could punish the people who rode in the carriage, purchased and kept up by the money so meanly stolen from the fatherless and the widow, the lawyer's stony-hearted relict could afford to defy public opinion, and to live on in what she imagined to be fitting pomp until she saw her daughters well

married and her sons established in the professions; while to the present day, in the Abbey burying-ground of Arbuthnot,

"The pure and costly marble
Which lifts its stately head
Above the undreaming sleeper
In the city of the dead,
Attests in loftiest language,
Beneath God's open sky,
That a life of legal fictions
Cannot be termed a lie."

Yet a brightness was to shine through the dool. Stunned as Alda was by the unwelcome intelligence which had been imparted to her, bravely and with the hopeful onwardness of youth she drilled her ideas into conformity with her altered prospects, and through persevering effort she procured a position as teacher in one of the city schools.

"We were passing through Glasgow on our return to the North, and are so glad to have discovered you."

Thus spake a gentle-voiced lady, with locks as white as the new-fallen snow, after she had heartily embraced our heroine and claimed her as a cousin.

"And I am glad, so glad to meet the first one beyond our own family whom I can call relative. But how did you hear of me?"

"Through the public prints. Shocked we were, and all Scotland beside, upon learning of the untimely death of your late father's trustee, and of the sad revelations made thereafter. To think,

poor child! that you who were brought up with such grand expectations, should thus so rudely have been thrown upon your own resources."

"I believe that enough of our means is left to afford of a respectable annuity. If my brother is still alive, I hope he will come back to his native land, when we can share it."

"And till then?"

"I have no fear for the future. I never felt so proud of being the owner of a few pounds as I am to-day. One can value money so much better if one has to earn it."

"Yes, but you cannot go on earning all your life. I fancy teaching to be very monotonous work—drudgery, in fact. You'd better resign your position and come to the Highlands with me. For your father's sake," and a tender light shone from the gentle eyes, "we would cherish his orphan daughter."

"I thank you ever so much. Still, I feel happier to be independent."

"Well, be it so. But recollect that you are not to consider yourself friendless—not, at least, so long as your Cousin Marion lives."

"I know that I can trust you, for my father spoke so kindly of you, and bade me be sure, if I lived to grow up, to visit the island of his birth and the friends of his youth. 'You cannot fail to love,' he said, 'our dear Cousin Marion.'"

There are those whom we meet every day, year in and year out, and yet we never approach nearer

than mere acquaintanceship; while there are others who, during one short interview, have set the seal upon a life-time's friendship. After a lengthened communion, the two, so favorably impressed with each other, bade "Good-bye," for the time being, both expressing their delight over the prospect of soon again meeting in the land held sacred by the younger as the birthplace of her ever-deplored father.

CHAPTER XV.

JEALOUSY.

THE holidays had come at last. The freed school-ma'am had escaped from the din and dust of the crowded city to the placid shores which she loved so well, the sea-furrowed shores of Glenmore.

"Going out?" asked Mrs. Heath, her friendly hostess and former playmate, the morning after her arrival.

"Yes. You'll be engaged inside, I suppose, for the earlier part of the day; so I'll get ready and start for a climb over the sand-banks. You can't imagine how I have thirsted for a sight of the open sea."

"All right. Don't get tired out by going too far."

Down over the railway crossing, over the heights, and homeward by the sea.

Standing on the foot-bridge which spanned the narrow river, Alda pondered of the day when, as a little girl, she fell from the rickety planks of the former bridge into the rapid-running current below. Then her thoughts went forth toward the youthful hero, whose prompt and energetic action had rescued her from certain destruction, her brother's favorite friend, the son of the lighthouse-keeper.

"I wonder," she mused, as she leant upon the rail and gazed down into the dancing froth, "whether he will succeed. He ought to, if perseverance will help him. Won't his parents feel proud of their gifted son, and as for Maria—" a slight sound, and the dreamer turned to encounter whom?

Foolish it seemed for two people, who had seen something of the world of sham, of society, and its plausible customs, but there followed a miserable failure in the attempted regulation greetings. Alda's tell-tale face become scarlet with shame at having betrayed confusion upon the young man's sudden appearance, while he, naturally bashful, and possessing an undue sense of his own inferiority, was utterly disconcerted by the young lady's curt replies to his friendly greeting regarding her brother and self. Though common sense and good feeling had kept chiding, her pride stupidly persisted in urging Alda to keep up her show of indifference, and after vainly offering to escort her village-wards, the artist was fain to express a hope of future meeting, and then bid "Good-morning!" after which he sped onwards toward the Castle, where his noble patron claimed a large share of the time spent apart from his studies.

"I'm glad he's gone. Now I take the chance so long wished for. Why have you tried to avoid me, Miss Graeme?"

The speaker was a young man of some two-and-twenty summers, who was accompanied by a lad

carrying a bundle of golf clubs. As he addressed Alda he motioned the lad to move on.

Startled as she was by he unwelcome intruder, his hearer had no desire to appear so. At the same time she felt some indefinable dread creep over her.

"I have not specially tried to avoid you. Yet, in all honesty, it is better that I should."

"Better that you should! Why, can you tell me? It cannot possibly be that you prefer that low-bred clod-hopper, who has so cleverly managed to ingratiate himself with that old lady and her stuck-up son. My governor and the folk at home are constantly holding up Jack Arnold to me for an example. Bah! I hate these model young men. They're mostly wolves in sheep's clothing."

But his listener's native courage had revived. She was too much of the Celt to cherish fear.

"Will you allow me to pass from the bridge?" was her indifferent reply.

"No! not until you have satisfied me upon that subject."

In desperation, Alda turned to retrace her steps, but was firmly caught and held fast.

"Answer me. Has that fellow had the assurance to make love to you, and why do you shun me? Bad as I have been, if you had condescended to reply to my letters, or to give me some hope, I might have amended my ways. You can't imagine how I hate that hell of a home up there, with all its sickening foolery."

"If you really love me, which I hope you do not, you would treat me with some respect. As for John Arnold, though any girl might be proud of possessing his affection, he has never breathed a word of love to me. Now, will you permit me to pass on?"

The request was unheard. Her persecutor had worked himself up into a perfect frenzy.

"I hate John Arnold. I mean to win you, and if I thought that he'd over-reach me, I'd take you this moment in my arms and jump right over, along with you, into a watery grave."

As he tightened his grip, Alda involuntarily screamed. It was not in human nature coolly to accept such a fate.

Her cry was quickly responded to by a blow, from a hitherto unseen hand, across the arm of her companion, who, in instant bewilderment, relaxed his hold, and stumbled backward into the fast-rushing river beneath.

"Oh, save him! save him!" called the terrified girl, as she saw the apparently lifeless body swept away on the current.

Her deliverer took one astonished glance at the speaker; then exclaiming, "If he can't help himself, I'll catch him at the bend," sprang lightly from the bridge, and hastened down the bank, and before Alda could overtake him, he was on his knees, grasping hold of the body, which had been whirled into the corner already designated.

"He breathes!" thankfully ejaculated the lately-

released victim, as she anxiously watched the pulling of the heavy, dripping, wet figure on to the greensward.

"He never completely lost his breath; though, methinks, he richly deserved to."

Alda was immensely relieved by the assurance contained in the first clause of the sentence, and she was too earnestly engrossed in the scene before her to remark, what would elsewise have surprised her, the semi-savage tone and unfeeling expression contained in the last.

Kneeling by the side of the silent form she applied her handkerchief to the bleeding face, the wound upon which had evidently caused the faintness, and held to his nostrils the vinaigrette which she had that morning borrowed for headache.

Gradually the young man came to his senses. Gazing first at his nurse, then at her companion, recollection soon returned.

"You almost finished me that time, Arnold," he slowly articulated, as he eyed the latter, who, having seen him restored to consciousness, had retreated several paces, and stood, awaiting the course of events.

"Arnold" vouchsafed nothing further by way of reply than a steadfast gaze from an unmoved countenance.

"You don't answer me. D—n you! I'll be even with you yet, if I live long enough."

Alda shuddered and shrank back. Turning his bruised face, he proceeded, "I'll have to trouble

you. Will you go to my father, and tell him privately—don't have the women come screeching after me—that I have met with an accident, and feel too shaken up to walk home; that I wish him to drive down for me. Tell him no more than that, remember!" he raised his voice to add, as Alda, glad to escape from her enforced ministrations, moved rapidly away to comply with his wishes.

With her departure silence fell upon the scene. There could not possibly exist any sentiment in common betwixt two such extremes of humanity as the idle, low-minded libertine, Walter Bonner, and the active, high-souled John Arnold; and this most recent episode in their lives had merely served to intensify contempt in the mind of the one and jealous, unmitigated hatred in the heart of the other.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE HIGHLANDS.

LOVELY was the bright July morning in which Alda reached the Broomielaw, Glasgow's busy harbor, and stepped on board that fine river steamer, the *Iona,* which was soon cleaving the murky waters, until, sighting the large mercantile port of Greenock, she glided, swan-like, into the broadening Frith of Clyde.

The ship is freighted with a motley company, most of whom appear to be steeped in holiday humor. A group of merry children are gathered round the old, blind fiddler, who scrapes away most zealously at the ever-revolving tunes of "Bonnie Laddie, Hieland Laddie," "Scots Wha Hae," "The March of the Cameron Men," etc., etc.

Several of the juvenile fry, curiously disposed, may be seen perched high upon the bulwarks, thence to make a satisfactory inspection of the paddle-wheel, with its splash, dash, as it churns up the waters into a mass of feathery foam; while the more advanced peer down with puzzled expression into the engine-room, to the great consternation of mamma, who is fearful lest her darling overbalance himself and fall headlong into the moving mass of machinery.

Paterfamilias, doubtless perceiving in this second edition of himself an unfledged James Watt or a Stephenson, and being, likewise, imbued with the humble opinion that in respect of talent the boy resembles the father, comforts his spouse with the assurance that her son is of an enquiring turn of mind, which simply awaits the development of years to constitute him a light in this darkened age. With this flattering unction to her fears, mamma is so far comforted, and again betakes herself to her pastry, and her guide-book, from which, however, her attention is speedily diverted by an attack upon her satchel and a rapid lessening of its stores.

Here, too, is the affected dandy, with his hob-nailed shoes and his tweed knickerbockers, which ill consort with his insipid drawl, as he proudly flourishes along the deck, with his gun or his fishing-tackle in full view; and here, also, are the newly-married couple, who retire into some quiet corner to admire the ever-varying landscapes through each other's eyes. And, as if to supply a fitting background to the picture of general happiness, here, also, is the inveterate grumbler, who cannot pick out a comfortable seat on the whole vessel; the "sun glares" in this quarter, and the "draught chills" in that, and so on, till her woe-begone other half can endure it no longer, but proceeds to pull forth the objectionable meerschaum, in certain hopes of dismissal from attendance on his lady love.

Can that possibly be? Yes, it certainly is a face

familiar to Alda, though a face sadly changed from the bright one which so often made its appearance in the home of her childhood; it was a face upon which the grandeur and dignity of manly beauty had succumbed to the repulsive and withering stamp of vice; it was the face of one who brought up to the amazed girl a thousand mixed-up memories of the many years gone by—the face of Sir Charles Keith, the abductor, the gambler, the drunkard, the worn-out, aged man of only forty years and four.

Mrs. Graeme had not spoken amiss in "Lady Keith is a good woman, she may forgive and take you back."

Lady Keith was a good woman, after a fashion, and she did "take" her erring husband "back." She not only took him back, but out of her own unlimited fortune she satisfied his countless creditors, and at the same time made it known that she would be responsible for no further debts of his contracting. She then exercised her pious inclinations by drawing up a code of strictly virtuous maxims, whereby the penniless and dependent Sir Charles was expected to guide himself for all time coming; in short, she so hedged her prodigal yet repentant husband around with the strong, pure-principled barriers of prudent protection as to render the valued prisoner's life so unendurable that only for the lack of moral courage he would certainly have put an end to his miserable existence. Unaware of the contrariness of human nature, she

continued to draw the puritanic leading-strings too tight, and, as was to be expected, they ultimately snapped. And what shocked the well-meaning woman was that many Christian people, who privately had not approved of his wife's curative system, almost sympathized with Sir Charles in this, his second downfall.

Continual nagging and unceasing espionage had rendered him so desperate that he broke through all purposes of amendment, and launched forth once more, this time going down to the lowest depths of drunken humility, begging even a few coppers from the bystanders, as he held out his quivering fingers at the door of some public-house.

And here we leave the aforetime full-pursed, light-hearted baronet, once the admired of the world of fashion, now the wreck, the young man aged, muffled up in a woollen plaid this hot July day, and on his way to a remote "Home for Inebriates," among the distant Highland hills; a wife-forsaken and a friend-forsaken man.

Through Crinan Canal, and a scene of surpassing beauty opens up.

There is the green Isle of Kerrara, with the grey hills of Mull overhead—Mull made memorable by the tragedy so graphically portrayed by MacFee, the Glasgow poet. The bold promontory is still pointed out wherefrom the Highland ghillie, because of injustice done him by his chief, sprang with his master's only child in his arms to instant destruction in the seething tide below. To Alda

the island was specially interesting, since from its small harbor of Tobermory her father, of blessed memory, had sent forth a shipload of hopeful onlookers toward the trans-Atlantic land of freedom.

There stands the big farm-house of Braeside, with its huge, barrack-like building for the accommodation of the flocks, the farm implements, and the produce; its long, low "bothy," for the lodging-place of the unmarried ploughmen, and its more home-like dwelling-house for the greeve, or overseer.

"Heard ye e'er the story o' the Guidman o' Braeside?" asked a shrill voice at Alda's elbow. The voice was that of an active, elderly lady, who had just complacently despatched her last sandwich, and seemed nerved thereby into the proper frame of mind for appreciating a listener.

"No," replied our traveller; then, glad to find some detraction from her oppressive thoughts, she added, "I should be pleased to hear it."

"Well!" with a nod toward the building on the hillside, which was now gradually fading into the rear, "I cannot say as to the truth of the story, for all I take it to be correct. It was about the end of last century. The then Guidman of Braeside, one of those really pious, Bible-reading Christians, was working with his reapers upon the harvest-field on that very knowe over yonder, when an uncommon queer sound fell upon their ears. It was not the sprightly tones of the pibroch vibrat-

ing over the purple bloom, but the harsh notes of a trumpet piercing through the flitting white clouds, and looking up, the terrified workers saw a sight which mortal eyes had, they believed, never witnessed before. Struck with amazement and fear, likewise, they speedily dropped their reaping-hooks —all of them, save the Guidman. 'My bairns,' quoth he, composedly, 'ye must not excite yourselves in such unseemly fashion. I have long been expecting this day, when the "Lord should descend with the sound of a trumpet." Leave the sheaves on the ground; they'll burn as well lying as standing. Let us go into the house and be well employed when the Lord alights.'

Urging the whole company as quickly as possible inside, the Guidman pulled down the big family Bible from its shelf, and, giving out a Psalm, began to raise the tune, when a loud hallooing from the farm-yard completely drowned the swell of the music and set all the intending worshippers rushing outside.

And what, think ye, was it after all? There stood, neither angel nor archangel; instead, only two very ordinary looking specimens of humanity, who had tempted Providence by ascending the air in a balloon, and were now mighty thankful that He had let them down cannily into safe quarters on the solid ground, instead of blowing them a few yards further on into the caller waves of the ocean and maybe into the maws of the man-eating shark."

With a graceful sweep the boat turns and heads

for Oban, beautiful Oban! with its frontispiece of white-coated dwellings and its green, waving foliage of Dunolly and Dunstaffnage. Historic Oban! once the rendezvous of warlike tribes, but later the birthplace of Scotland's immortal Dickens, the patriotic Macrae.

Now for the Isle of Mist.

Not a ripple disturbs the face of the glassy sea as, perfectly entranced, sits Alda, taking in, with artist eye, the scene so passing fair, as the boat steams slowly up the Sound of Mull, through a fleet of fishing-smacks, their dusky sails, which the red sun fails to illumine, casting murky shadows along the shining deep.

Callous, indeed, must be the soul which can remain unmoved amid the awe-inspiring grandeur and the touching sublimity of the cloud-cleaving mountains and the calm, silvery lakes of the Heather Land. Down in the distracting turmoil of a busy world, in the ceaseless, worrying cares of the household, bedazzled by the gilded glamor of fashion, or soul-sunken beneath the depressing air of the gloomy abode of poverty, weak human nature may be partly condoned in viewing all imperfectly the superlative brightness of "that glory which excelleth"; but away out amid the vast infinitude of splendor so lavishly exhibited in the countless beauties of creation, from the bright, tender blue of the far-on-high heavens to the sweet, vivid greenness of the fields below, where is the

shadow of excuse for the rebellious attitude of that error-infected "fool" who presumptuously dares to match his own petty insignificance against the peerless might of Omnipotence, and to sully the tongue Heaven gifted him with by the boldly arrogant assertion, "There is no God"! Verily, "Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night teacheth wisdom."

CHAPTER XVII.

COUSIN MARION.

THE crimson splendor had not long disappeared from the darkening heavens which presage the still, short term of a midsummer night, when the rest-inducing curtains which obscure a sleeping world were softly withdrawn, a faint streak of brightness stole out across the orient sky, and soon the grey dawn of morning overspread the scene, disclosing to view the fair castle of Armidale, seat of the Highland chief, Lord MacDonald, which marks the southern promontory of Skye.

Passing the small town of Broadford, and the far-famed Cuchullin Hills on the left, and the Isle of Raasay, with the heights of Ross-shire on the right, they are soon at their destination, Portree, the capital of the island.

By-and-bye, up comes a splendid specimen of masculine vigor in the person of her six-footer cousin, who, finding in Alda the expected guest, assists her and her luggage on to the landing, then into the waggonette, which is soon bowling on its homeward way. Through the sleepy old town, along past the miles of moorland, with its spongy peat moss, and its white flossy flowers of the unpro-

nounceable name, on to the beautiful Loch Snizort, which stretches away before them, glistening in the gay sunlight like a long, broad tongue of molten flame.

There, embowered among the trees, stands the mansion of Strathgay.

They approach. A figure emerges from the shrubbery. Yet nearer, and the carriage halts, Alda descends, and is clasped in the motherly embrace of "Cousin Marion."

Inside awaits the aged laird, and around him are a merry group of his younger grandchildren. Marion's elder brothers have all gone abroad, and the Benjamin of the family is now master of the household. None the less, his good-natured wife positively refuses to accept of the position of mistress in place of her who has so long and so agreeably acted that part.

After the preliminaries of introduction all round, "And now, Alda, you must take some refreshment and retire for a rest," suggested her cousin.

"Oh, no, thank you! I'm not in the least tired. However, I'll go upstairs to unpack and change my dress."

Very soon she returned with her hands full of packages.

"It isn't much," she apologized, "only a few small presents for the bairns."

The surest passport to a mother's heart is kindness to her children. Mrs. Chisholm stood smilingly by while her sister-in-law brought in the

stragglers, and Alda distributed the gifts. She thanked the giver most warmly, and then crossed to the window to feast her mother-love upon the childish glee which followed in the tossing of balls and jumping over skipping-ropes upon the smooth, green lawn.

"What ancient-looking building is that across the loch?" asked Alda, the morning after her arrival.

"That," answered Marion, who, having set the domestics to their several duties, came in to devote some time to her guest, "is Kingsburgh, whither the last hope of the Stuart race, 'Bonnie Prince Charlie,' was conducted, after his final defeat at Culloden, by the heroic Flora MacDonald, my worthy grand-aunt. Loyal as the family are to the present sovereign, they still keep the road along which the royal fugitive travelled on that occasion barred and sacred to his memory; and one of the most treasured of my possessions is a brooch containing a lock of the golden hair, presented to his fearless guide as a parting gift. But I will show it to you."

"Do, please. The sight will be worth remembering."

Marion stepped across the landing, and soon returned with her tiny jewel-case.

"Not many are the treasures I possess; still to me these are of priceless value. This is the brooch —it was bequeathed me by my mother; this locket," and Marion touched the spring, "contains a curl

of ebon hair, which was shorn from the head of one who was dear both to you and to me; and this is a ring which I have not worn since the coming of my first grey hair."

"The brooch is splendid."

"Yes. Uncle Norman—you know he is the magnate of the family—had the former plain gold rim substituted by that setting of pearls out of compliment to his old-maid niece."

Alda, like all young girls, had a natural shrinking from the much-despised appellation, "old maid." She quickly looked up into the smiling face before her.

"And why, dear cousin, should you be his old-maid niece? You make so light of the ugly term, too."

"Is it an ugly term, Alda? To many young people it does seem a reproach to be left unmarried, yet to me it has been happiness indeed; happiness which I have refused to exchange for the coronet of a marchioness and one of the finest mansions in Belgravia. Your question of 'why' I remain unmarried has often been asked of me, but has never as yet been replied to. Would you care very much to have me answer it now?"

"Indeed, I would."

"It is away far back in the years since I, as one of a happy circle, played upon the shores of the loch, or scampered up and down those same hillsides. The seasons fled; the elder among us grew up, many of the young men to go to foreign climes,

and many of the girls to get married and remove to a far-off home.

"I was keeping house for my widowed father, when home to his native land came the chief companion of my childhood's days. From my earliest recollection I had clung to that cousin, and, insensibly to myself, had given to him the best affection of my youthful heart. If I had loved him as a child, how much more did I love him now that he had returned in all the grandeur of his manly beauty. May God forgive me! I almost worshipped him. Somewhere have I read:

> "'Whatever passes as a cloud between
> The mental eye of faith and things unseen,
> Causing that better world to disappear,
> Or seem more distant, and its hope less dear,
> That same is Idol, though it bear
> Affection's impress or devotion's air.'"

Alda looked in amaze upon the face of her companion. The subdued air of the "old maid" had completely vanished, and the countenance before her glowed radiant with the stirring excitement of a resurrected past.

"It must have been that I sinned in loving the creature more than the Creator. My cousin departed as he came, leaving me as a keepsake that locket and ring. He afterwards married, and I—all the music died out of my soul. Do you marvel that I never loved again?"

"He did not deserve you!"

"Hush, dear! There is no forced growth in genuine affection. My perfect and only ideal was

nobility itself, and of one thing I am thankful—that he lived and died without that knowledge which would certainly have pained him—the knowledge of my incurable love."

"Being so long acquainted, how could he help loving you?"

"Thank you, Alda, for your kindly thought. Still, if you study human nature you will learn that novelty is far more apt to attract and also to fascinate than long acquaintance, and that many, also, marry the very opposite of those we'd expect them to. I have no picture of my hero to show you, but I can easily paint him from memory. His curly locks were of the darkest hue; his eyes, like those of his Spanish mother, were of the self-same color, and flashed just as these eyes before me—"

"Oh, Marion! was it my father, my own dear father?"

"Yes, my darling! It was—your father. Through the help of the Lord, and the pressure of duty, I have long outlived my early sorrow, and now await with cheerfulness the morn when I shall meet him again in that holier, happier sphere, where 'there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage.' I never blamed my cousin; he was not responsible for my infatuation. Wellesley Graeme was one of those unwittingly magnetic, who, as the sun in the material heavens, attract the admiration and brighten the lives of all beneath their influence."

And, to this closing tribute, the grateful heart of the ever loyal daughter responded, "Amen!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE HAUNTED MOOR.

MARION appeared in the doorway to suggest that, on this beautiful morning, it would be well to prepare for their contemplated trip to "Uncle Norman's."

"It would never do," she urged, "to return to Glasgow without paying him a visit."

"I should think not," agreed Mrs. Chisholm, "he was much disappointed, that day he drove over, to find that you had left for Dunvalloch."

"If we start soon," prompted Marion, "we can take in the Free Kirk services by the way."

A three miles' drive brought them round the head of the loch and into the neighborhood of the church.

Multitudes of all classes and of all ages, from the tiny child who clung to its mother's skirts to the aged man who tottered feebly along by the help of his staff, wended their way from divers directions toward the sloping hillside, upon which a desk had been stationed for the preacher; and despite the fact that all did not congregate for pious observance of the sacramental rites, there was

enough of sincerity and devotion to inspire the beholder with respect, if not with reverence, and to bring up to the mind's eye those former gatherings beneath the same blue vault of heaven, when "Scotia's persecuted children foiled a tyrant's and a bigot's bloody laws," and often were compelled to assemble on the mountain-side or in the moorland cave to worship as their conscience dictated; or that still further back scene by the other lake, in that far eastern land where, the crowd pressing close upon the Divine Preacher, He stepped into a boat, and, pushing out in the water, finished His sermon thence to the eager audience on the shore.

The Gaelic services were interesting to our visitor merely because of their novelty, and were far from being the treat she had anticipated. Accustomed to the quick measures of city musicians, it required unlimited patience upon Alda's part to endure the monotonous drawl of the Highland preacher, while to the lengthened out lines the old women occasionally added a note or two as they sat, with their white caps neatly bound on their heads by a broad, black ribbon, drooping their eyelids and shaking their heads as if to add solemnity to the scene.

Now for Glenfairn, the estate of that cousin who had been partner with Alda's father during his sojourn in India, and who had remained long enough abroad not only to accumulate a moderate fortune by his own exertions, but also to win the gratitude of a native prince, who in return for some

valued professional services, showered upon his favorite gold and precious gems unlimited.

"Glenfairn," for the Highland proprietor is popularly named from his estate, who as a younger son had been obliged to seek abroad the maintenance which he could not procure at home, had returned to his native isle to settle down therein as one of the richest of its landlords, and to share in that homage which, if not actually claimed by the landed class, is cheerfully accepted as a right. To Alda, however, who had been educated into the belief of a certain degree of equality between man and man, irrespective of condition, the cringing servility of the poorer classes in many districts appeared absolutely pitiful.

"What is the meaning of that?" enquired the young lady of her cousin, as she pointed toward a huge cairn of boulders which towered high upon the moorland.

Marion slackened the reins, and permitted the sleek ponies to jog along at a leisurely pace.

"That," she answered, looking in the direction indicated, "was placed, or rather misplaced, there by way of monument. But, 'thereby hangs a tale,' which, if you are inclined to be nervous, I'd rather not recount."

"In this case my curiosity overcomes my nervousness. It's accredited to the Highlanders that, with all their native courage, they are extremely superstitious, therefore I shall hold myself prepared for some blood-curdling narration."

Marion smiled. "Overlooking your very doubtful compliment to my country-people, I'll indulge you with the story as I heard it, the story of

"THE HAUNTED MOOR.

"Two brothers MacLachlan, sons of the Laird of Greishnish, were, along with a number of ghillies, on the way home from deer-stalking. All the company had imbibed rather freely of what the Southerners term 'the mountain dew.' Night came on as they crossed the moor, and with it fell a dense fog. Towards dawn the whole party, save the younger MacLachlan, reached a cot by the wayside, but they were so utterly exhausted, and also stupefied by their late libations, that it took some effort on the part of the cottars to revive them. Upon restoration, they reported that, during the darkness, flashing lights and peculiar noises had surrounded them, and that the younger brother became separated from the rest of the company, and could not be found. A search party was immediately instituted, who spread themselves over all the morass, but their labor was in vain. Shortly afterwards it leaked out that a traveller, passing along that eventful night, had heard high words interchanged betwixt the two brothers, which ended in threats of murder by the elder, accompanied by the sound of struggling and suppressed groans. It had long been mooted that the brothers were both attached to the same young lady, daughter of Macrae of Benmich, and that the younger one

was believed to be the favored suitor. From this latter deduction, combined with strong, circumstantial evidence, the elder brother was convicted in the minds of a large number, for his exalted position defended him from being openly accused of the murder and of subsequent concealment of the crime; while, agreeably to the superstition of others, the supernatural noises which the ghillies alleged they had heard were likened to nothing save witchcraft, and the inference was that the light-hearted youth, who had grown up from childhood the special favorite of the whole community, whose step on the heath was buoyant with rugged health, and whose unaffected friendship was appreciated by rich and poor, had been spirited away to haunts beyond human ken.

That cairn of stones was erected to his memory, according to an ancient custom; each mourner, as he passed that way for the first time after the young man's disappearance, contributed a stone to the heap.

By-and-bye, it began to be confidentially whispered that, at a certain hour of the night, bitter quarrelling and the sound of blows could be distinctly heard through the darkness which obscured the monument; and to such an extent did this superstition gain ground that the strongest-minded man in Skye, who would unflinchingly have faced the cannon's mouth, could not have been persuaded to cross that haunted moor after nightfall.

Twenty long years thereafter, when the inci-

dent was well-nigh forgotten, or at most related by the few as they sat around the glowing peat fire during the dull winter evenings, who should walk into the hospitable homestead of Greishnish? Not the ghost, but the real, substantial flesh, blood, and bones of the supposed murdered or spirited-away man, who lived long enough to be not only reconciled to his brother, but likewise to pass many a happy day in the haunts of his youth; notwithstanding his sad disappointment on learning that the lady of his love, instead of availing herself of his departure to marry the elder brother, had pined and died of a broken heart over the imaginary tragic fate of him who had been dearer to her than all the world beside.

The two MacLachlans had exchanged bitter words, though nothing more, that night on the moor; and the younger brother, who was not certain as to Miss Macrae's preference, had then resolved to quietly absent himself. Therefore, when the party, after resting, went onward, he turned aside and made for the coast, where he boarded a southward-bound fishing-smack, the crew of which gladly hailed the jovial young son of the Laird of Greishnish. The whole of the hardy company, having put into a city port for supplies, were caught by a press-gang and forced on board a British cruiser, which, unfortunately, fell into the hands of the enemy, and for many a year the sturdy young islanders, who had lived a life as free as that of the antlered denizens upon

their native hills, were destined to fret against their hapless fortune within the gloomy enclosure of a French prison.

When the fall of Napoleon Bonaparte put an end to hostilities, and effected an interchange of prisoners, MacLachlan and those of his comrades who had survived the weary years of captivity, returned to his native isle and to the gladdened hearts that had so long mourned him as lost.

My story is finished in time, for see! yonder are the towers of Glenfairn," and Marion gave a light touch of the whip to the loitering steeds. "Won't uncle be pleased to have company for dinner, and particularly pleased to have the company of the daughter of 'Dunvalloch,' his friend and companion of the far back days."

CHAPTER XIX.

INEQUITABLE.

"WHY so pensive, Alda?" pleasantly queried "Glenfairn," as he approached to where his visitor sat by the wide bay window which overlooked the broad Atlantic, with the faint blue lines of the Harris hills in the distance, and the bold, grey battlements of Dunvegan on the near-by rocky ledge. "What think you of this for a picture?" he continued, as he placidly surveyed the gorgeous scene. "You have no such magnificent prospects in the South."

His young kinswoman raised her eyes, but the shadow flitted not from her countenance.

"It is beautiful, most beautiful," she replied. "What a pity that the enjoyment of such scenery should be marred by saddening reflections."

"Give me some insight into the trouble; perhaps I may be able to explain it away," and he seated himself in the easy-chair opposite, prepared to listen.

"I feel puzzled—more than puzzled, grieved—at what we have seen lately. Dunvalloch was lonely and disappointing enough, but, passing

through Lintocher, Marion and I called in at some of the wayside cots, and it is impossible to think calmly of what we saw there."

"Probably sights which would not delight you; yet there's no help for these things. Poverty always existed in the world, and always will."

"It seems ungrateful on my part; still, beautiful as the scenery is, and kind as my friends are to me, I could not feel happy on this island. The very salmon from the loch and the grouse from the moorland lose their delicious flavor when I reflect upon the hapless condition of those whose scanty meal consists of a few, poor potatoes and fish, or a piece of coarse, peat-smoked bread and a dish of milkless tea."

"You are quite too democratic, cousin. You would soon get used to these sights."

"I would never get contentedly used to them."

"Then you'd require to close your eyes and stop your ears and thank heaven for your own comfort."

"That would be insulting heaven. We are commanded not only to look upon our own—"

"Yes, yes! I know all that. But the same old Book charges us to 'mind our own business,' etc. I'm afraid that you'd prove too practical for a Highland pulpit, Alda. However, let me hear of your experience."

"I'd rather not. The relation would be sickening, as the sight of so much misery was to me."

"Yet there are such cases to be met with in all

parts of the world—in your city of Glasgow, for example."

"That may be. But on this island there does not appear to be the same excuse for such deplorable destitution. These poor are not brought to want because of crime or liquor-drinking. They are willing to work—"

"One cause; the country is over-populated."

"Is that so? Only yesterday you informed me that, during the Peninsular war, this small island sent forth no fewer than ten thousand fighting men to join the British army."

"That's correct, and you wouldn't find one-fourth of that number upon it now. War drafted off many, emigration claimed many more, and what with exchange of proprietors, etc., the mass of the inhabitants will soon be swept out of the country. Still, under existing circumstances it is, as I remarked before, over-populated. As for the destitution, I fancy that exists principally upon the estates of the alien proprietors, who do not understand or sympathize with the people. You do not see oppression on my lands."

"No; but I see your fat ponies tumbling in laziness on the lawn, while aged women carry creels of peat on their backs. One thus loaded actually dropped us a curtsey as we drove along."

"Every place has its peculiar fashions. If you were in India the natives would prostrate themselves and knock their foreheads on the ground before you."

"Oh, yes! but this is not a heathen land, and intelligent people ought to decline such servile homage."

The Laird smiled. "You are incorrigible, Alda."

"We were informed that the factor on one estate, upon being told that the rent was not ready on account of half the crop having been blown into the sea, declared that he didn't send the wind, therefore he must have the rent. When they complained that the deer were eating up the corn, he mockingly told them to pay themselves the damage by milking the deer."

"Why, cousin! this is really outrageous. Marion ought not to have taken you to such places."

"It was not at Marion's suggestion; it was by my own wish that we entered these dwellings. Often have I admired the noble stag, but I shall never again care to behold one when reflecting upon the state of things which affords neither food nor shelter to people fashioned in the image of God, and yet furnishes plenty of both for the soulless brute."

"For that matter, this island is not so bad as the mainland. If several of the landlords of Skye are cruel enough to send the bread-winner of the family to prison for having committed some almost enforced theft in the endeavor to feed his starving children, and if rack-renting is moderately prac-

tised, they do not turn the cottars out of their abodes and then set fire to them, as in some other parts. Of course, you have read of those unnatural cruelties?"

"Yes, we read about such things, yet without direct observation, cannot fully realize them."

"Those on estates managed by factors have usually most to complain of. You know the adage, 'Take a beggar and make a porter of him,' etc. The proprietor, if not always a person of strictly religious principle, is at least possessed of some attributes of a gentleman, and would scorn to be guilty of petty meanness; but the go-between is sometimes an unscrupulous man of low extraction, who never permits any consideration to interfere with business, which business means, generally, his own aggrandizement."

"Slight marvel that my father left his native land, much as he loved it."

"You are your father's daughter, Alda. He could not remain contentedly beside misery which it was impossible to overcome. The House of Dunvalloch long fed the hungry and clothed the naked, and also sent many to America at their own expense. That reminds me. I heard from your Uncle Donald the other day. He did well by going to the New Land, and has also done well by the crofters and cottars who accompanied him."

"Uncle seems to believe in the New Land, which he deems to have been specially prepared by heaven

as a refuge for the oppressed, or, as some would put it, a receptacle for the surplus population of other climes."

"Several years ago I proposed crossing the Atlantic to view the much-vaunted country, and offered to defray the expenses of any of my tenants who desired to accompany me; but, to my surprise, they each and all declined to go, entreating me to permit them to live and die on the old sod; and I believe that my neighbor of Dunvegan made some similar offer, which was also refused."

"No wonder that simple-minded people, who have never travelled, should be timid as to venturing so far, and you know, besides, how dearly all of Celtic race prize their native country. Even now, through my beloved father's word-pictures of his early home, I could almost sing in the song of every purling brook and smile in the face of every heathery hill of this, his truthfully depicted realm of nature's magnificence; and how much more keenly must this sympathy with surrounding nature exist in the being of those whose whole world is compassed by the waters which circle this little isle."

"Your argument seems plausible; still, people will venture a great deal rather than confront actual starvation."

"They certainly would not prefer starvation if they could see their way out of it. Were it in my power to assist, I should try to persuade many of those suffering ones to seek a home in that happier

haven where no moneyed man's hireling can wrest the trout fished in the river or the rabbit caught in the woods out of the hands of the starving victim of injustice."

"I am not altogether blind to the failings of my neighbors; yet it would serve no great purpose for me to disagree with the existing state of affairs. I fully admit that something ought to be done in order to rectify the system of extensive landlordism which, in Skye alone, allows eleven persons to dominate over almost eighteen thousand, and in some districts to starve many, when the productive land upon the island is well able to sustain the whole."

"Thanks for the acknowledgment! If all the landlords in the Highlands would admit as much, there would soon appear sóme chance for improvement. And don't you think it would reflect well upon themselves, also? For there can be no real reverence for Deity where there is no respect for humanity."

CHAPTER XX.

LOVE LINKED WITH GENIUS.

"LAY aside your brush and pallet, old fellow!" called the merry voice of a brother artist, as he put in his head at the open door. "Why should you go on everlastingly daubing, while all Rome is outside, these days of the Feast?"

The "old fellow," thus familiarly accosted, withdrew his hand from the easel, and looked around with a beaming countenance.

"Lucky for me," resumed the seemingly appreciated intruder, "that *Pater* does not mete out my supply of pocket-money according to my exertions. How should I fare if my living depended on them?"

"That's where you and I differ. Though I shall deem myself fortunate if enabled to earn my living by means of the art which I love so well." And so saying the earnest worker arose and laid aside his brushes.

"Even so. Yet, in your earnest endeavors to master that art, you need not entirely make a sacrifice of yourself," replied his jovial friend, as he regarded, with some anxiety, the pale face of the artist. "What are you engaged upon now?"

He stepped forward to gratify his curiosity, and drew aside the curtain.

"Whew! this is a gem; a decided success. I declare that were it not for those roguish, dark eyes which bespeak the earthly, I'd pronounce her one of the seraph throng."

"Minus the wings, and eyes the hue of her native heaven."

"Which of Italia's daughters is here represented?"

"Neither of them; it is a painting from memory."

"I understand. 'Distance lends enchantment to the view.' It is partly true portrait, but mostly fancy picture."

"No. I claim it to be a very correct likeness."

"The original, may I ask?"

"Oh, come along! You seem to be almost as much fascinated by that face as was that beautiful lady whom we so fervently admired."

"Has she called at your studio?"

"I had the honor of a visit from the lady and her father the other day. She was in ecstasies over the picture, and was so interested therein that I could not refuse to give her the name of my ideal. It might have been imagination on my part, but, upon my complying with her request, it seemed to me that the lady's face turned pale—so pale that I feared that she was going to faint. Howbeit, her father approaching, she regained composure, and asked his opinion of the work. They have engaged

me to furnish them with a copy, at a price which, to an uphill climber, seems fabulous."

"You're certainly in luck. I met your two patrons the other evening as I drove out the Appian Way. The lady is, indeed, a remarkably handsome woman, the most beautiful woman that I have ever looked upon; yet her peerless countenance is truly pathetic in its settled air of sadness. She seems burdened with some ever-present sorrow, while this fresh, young face is radiant with a wholesome happiness."

"We cannot always judge by expression. I believe that 'fresh, young face' was early enough clouded by sorrow. But come, our time is precious."

The artist replaced the veil before his much-prized work, and firmly closing the door of his studio to prevent intrusion during his absence, accompanied his friend out into the open air. Linking arms, they stroll along the Corso, look in for a few moments at the French Academy, then leisurely proceed up the broad flight of steps which lead to the small pleasure-ground of the city, the Pincian Hill.

The mild, slanting rays of the wintry sun cast the long shadows of the oak and the pine athwart the gravelled terraces, and pleasantly smiled upon the golden locks of the Saxon, and the darker tresses of a Southern clime.

"The Hill seems deserted, yet the evening is balmy and inviting."

"Didn't you observe the commotion in the streets, and where were your ears that you heard not, earlier, the boom of the cannon and the pealing of cathedral chime? To-day His Holiness, attended by the Swiss Guards, the Cardinals and a long line of lesser clergy following, went in solemn procession to the Church of St. Maggiore, where a magnificent service drew multitudes of the faithful, and a large concourse of strangers besides."

Our artists chose for themselves a shady resting-place, where they might comfortably enjoy the cool evening breeze. Drawing forth his case of Havanas, Brooks passed one to his friend, and lit another for his own use. Then, stretching his long legs upon the bench, in a style which indicated that he was fonder of repose than of hard labor, he prepared to take it easy.

After a few puffs, a profound silence accompanying: "Come now, Arnold! You might as well enlighten me as to the original of that portrait. You're altogether too stiff with your old chum."

Arnold could not repress a hearty laugh at the unexpected accusation.

"So that's what you're musing over. Inquisitive, to be sure!"

"Oh, *n'importe!*" as he resumed his cigar in pretended indifference.

"It does seem cruel to keep you in suspense, but enlightenment could prove of no possible benefit."

"Don't know! I might get acquainted, and

acquaintance might be followed by—indeed, there's no saying what it might lead up to, upon mutual appreciation."

"Listen! Years ago, when a merry school-l in my native Scotland, I used to play at golf and cricket with a favorite companion. That companion had a sister, whom he dearly loved. I remember, as of yesterday, how she stood watching our play, and how I used to miss the stakes, and set my ball flying aside, because my gaze would keep following that small figure in pink. Many were the boat-sails and pic-nics which we enjoyed together during the succeeding years, till her brother went abroad, when we drifted far apart.

I lately met her, during a visit to the old home. The years had changed the lively girl into the well-bred young lady, but they had not deprived her of her personal charms, nor of that kindly disposition which so endeared her to her school-mates, and which was doubly prized by me, for I have loved her all my life."

"Whew! I might have guessed as much. But you don't appear to be very exultant."

"In point of birth I am her inferior. You know how conservative these old families are."

"Fiddlesticks! With your talents, Arnold, I'd deem it no presumption to aspire to the hand of the foremost in patrician Old England."

His companion gravely smiled.

"I have still years of hard application," he said, "between me and success; and even were I assured of winning the young lady's affection, would it be

honorable on my part to interfere with her chances of a higher union?"

"Perhaps you have already won her affection, and if so, the dishonor is the other way, in not declaring yours. As to the 'higher union,' it may be that she's of my humble opinion concerning your artistship, that you are worth the waiting for."

"I will soon be in Scotland again, and will at least give her the opportunity of refusing me; anything would be a relief from this continued uncertainty."

"That's right! 'Faint heart ne'er won fair lady.' As the democratic son of a self-made man, I can't sympathize with your foolish ideas as to 'inferior birth,' etc. You possess a quality ten-fold more valuable than either rank or fortune, a quality which ought to serve you in ample stead. The good or evil deeds of our ancestors, we need neither be over-elated about nor ultra-ashamed of; they cannot affect our present-day, personal worth; and as for money, he only is to be respected who, in his plenitude of riches, knows how to dispense his largess with a regal bounty. The quality with which you are so liberally endowed, the heaven-bestowed and incomparable gift of genius, is far exceeding either privilege of birth or advantages of wealth. As it is, *mon ami*, keep a stout heart; short time may suffice to level the inequalities of life."

He sprang to his feet, and in the quickly shadowing dusk the two faithfully attached comrades descended the height, and were soon again threading their way through the irregular streets of the Eternal City.

CHAPTER XXI.

MISTAKEN.

UNUSUALLY dull felt Alda that afternoon as she retraced her steps after her day's labor in school.

"There's a friend coming to call for you," was the information which greeted her as she entered the dining-room, after going upstairs to remove her school-dress, and to refresh herself by a copious application of Loch Katrine water.

"Who is it?"

"I forget his name, but this will tell you," and Mrs. Aiken reached over the card, which she had at last bethought of.

Sure enough. Ewen Ross—Ross of Kintoila; and a hot blush suffused the countenance of our heroine. She had met the gentleman during her sojourn in Skye, and was then disconcerted by his undisguised admiration. Still, he had been introduced to her by mutual friends; therefore, it behooved her to receive him with due politeness.

During his call she studiously exerted herself to entertain her visitor, though while doing so she could perceive that his thoughts were not with the conversation. Getting uneasy, she suggested their

joining Mr. Aiken in the library. This brought matters to a climax.

In a very brief sentence Mr. Ross disclosed the purport of his visit. Then, summoning up courage during the lengthened quietude which followed the announcement, he carried on his declaration of love more smoothly.

"You cannot be in earnest!" his listener at last found voice to exclaim.

"I am in perfect earnest, Miss Graeme. I have not ceased looking forward to this moment since I first met you in Skye."

Alda was truly puzzled.

Like many others who commence courtship late in life, Mr. Ross proved himself to be a most persistent wooer; so much so that the young lady, convinced of his sincerity, was quite at a loss for suitable terms in which to decline his proposals.

The gentleman remained for one week in the city, and upon his departure it was understood that Alda was prepared to accept the position offered her as wife of the Laird of Kintoila. Her persevering suitor had contrived to enlist the sympathies of Mrs. Aiken on his behalf, and so it was, when she reasoned with the obdurate one upon the folly of rejecting such a matrimonial prize, she "an orphan and penniless," poor Alda's determined will relented, and she submitted to give her hand where she could not possibly bestow her heart.

Ah, me, daughter of heroes! where is the faith and courage that sustained you from childhood, that

you now crush down your honest convictions of right, and marry, as you little expected to, for the sake of a home and a position?

Judge her not harshly, ye pet children of fortune. Her beloved father and protector brother both gone; her affections, she fancied, buried with them. Fortune, also, was fled, and it is a most unpromising outlook for a young and sensitive girl to be confronted with a new and bitter phase of life by having to struggle through the cold, hard world alone.

Poor Alda! she felt the clouds gather; yet mechanically she went on with her wedding preparations. News of her intended marriage had reached the village of her school-days; and from many of her former friends she was, now and again, receiving tokens of special good-will.

There was no more to be done. The bridal dress and wreath had been sent home and fitted on the intended wearer; the bridegroom had forwarded some precious heir-loom gifts; the pastor of Glenmore had sent an elegantly bound Bible, and the Earl had forwarded a beautiful oil painting of the village seashore, with the bridge and silvery wave beneath, the handiwork of his *protégé*, John Arnold. Even Tam Crumb, now an able-bodied farm-hand, had kindly remembered her by the gift of a highly ornamental rustic chair, carved out during his leisure hours; while Eppie, the washerwoman of old, had contributed a much-admired sea-shell, which her husband had brought from

abroad, and which had annually graced the flower show at Arbuthnot as the largest and most select of the species ever exhibited in Old Scotia.

Mrs. Aiken came in to inspect the latest arrived of the gifts, and, after expressing her admiration thereof, seated herself by Alda.

"I think," she said, "that everything about your family should be made clear to you before you leave us. You know that we never heard of Wellesley after he left his ship in Australia."

Alda began to wonder what needed to be "made clear," but she was soon enlightened. Mrs. Aiken went on.

"You never learned that we had visits from your mother."

"From my mother!" The surprise was almost too much for the already over-taxed mind of the young girl.

"Yes; it was several years ago, before we left Glenmore."

"Why didn't we see her?"

"Because it was thought better that you shouldn't."

"My poor mother! And you led us to believe that she was dead?"

"We believed so ourselves, till we were startled by a call from her. It appears that shortly after your father's death she accidentally fell over a pier in a French watering-place, but was rescued by some lads in a pleasure-boat, and taken to her hotel, from which she soon after disappeared. It was con-

cluded that she committed suicide, from going wrong in her mind with grief."

"Where is she now?"

"That wouldn't be very easy to find out. Really, to tell the truth, I didn't expect that you'd be so concerned about her."

"Why shouldn't I?"

"That's an odd question to put to me, Alda, when I've tried to be a mother to you all these years, while she—"

"I don't mean to be ungrateful, Mrs. Aiken; still, I ought to have seen my own, real mother. Why did she go away without seeing us?"

"You and Wellesley were at a pic-nic at the Sandy Hills when she first came. I was terribly flustered when I found out who she was, and what she wanted, and I'm afraid, thinking of it now, that I spoke my mind rather plainly."

"Poor mother!"

"Poor! there's no need for you to pity her. She's anything but poor. You'll never have the looks o' yere mother, lassie. That's what chiefly provoked me, after all that I'd heard about her conduct. I mistook her for a born duchess, and asked her, at the first, if she was visiting at the Castle."

"Tell me all she said."

"It was not a great deal, for she sat barely ten minutes. She'd come, she said, all the way from France, and went straight to Arbuthnot, where Finlay gave her our address, at the same time

admonishing her against trying to coax you away. She cried sorely when I told her that her bairns were in charge of Christian people; that their souls, as well as their bodies, were well attended to, and that we could not risk the chance of her disturbing your peace; in short, I cautioned her that the best kindness she could do you was to go back the road she came, and not have the assurance to stand before her children's face as the murderer of their good, respectable father."

"Oh, Mrs. Aiken! how could you be so wicked? When she came so far, too."

"Wicked! I think it's wise ye mean—" But the inconsiderate, Pharisaical, though not altogether unfeeling woman was fain to pause. Her words had lost their listener; for Alda's pent-up emotions had meanwhile overcome her, and she had quietly lapsed into unconsciousness.

CHAPTER XXII.

EXCELSIOR.

"HEAR this, Philip! This is, indeed, good for our young friend."

Lady Glenmore commenced to read from the latest edition of the *Illustrated News:*

"From the several pictures worthy of favorable notice, at present upon exhibition in the Royal Academy, we select two for illustration. The first, a painting in oil, which easily takes pre-eminence, is the work of a young, though rapidly rising, artist, whose truthful delineation and faultless coloring denote the touch of a richly inspired genius, and augurs well for his standing, at no distant day, at the head of his noble profession."

"But the article is quite lengthy," she said, glancing down the column, "you may read for yourself."

It detailed at considerable length the opening career of the artist, his humble origin and subsequent training, and finally wound up with a glowing tribute to the keen perception and unwonted beneficence of the helping hand who had happily planted in the horizon of art this rising luminary.

"Pshaw!" exclaimed His Lordship, alluding to

the last clause in the article, "one cannot discharge his bounden debts without having the record of it blazed abroad. However," referring to the opening sentences, "of those flattering comments upon our artist I am certainly proud. He has more than satisfied me; he has already surpassed my most sanguine expectations."

"I have always prophesied success for him. His beautiful, honest, brown eyes, contrasting so becomingly with his pearly white skin and golden locks, my highest type of beauty, won my admiration from the first; then his unassuming, yet fearless, manner quite captivated my heart."

"Bravo, my mother! Who would imagine such close criticism from the lips of three-score and ten?"

"You consulted me as to providing for his future. If fame leads to fortune, I trow that he will soon earn ample supply for himself."

"That is no reason why I should alter my plans concerning him. John Arnold earned well my gratitude, and he shall find that a Seaton repays in no stinted fashion."

"You may yet marry."

"I thought that subject was dropped forever."

The quick retort grated harshly upon the ears of the widowed parent. Her lip quivered.

"When I am gone," she said, "you will feel so lonely in this secluded spot."

The voice of the Earl assumed a more tender key.

"I would fain keep that subject as far away as

the other," he replied, and rising, he stooped over the low chair in which the Countess reclined, tenderly touched his lips to the aged forehead, then passed out of a window which led to the conservatory, wherein he paced up and down, with a darkened expression upon his usually unclouded countenance.

Similar to those of most of the Scottish nobility, the Glenmore estates were entailed, thus passing, at the Earl's demise, to the next male heir. The matter to which his mother had alluded was that her son had proposed to devote a large part of the money accumulations of past years to the purchase of an estate which was to be presented to the artist in perpetuity, the only condition being that to his own family name the recipient append the ancient one of Seaton.

The picture which had excited such flattering criticism was a scene, indeed, the last, tragic scene in the chequered life of Scotland's hapless queen, Mary Stuart, thus aptly rendered by the poet:

"With slow and steady steps there came a lady through the hall,
And breathless silence sealed the lips and touched the hearts of all."

"I had in vain searched for a model," wrote the artist to his noble patron; "no hired one combined the essentials of dignity, beauty and brave resignation which consorted with my high-sphered ideal. Still, my picture stood ready for the principal figure,

and finish it I must. In my mania I fear that I gazed oftentimes rather too intently upon the faces of the female passers-by. Yet none came up to my standard.

At length I found my inspiration, and where, think you? In the very last place your Lordship could imagine, in that charnel-house of the centuries, the Catacombs. Loitering along, with my friend, Lionel Brooks, through the labyrinth of monuments, we approached a gentleman and lady who were standing before a tomb. In my craze I almost forgot the rules of common politeness, and actually stepped back to address the strangers. Happily my cool-headed companion was wiser than I. 'Would you have yourself arrested,' he said, 'for an escaped lunatic? Now that you have met your divinity, quiet down, or the next thing I'll have to nurse you through the Roman fever.'

Brooks kindly managed the whole business for me. The lady at first objected to the hitherto unheard-of request that one in her position should sit for an artist's model; but finally yielded to the wishes of her uncle, who felt flattered that, in my opinion, none else save his niece could personate the beautiful queen. The travellers are from the Highlands of Scotland—Chisholm, the Laird of Glenfairn; while the white-haired, but youthful-faced lady who accompanies him is his niece, Miss Marion."

And now that this last production was off his mind, the artist might enjoy a few weeks of leisure

beside his increasingly delicate mother in the dear old home.

His sister, Maria, lately married, had removed into a cottage in the village purchased for her with the dowry presented by the Countess, and upon his first call John ventured to broach the subject nearest his heart.

Maria gave a significant smile as she answered:

"Oh, yes! I heard of Miss Graeme lately. Her marriage was fixed for the end of last month, so I suppose by this time it is all over."

Suddenly over the youthful heads seemed to fall a dark shadow, with a silence so intense in its stillness that nothing was heard save the loud tick, tick of the tall mahogany clock, which is the indispensable accompaniment of every newly-married Scottish couple of the middling classes in the establishment of a home.

"All over," mused John. "Yes, all over for me. Still, by the help of heaven and the aid of hard work, I will conquer this also. Yet, Alda, if you had only known."

CHAPTER XXIII.

A VILLAGE TRAGEDY.

BROWN and bare was the face of nature, and hushed was the merry trill of the song bird, when Alda descended on the station platform at Glenmore.

The swoon into which Mrs. Aiken's ill-considered announcement had plunged the sufferer, whose nervous system had previously been strained to the utmost, was simply the natural sequel to a before unperceived sinking of both health and spirits, in consequence of which, through medical advice, her marriage was postponed, and she, meantime, sent off to benefit her health by change.

"Good-mornin', Miss Graeme!" in the familiar tones of Robbie, the sexton, was the first salutation that fell upon Alda's ears as she quitted the grounds of Mrs. Heath for the enjoyment of an early stroll.

The old man came to a standstill, and, touching the tip of his ancient Tam o'Shanter cap, his constant, everyday head-gear:

"Have ye heard o' the awful refleckshun that has been cast upon the village?" asked he, at the same moment giving a hearty shake to the out-

stretched hand, "although we can scarcely say it was in the village the crime was committed."

"What has happened, Robbie? I only reached Glenmore yesterday."

"Ou, aye! Weel, the whole place is ringing wi't. As a band o' golfers were comin' past the auld boat-house, in whilk the Hermit resides, they heard some fearfu' groans, and jalousin' that something or ither was wrang, they opened the door and keeked in. What a sicht met their een! The puir auld doited body, wha wouldna hairm a living creature, was lying on the cauld grund, near aboot dead."

His listener drew a long breath, and, excusing her hasty retreat to the loquacious, though friendly, old man, she reopened the gate and returned to the house.

"Aye, aye! ye'll hear it a' soon eneuch. Bad noos traivel fast," was the parting comment, as Robbie, noways flattered by Miss Graeme's abrupt withdrawal, proceeded on his route.

"It's a dreadful affair," said Mrs. Heath, upon Alda's entrance. "We have been getting particulars from one of the message boys."

"Is there no clue to the perpetrator, nor any alleged motive for the crime? Could it possibly have been committed for the sake of plunder?"

"That was the rational inference; but when the doctor was summoned, and the injured one attended to, a search being made, it was discovered that the Hermit's watch and chain, with several other valu-

ables, money, etc., remained safely deposited where he had apparently placed them."

"It seems strange."

"There is nothing save circumstantial evidence to judge by. A band of golfers passed that way about an hour before those who made the discovery. The Hermit had then furnished them with a drink of water, and with mutual compliments they went on. About three-quarters of an hour thereafter, a lad who remained behind in search of some missing balls, saw John Arnold—"

"John Arnold! I thought he was in Rome."

"He has lately returned. His mother is in very poor health. However, as I was about to state, John Arnold was the last person seen in the company of the almost murdered man."

Her hearer turned pale.

"You cannot surely mean—"

"That our artist is suspected, and is now under arrest. It is really so. No marvel that you should be startled, your brother and he were so attached to each other. But, think of his sick mother and his honest father, and sister."

"John Arnold a criminal! It is impossible."

"I can't imagine it anything but the work of some low ruffian, who was likely surprised by a fancied sound or apparition ere he accomplished intended burglary."

What a change within the last few hours. First the honored guest of the highest in the county; now the degraded companion of the outcasts of society.

The artist's reliable friend, the Earl, shocked, grieved, and enraged, had at once come forward to the rescue, and had offered to furnish bail to the utmost demand; while, to the astonishment of the villagers, the wealthy ship-owner, Mr. Bonner, relaxing his usual parsimony, had offered to second to the full His Lordship's endeavors.

Their generous offer was refused; their exertions proved futile. John Arnold was at first lodged in the village police station, whence he was conveyed to the magistrates' court in Arbuthnot, examined, and, being unable to prove an *alibi,* remanded to the common jail of the borough, there to await the results of the alleged attack before being sent up for trial before the Supreme Court in Edinburgh.

Christmas Day opened up with a dull, grey atmosphere, and a white-mantled covering upon the hard-crusted earth of the day previous. According to the existing orthodoxy, there was no sacred observance of the season in the village; but to Alda came up the hallowed memory of a far-back morn, upon which the sunlight streamed through the diamond-shaped window-panes all over the white-robed choristers, and over the red-cushioned pew wherein a little girl sat listening to the deep, reverent tones of a manly voice by her side, as, with peal of organ and sound of many voices, ascended on high the magnificent strains of a Christmas *Te Deum.*

"I can visit the place of his rest," she said.

Seven miles by rail, then a brisk walk up the

long, crooked High Street, to the gate of the Abbey of Arbuthnot.

The huge iron bars were closed and locked.

Alda applied at the Lodge, but the keeper seemed loath to quit his comfortable fireside. However, the powerful argument that she was a stranger, and the still more forcible one of a shilling slipped into the horny hand, relaxed the stubborn heart, and besides unlocking the gate, he volunteered to remain sentry until her return.

Ten long years had elapsed since she passed beneath that arch, yet she found her way to the desired spot. Stepping over the soft bed of snow and standing beneath the wide-spread branches of the drooping willow which had guarded the hallowed resting-place through many a winter's storm and from many a summer's sun, she leant her hand upon the jutting side of the monument inscribed, "Sacred to the memory of Wellesley Graeme"; and as the blinding tears coursed down her cheeks, she pondered of what had come and gone since the tender breast upon which her childish head had so fondly nestled lay hidden there. From out of the depths of her perplexity and sorrow she breathed a fervent prayer that God, her father's God, would not forsake her in this her hour of trouble; and, for comforting reply, down through the stillness came wafted peacefully to her wearied soul, "A father of the fatherless and judge of the widow is God in his holy habitation."

As the mourner stooped to imprint a farewell

kiss upon the graven marble, a roseate light began to flicker athwart the stone, and, turning, she beheld the clouds clear off the western sky, and the mild, golden beams of the wintry sun light up, as with magic splendor, the tall, picturesque ruins of the grand old Abbey, the thousand crystal coronets upon the stately trees and the soft, white coverlets upon the lowly beds of the long-silent sleepers. Blessed omen! "The Lord God is a sun and shield; no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly."

CHAPTER XXIV.

RELEASE.

THE door was "on the latch." Neither lock nor key was required, for none of the villagers would think of disturbing the humble home of Eppie, and as the school-boys were her devoted champions, in return for the privilege she accorded in allowing them to twist their kite-strings into proper strength upon her spinning-wheel, no foreign marauder might intrude.

Of late Eppie, not being so robust as in earlier years, had relinquished her harder and less congenial labors, and now made up the deficiency in her income by turning her hand to the brewing of mushroom ketchup, in preparation of which she excelled.

It seemed discouraging that, after her long struggle to afford her son the best of education, he should have been induced to join a party of emigrants bound for Canada, as she was commencing to travel down hill. But the intrepid woman had overcome the past, and she did not mean to cower before the future, and as her eyes fell upon the small corner-shelf, with its big family Bible, its Johnson's Dictionary, and its several others of

"Geordie's books," of which she "could neither mak' head nor tail," her courage oft revived, and with the patient, parental affection which "hopeth all things," she accepted futurity, trusting that her laddie's peculiar beginning might prove a satisfactory ending. The several sums of money which Geordie duly sent for her comfortable maintenance she had carefully deposited in the savings bank "against the rainy day which, despite all his book-lear, might overtake one who had never learned a trade."

As Eppie neared her cottage, she perceived the smoke ascending briskly from the chimney, and guessed aright that one of her young friends had forestalled her request for use of the spinning-wheel by pre-payment in kindling the fire and hanging the kettle on the crane against her return.

Opening the door, Eppie walked over to the clean-scrubbed pine table, and deposited thereon the basket of mushrooms which she had collected, then sat down to rest while she unpinned her tartan shawl, and untied the strings of her stiffly-starched gingham sun-bonnet. Then rising, she lifted the hissing kettle on to the hob, and, taking from the mantel-piece the tea-caddy, infused in the brown "Rebecca at the well" teapot a double strong dose of its contents.

"What ails ye the nicht, Eppie?" questioned the shrill voice of a stripling, who had previously looked in at the door, but, not receiving the usual smile of welcome, had ventured no further.

"Ails me!" rather sharply, "naething ails me." Perceiving, however, the youth's disappointment, she added, in a milder tone, "It was gude o' ye tae kindle the fire; I'll no forget ye for that."

This encouragement had the effect of producing from the depths of her visitor's pockets a rather ravelled bunch of weaver's thread.

"Leave yere twine till the morn. I canna be fashed wi't the nicht," was the somewhat testy reply to the unvoiced request.

"Are ye no weel, Eppie?"

"Hoots, laddie! I'm well eneuch; tho' dinna ye see that I've lots o' mushrooms tae soak, and I'm tired forbye?"

The visitor parleyed no longer, but gathering up his odds and ends of thread, deposited them carefully behind the flower-pots on the window-sill, then noiselessly retreated, and meeting some of his playmates, cautioned them not to go near the cottage that evening, as Eppie was awfully "oot o' tune, there's something or ither far wrang wi' her."

There was decidedly something wrong with the usually friendly woman, else why did she commence to sprinkle the mushrooms with sugar instead of salt, and light the candle with the very last letter received from her beloved son; and then, getting provoked at her unwonted stupidity, why did she halt in the midst of her pickling, fasten the door, and, drawing a stool nearer the fireplace, sit down with her head between her hands to brood by her lonely fireside?

But the candle burned to its socket, and the red firelight waned behind the bars, and Eppie bestirred herself, and retired to rest.

As the days flitted past, she seemed to recover her former placid temper.

It was Saturday evening. The smooth, chalk-polished flagstones on the floor smiled up, like a newly-bathed child, into the sparkling face of the white-pillared fire. The window-panes, in their spotless transparency, reflected brightly the dancing flames, the very boots sat shining in their ebon lustre upon the rack beneath the table, and about and upon everything, from the purring, winking, tortoise-shell tabbie on the hearth to the almost blind with age collie, "Geordie's dog," that lay stretching his lazy length along the door-mat, there seemed to have fallen that air of perfect repose which foretold the ever-recurring sacred hour when the great Designer and Creator of all rested from His six days' labor and hallowed the seventh.

Commend we the old-fashioned Scottish Sabbath, with the decorous preparations made for it. The Scotch may often be reviled as a nation of drunkards or hypocrites; but, however long the Scotchman may have broken loose from the apron-strings of his childhood's Sabbath, and however far he may have wandered from its observance, the flavor of its teachings will follow him, and echoes of its influence will appeal to him as long as his heart is open to the pointed voice of conscience,

and as long as his early home remains to him a pleasing memory.

A knock at the door, and "Gather" quickly gathers himself up, and stands ready to guard the citadel of home; the lazy cat stops its purring, and disappears below the dresser, and the busy worker, who has now given the finishing touches to a week's labor by removing the silent spinning-wheel into a corner, turns round to greet her caller, who has raised the latch upon announcement of his presence.

Soutar Thomson stamped the dust from his feet the second time at sight of the spotless floor, then walked over to the proffered rocking-chair, which Geordie had sent his mother by a captain in the Canadian lumber trade.

"Elder Forbes," commenced the Soutar, "asked me to call wi' yere token for the Sacraiment. We missed ye frae the service yestreen," and he drew forth from his breast-pocket one of the small pieces of engraven metal regularly used by the kirk members as a passport to the Communion.

"Thank ye kindly, Soutar; although I'm sorry tae say't, I daurna approach the tables in my present frame o' mind," returned Eppie, much to the surprise of her visitor.

"If onything disturbs yere mind, ma guid woman, or causes ye tae negleck yere bounden duty, accordin' tae the express commands o' the Maister himsel', ye dootless ken whaur tae find relief," suggested the godly man.

"That's weel said; yet, that's where the feck o' the trouble lies. I canna expeck the Lord tae help me when I gang contrairy tae my convictions."

"And wherefore do ye sae, may I ask?"

"Wha kens! Maybe the Lord sent ye here this evenin' tae help me oot o' the difficulty."

"I'm only a fallible being; yet if I can advise ye tae the richt, ye may trust me that I will."

"I hae been sair tae blame in lettin' the innocent suffer for the guilty."

"Explain yersel', Eppie. I'd fain ken yere reason for blaming yersel' thus."

"Weel, tae mak' a long story short, I was witness o' the attack on the Hermit. Comin' hame wi' a basket o' mushrooms, I took a near-cut across the knowes, and no feelin' inclined tae meet a band o' golfers wha were lauchin' and gablin' at the auld man's door, I rested ahint a hillock till they'd gang on. They had but left when young Arnold cam' whistlin' alang on his way to the licht-hoose. He spake 'Guid-day,' cheerily tae the Hermit as he gaed on. I rose up tae haud on my way, when I heerd anither voice, ane I kenned weel. I couldna, for the life o' me, steck ma een, and sae witnessed the hale transaction. It seemed less than a minit when it was all over; the auld man flung intae the hoose, the door closed, and the misguided callant skipping awa' as faist as his legs could cairry him. I got as weak, and would hae fainted on the spot were it no for the fricht that I would be found there and somehow conneckit with the evil deed.

Rousin' mysel', I made off hame and waited, in sair suspense, for the first noos.

When I heard that John Arnold was arrested, ma conscience spak unco lood, but I hushed it wi' the answer, 'There could be nae proof against him; whereas, if I made confession, I'd be obliged tae swear awa' a man's life, and that's an awful thocht.'"

The Soutar was dumbfounded. Had Eppie simply broken one of the Commandments, but this case of "swearin' awa' a man's life" was beyond him. Notwithstanding, as his client had deplored, "the innocent ought not to suffer for the guilty," and the artist and his relations had already suffered too long.

There was only one way out of the difficulty. "Let us lay the maitter before the Lord," said the firm believer in the efficacy of prayer.

Bending his silvered head as he knelt upon the stones, slowly and reverently came the words:

"Oh, Thou Almighty Power! wha didst deliver Thy servant Joseph oot o' the dolesome pit, and Daniel frae the mouth o' the lions, hear us, Thy humble worshippers, when we call upon Thee in this, oor hour of trouble! Give us grace tae keep straicht alang the narrow way; neither being tempted tae the richt or the left through the wiles o' the flesh and the devil. Seeing that we enlisted under Thy banner, give us strength tae fecht and overcome every foe in oor heavenward path, and grant us aye perception tae see the richt, and

courage tae do the same, whatever the ootcome o't may be. This we beg through the merits o' Him wha suffered in oor stead, oor Great High Priest and Advocate. Amen!"

"Amen!" in a tone of determination, was uttered at his side, and the pious petitioner arose from his knees feeling that the simple prayer of faith, presented under that lowly roof of thatch, had ascended through the anthems of the angel throng.

"I can see my road clearly noo," said Eppie, "for all we canna find a magistrate till Monday."

"If ye hae no objeckshins, I'll proceed at wance tae the licht-hoose, and relieve the minds o' John Arnold's father and mother."

"Would ye? If it's no ower far in the nicht for sic a lang tramp."

The Soutar set out with hearty good-will upon his benevolent mission; though, owing to his rheumatic limbs, it was on the stroke of midnight ere he reached his destination.

He had not long been seated in the outer apartment, whereinto the master of the house had ushered him, when a curtain was gently drawn aside, and Carlotta beckoned the two men into an inner chamber, where lay, calmly regarding their entrance, the apparently reviving man. But the present calm was merely the prelude of eternal peace. Yet, fortunately, consciousness had returned before the close.

"I am dying," were the last words of the sufferer. "During my apparent recovery I have been

granted, first, the power of hearing, and now of speech. John Arnold—my dearest friend from his childhood—is guiltless of my death. The real criminal I know, but I leave him to the mercy of his Maker, whose forgiveness I hope he will seek."

"We are well rewarded, Carlotta," said her husband, "for your kindness in nursing the friendless."

"Ye may weel say't," added the Soutar. "Yere wife was the wisest o' the twa o' ye, for, had the auld man been cairried aff tae Arbuthnot Hospital, he would hae died by the road gaun, then whaur was his confession. Sick and all as Mrs. Arnold was, her offer tae fetch him here and nurse him has helped tae save the life o' her ain laddie, and has, at the same time, given the real murderer a chance o' repentance instead o' a certainty o' the gallows."

CHAPTER XXV.

TOO LATE.

A CLATTER of horses' hoofs, a slight whirlwind of dust, and they are past.

Away beyond the hawthorn hedges, with their fresh, spring blossoms of pinkish white; away beyond the dark, low bushes of prickly furze and the tender green of the bonnie broom, rich-laden with its Easter buds, on to the wide, far-reaching moorland, where they rein up their high-bred steeds for a quiet canter, and a joyous, uninterrupted *tête-à-tête,* a beautiful young lady, attired in a perfect-fitting habit of Lincoln green, and a fine-looking escort of some twenty-two summers.

Hastily a figure draws back into the shade.

"Who are those, Alda?" asked Mrs. Heath, who had merely caught a glimpse of the receding riders.

"The lady I do not know. Her attendant is—John Arnold."

"Oh, yes! He only went away for a few weeks to recruit after the nervous strain he had undergone. I heard that the Earl intends giving a ball to the tenantry in celebration of his favorite's release. The lady is, I presume, Miss Maitland, daughter of the Earl's anticipated successor to the estate, who spent nearly all last summer at the

Castle. She is a lovely girl; still, much as the Countess and her son appreciate our rising artist, they can scarcely contemplate making a match between these two."

"Why not, Mrs. Heath?"

"You almost puzzle me, there. I have my cherished notions regarding birth, and surroundings, and such like; though after all they seem but notions. Surely there is greater dignity in attaining to position through merit than in reception of the same by inheritance."

"I am glad you admit that. I think the respect paid to 'old families' is more the result of custom than of genuine esteem. Some of our old families can point with satisfaction to valiant military or naval exploits which gained for their ancestors both land and title; as for others—you'd search long enough ere you'd discover any just cause for their ownership of either."

"The Countess is exceedingly fond of Miss Maitland, and, it is said, would be delighted to promote a union betwixt her two favorites, should the friends of the young lady prove agreeable."

"Why shouldn't they? John Arnold's talents must soon raise him to the very top of the social ladder."

"It is reported that our richest commoner has made up his mind to be father-in-law to the artist; and that it has proved difficult for the young man to withstand the profuse patronage of 'Moneybags,' and the almost direct proposals of his wife."

"Matilda Bonner always had a liking for John Arnold, yet assuredly she'd be horrified if aware that her parents had, as the saying is, 'flung her at him.'"

"But what are you pleading for, Alda? Your logic may be reasonable, but what of your feelings? Are you endeavoring to cover up some strong, irrepressible emotions by unnecessary flow of argument? Why should humanity stand abashed because of involuntary admiration of some earthly ideal? Sinless, honest, unforced affection may overestimate, but it will never degrade either the giver or the recipient of the gift."

Under a half-sickening mixture of sensations Alda longed for relief.

Stepping noiselessly upstairs, she donned her hat and mantle, and, calling to Frisk, the small Skye terrier, to accompany her, set out for a ramble along the shore.

The ocean was, to the soul of the girl who loved it, the sea-side nurtured girl, a joyous inspiration. When lonely or perplexed, its many-voiced diapason fell gratefully upon her ears in tones of friendship or of consolation; and though it had cruelly borne her loved brother away, it yet breathed in many an undertone the blessed hope of restoration.

Over the railway track, across the greening meadows, and over the bridge to the sea-grass-covered heights, Fritz enjoying himself to his full content; now barking up from their ground-set nests the whistling pease-o-weets, now chasing into

their dusky burrows the scared little rabbits, then galloping back as fast as his tiny legs could carry him for a word of commendation over his smartness.

Walking slowly along, Alda could meditate peacefully upon her lot.

When other children were emerging from a love-protected infancy, and climbing up life's slippery or rugged hill with a trustful grip of some sturdy, helping hand, she had been compelled to think and act for herself; consequently, though young in years, she was old in experience. Born to great expectations, and inheriting noble aspirations, life had dwindled down into the commonplace, and was about to culminate in a ruinous mistake. The only love, aside from home love, which had come into her being must now be ousted before the prior claims of honor. Still, "had John Arnold cared for her—or had she even kept free from that absurd engagement," for so Alda had, upon deliberate reflection, concluded her bounden obligation to be.

"But, Frisk, the clouds are flitting. Let us get home before the squall comes on."

"Not so, Miss Graeme. The squall is already 'on,' and the wisest thing we can do is to take shelter in the near-by golf-house."

There was no alternative. Alda accepted the proffered hand, and they were soon over the high sand-hills and into the Golfers' Rest in the hollow.

"Now," said her unexpected and imperious escort, after seeing his charge safely ensconced upon

a huge log inside the rude structure, her dog Frisk mounted beside, "I ought to crave pardon for interruption of your plans. Although we are not a whit too soon in gaining shelter."

The Earl's deer-hound placed his nose on Alda's hand, and looked up in her face with a friendly air, thereby provoking the jealousy of Frisk, who, from his secure position, gave vent to his disapproval in sundry low growls; and the wind soughing and the rain pattering on the boarded roof so intermingled all sounds that the reply of our heroine was lost in the confusion.

The more swift the uprising the sooner past; and the gale, having whitened the crest of the ocean, torn up a few saplings in the nursery, and sent several chimney-pots flying off village dwellings, abated its fury and as quickly gradually declined.

Our detained ones once more emerged into the open, and Alda reached the home of Mrs. Heath in time to dispel her friend's growing anxiety regarding her. John Arnold, for, as the reader surmises, it was he who was the unlooked-for companion of the young lady, politely declined Mrs. Heath's invitation to enter, and expressing a hope to meet both ladies at the forthcoming social event at the Castle, he bade them "Good-morning!" and retraced his steps toward the lighthouse.

With the click of the front gate, her hostess passed Alda the salver, containing two letters.

One was a note of invitation to attend the fes-

tivities at the Castle, and the other, and this she opened with trembling fingers, was from "Cousin Marion."

The Laird of Kintoila had agreed to accede to Alda's request that their hastily entered into marriage engagement be broken off. "I was on the Continent with Uncle, and heard nothing of the matter till I returned," wrote Marion. "I have much to impart when we meet, which I do not care to risk upon paper," etc.

Mrs. Heath, who had noted the change of expression upon the face of her visitor while perusing the letter, was more than astonished by the joyful exclamation with which it was handed her. "Oh, Mrs. Heath! I am so glad! I never before felt so glad and thankful!"

"This is a decided surprise for me, Alda," answered the lady, as she hastily glanced over the contents of the note. "But, if you are satisfied, and you certainly appear to be, it's all right. Those specially interested ought to be the proper judges in these matters."

"If I had been permitted to think so, it would have spared me much misery."

"Well, well! We'll dismiss the matter entirely from our minds. And now, let us go and dress for dinner, after partaking of which we'll consider about preparations for the gathering at the Castle, which, I presume, we will both gladly attend."

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE GOLDEN RIFT.

For the first time since the accession of His Lordship to the estates were the folding-doors of the elegant and spacious saloon thrown open.

Now a large assemblage, numbering between four and five hundred persons, chiefly farmers and lesser tenants, with their wives and grown-up daughters, were met to partake of the hospitality of their noble landlord, whilst along with these were many inhabitants of the village proper, who were chiefly connected with the Castle by payment of an annual ground-rent.

Over the broad lawns, around the well-kept parterres of gaily-tinted and odorous plants, by the miniature lake with its stately swans, and beneath the branching shades of the extensive Home Park, were scattered the younger and more lively of the guests; while the older contented themselves with strolling, from the great, square entrance hall, with its varied decorations of glittering sword and spear, and massive stag-head with its defiant-looking antlers, implements of the victorious battle-field and trophies of the chase, to the Grand Gallery, from the walls of which looked down the

haughty and the gentle, the grim warrior and the court beauty of days gone by, he who had borne the brunt of the battle on many a bloody field, and she who had sat among her maidens and chanted the deeds of the brave, as, upon silken tapestry, they depicted with their nimble fingers rare feats of chivalry.

After a sumptuous repast and an unlimited number of speeches and songs, the evening's pleasures were wound up by a dance.

The Countess and Mrs. Heath, with Mrs. Bonner and several other ladies, were grouped upon a platform overlooking the gay scene, and as the Earl with Miss Graeme, and John Arnold with the fairy-like form of Miss Maitland by his side, entered the hall and stepped across the variegated marble floor, many a joyous shout resounded aneath the frescoed ceiling and through the waving banners, which had so long hung motionless, unstirred of mirthful music.

First the grand march, with finale of quadrille.

As Alda glanced toward the couple opposite, she could not but acknowledge that they were a remarkably handsome pair. Miss Maitland, in her cream-colored silk dress and delicate spring blossoms, seemed the choice ideal for a painter's study, whilst her partner appeared at least her equal.

The son of the lighthouse had improved quite as much in personal appearance and in suavity of manner as he had in other respects. It was, indeed, hard to reconcile the handsome and well-dressed

man of the courteous and polished bearing with the slight-built youth of the bashful demeanor.

"I ought not to engross the attentions of our guest. Miss Graeme, may I entrust him to your keeping for a space?" asked the lively *protégée* of the Countess as, after resting by Alda's side, she arose.

"I meant to ask Miss Graeme for a dance, ere I'd get crowded out," was the artist's polite rejoinder to his late partner's summary disposal of him.

Miss Maitland ascended to the dais, and Alda, with John Arnold, took her place at the lower end of the "Haymakers," a popular country dance, which was then being arranged. This time-honored dance was prolonged to the utmost duration, even as it had been entered into with the greatest of zest.

Unwilling to appear disagreeable, our couple continued their presence therein to the close, when they were glad to seek relief from the heated atmosphere by finding a seat upon the balcony, where the artist ordered some refreshments to be brought.

Alda quietly sipped a glass of light wine, but declined aught else.

"How long have you been in Glenmore—this visit?"

"Since last December."

"Then you remained during the winter—"

"Here are the runaways. If you are not *de trop*, I shall leave you with them, and return to my

guests." So saying, the Earl placed a chair for his companion, and withdrew.

For several moments conversation was carried on briskly, principally by Miss Maitland and the artist; for, though Alda made an attempt to act her part, it proved hard for her to do so.

Miss Maitland, in her supreme contentment, did not at first perceive Alda's quietude, but at length she remarked:

"Do you feel the air too chilly, Miss Graeme? I fancy there's a breath of the winter in it yet."

"Oh, no, thank you! I don't mind a touch of the keen air. We of the sea-side are accustomed to this bleak atmosphere."

"We'd better be on the safe side, however," suggested the young lady, as rising, she drew her opera cloak more closely around her, and, taking Alda's arm, prepared to return to the ball-room.

"I hope we may see more of each other, Miss Graeme, since I am destined to remain in Glenmore for the summer. Don't you think it's too bad that Mr. Arnold should start for Rome on the eve of my father's arrival, more especially as they have not as yet been made acquainted?"

The first blushing gold of the eastern sky was beginning to creep over the dewy meadows and to touch with mellow brightness the lofty turrets of the Castle when the gay assemblage dispersed, and through the arcade of gorgeous leafage down the clean-cut carriage way, past the picturesque, jasmine-wreathed lodge, and out of the huge portal, with its

great stone lions *couchant,* issued forth upon their devious routes carriages, farmers' gigs, and minor conveyances, each with its load of happy-hearted travellers, while the song-birds, rudely disturbed by the unwonted sound, peered from the shades in amazement, shook their feathers, and with a comforting chirp down to their little brood, and a long, clear pipe of praise up to the brightening heavens, winged off in quest of a morning meal.

After the ball came a lull in the village; all settled again to their ordinary vocations.

Alda sat thinking, and what were her thoughts. "The past cannot be recalled, the present is—a blank; the future—shall be, under God, what I will make it. I cannot resume my former occupation; my brother, if alive, seems lost to me; my mother, had she really cared for us, could not have been so easily set aside, and for shame's sake I may not visit Cousin Marion. But I can go where my father would have taken us had he lived—to Canada," and with this decision she arose, and set about preparations for return to Glasgow.

She was on her knees before her travelling trunk, when a ring at the front door-bell caused her to pause in her packing operations.

All was silent below.

"Alda," called Mrs. Heath from her chamber, "would you run down and attend to the door. The maids are, apparently, out of hearing, and I can't leave off dressing at present."

Alda obeyed, descended, and, opening the door, ushered in—John Arnold.

"I was on my way to bid you good-bye, when I made a discovery."

"You did! Is it anything concerning my brother?"

"No; it concerns yourself."

What answer could be forthcoming. There was none.

"Maria tells me that your intended marriage is broken off; also, that you will soon leave the village."

"Well, what of that?" queried his listener, scarcely aware that she was breathing her thoughts aloud.

"Only this, that if you go you will take all the sunshine out of my life, and all the love of my life-time with you."

No response, nought save an intensely mystified expression on the face before him.

"Pardon me, Miss Graeme! I have startled you. I am not used to studied phrases. Besides, this may be my last opportunity."

"What of Miss Maitland?" and the long, dark fringes drooped over the eyes for very shame that she should feel obliged to ask the question.

"Miss Maitland! Have you also fallen into that mistake? Miss Maitland is a firm friend of mine, as she well may be. She is engaged to marry the constant and much-prized companion of my

years of study, Lionel Brooks, son of a millionaire manufacturer of Lancashire, England. He will be at the Castle next week, along with the father of his *fiancée.*"

Serenely and surely were the clouds dissolving.

"I was your brother's friend, and I am willing to be yours if I can be no more; but this I solemnly avow, that no other shall ever usurp the place which you have so long and so completely filled in my heart."

Gradually the brightness had stolen back into the face of the hearer. She raised her eyes, and as they met that steady gaze of honest, unswerving affection, the tell-tale blush crept up with silent confession over all the radiant countenance.

"Have you no answer for me, Alda? I have loved you so faithfully and so long that I think you must care for me—if ever so little."

"I think that I have cared for you—a great deal—and that, too, all my life."

Long and uncertain had been the waiting, but rich was the reward.

"God bless you, dear!" was the solemn acceptance of avowed affection, as, with the reverence of an artist for an angel-subject, and the fealty of a whole-souled man for the woman who relies upon him, he bent down over the blushing countenance and imprinted thereon the tender kiss of betrothal.

The early-bereaved and fortune-tossed girl had found an abiding refuge at last.

"Oh, John!" was her first-voiced thought, "won't my father be glad? He loved me so when on earth that he will rejoice with me, even in heaven."

"I do not marvel at that most filial idea, Alda, If we believe in the communion of saints, we can surely also realize that our loved ones, even in the heavenly service, retain some interest in those they have left behind."

"I shall feel so much happier now in going to Canada."

"Why should you go? You are quite alone. It would be better—"

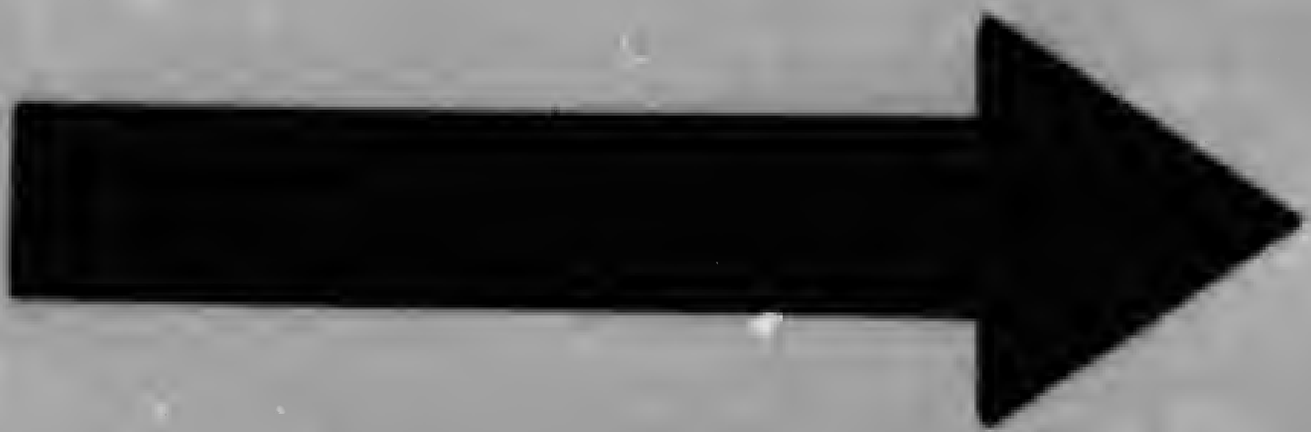
"For you to finish your studies, as the Earl expects you to, while I carry out my intention of visiting my friends."

"I know that one other session would enable me to be, at least, self-supporting; but meanwhile, you—"

"I'll be all right. You know that I have been accustomed to looking after myself."

"Then be it so," agreed the now happy lover. "Whom God doth bring together, neither sea nor land may separate."

What need we to tell of those halcyon days ere the lovers parted. In that "fool's paradise," in which they whiled away the golden hours, many as wise a couple have walked, and many fond, young, faithful hearts, such as theirs, have been compelled to bid adieu, the one to be wafted to the far-distant



haven, and the other to stand upon a crowded platform and watch a white token waved from a receding train, then walk out in his loneliness beneath the deep, blue vault of heaven, from which the bright star-lamps keep blink, blinking as merrily as if no solitary heart existed beneath their silvery beams.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE WESTERN WORLD.

OVERHEAD, the thunder pealing its loudest, and the lightning flashing its brightest, and all around the wrathful ocean swelling mountains high; the vessel, now in the trough, then suddenly hoisted aloft upon the seething crest of a mighty billow, which lifted it, in the graphic language of the Psalmist, "up to the heavens," only to be again battered and bruised and well-nigh overwhelmed in its next descent. Such was the experience of our voyager, when, after a pleasant sail from the great seaport of the Mersey, round to the harbor of Queenstown, with its green, sloping banks, the good ship *City of York* again put out to sea to meet with a storm the like of which is seldom encountered upon a summer passage.

But the gallant ship outrode the tempest, and, with the loss of a top-mast and part of her bulwarks, steamed once more into a glassy sea; and when the passengers were permitted to appear on deck it was to congratulate one another upon a narrow escape, and to gaze, with grateful hearts, over the broad expanse of glittering waters, wherein a wide frontispiece of porpoises were careering along,

bobbing up and down from the shining surface their human-looking heads.

Relieved, yea, glad, were the voyagers after their twelve days' passage to behold through the rising fog the nearing banks of Newfoundland, and still more thankful felt they when the following day saw them entering the extensive sheet of water which almost surrounds the well-set city of Halifax.

They near the wharf. There comes a gig with its naval occupants, fresh-looking in their summer suits of white as they briskly and regularly ply the oar through the silvery-crested wave. There, also, is the usual crowd of sight-seers on the pier, along with business men and groups of the military and navy; some interested, all curious as to the vessel and her imports.

On board things are changing aspect. General Fitzroy has laid aside his old cap with the huge ear-covers, and, with a discernible countenance, is looking affectionately over the side of the swaying vessel toward his handsome bays, in waiting to convey their master to his suburban home. The sailors are hauling and heaving out cables, and shouting to the young folks to keep out of danger, and the ship's officers are emerging from their respective quarters arrayed in spotless shirt-front and go-a-shore clothing.

Then the ladies. Can these smiling, bustling, beautifully bedecked charmers be the same with those pining objects who had sickened and sighed and vowed that once safely on shore they'd never

again trust themselves to the mercy of the deep; who, only three short days since, sat pillowed up on deck or went staggering along, a great shawl trailing behind, or a dull waterproof hood concealing those faces which bore upon them the resigned air of martyrdom?

Moored at last. Trunks are hoisted on to the wharf, and consigned to the Custom House sheds; all manner of packages and valises are pulled forth; friends come on board to greet friends, and—

Who is this that accosts our heroine?

The explanation seems satisfactory. She and her luggage are taken in charge, and conveyed to the railway hotel, to be in readiness for to-morrow's journey.

After resting and partaking of luncheon, Alda and her Cousin Martin, for he it was who had come from Prince Edward Island to meet her, made a tour of the city, and from the Citadel enjoyed a comprehensive view of the beautiful, tree-interspersed prospect beneath and the charming vista of waters beyond, upon which lay several of the engines of war, with their country's banners lightly waving in the soft, summer breeze.

Halifax, the key of our Western Britain, aforetime known as Chebucto Bay, was a place of slight importance previous to the year 1750, when thousands of persons were brought out at the expense of the British Government, who founded that settlement which increased and progressed into that now imposing city which strikes the traveller as being

an intermixture of the New and Olden Worlds. Indeed, the general appearance of Nova Scotia throughout, with its rugged heights and glistening lakes, its intervals of fresh greensward, and its splendid orchards of fruit, reminds one forcibly of that other Scotia beyond the wave.

Passing by rail through the coal districts, Alda and her cousin reach the finely situated town of Pictou.

"Who are these?" questioned the young lady, directing the attention of her escort toward a tawny group who stood near them on the steamboat landing.

"These are Indians. You will see plenty of them by-and-bye."

Alda's expression betrayed her disappointment.

"I should never have taken these ill-favored, ungainly-looking creatures to be of the race which I have read about, the race of handsome braves and beautiful princesses."

Her cousin smiled.

"So much," he replied, "for impressions gleaned from the popular story-books of the period; books which give exaggerated and even false presentments of life, and are not only responsible for disappointment, but often for actual disaster to the minds which feed upon them."

"One must have something to read. Why do authors exaggerate to such a degree? They ought to reflect upon the evil results."

"Why do people cheat, and lie, and steal?

Simply for the sake of gain. So long as there is demand for a certain class of books, writers will be found to keep up the supply. But, in respect to the Indians, these wretched-looking specimens are not to be taken as a perfect sample of the race; under other conditions they might appear more dignified."

They cross the Northumberland Strait by steamer to Prince Edward Island, formerly St. John's, which was ceded by France to Great Britain in the treaty of Fontainebleau, 1763, and were soon driving out of the Capital on their way to the homestead of Martin's mother, Mrs. MacLaren, widowed sister of the late Wellesley Graeme.

Although the sandy roads are, for most part, very dusty compared with the smoother and harder highways of an older clime, and there is quite a superfluous glare of the sun on account of no fringe of foliage having been left for shade, the pioneers in their zeal to clear away the forests having overlooked that wayfarers' comfort; yet delicious feels the odor from the pine woods after the two weeks' inhalations off the briny deep, consolatory is the sense of security when journeying upon dry land, and sweet is the friendly handshake of welcome after the tossing and tumbling of ocean's boisterous fury.

They reach their destination, and our traveller finds herself for the first time located within a dwelling-house built of wood, which, in its favorable appearance, soon puts to flight her pre-con-

ceived notions that a healthful temperature and the refinements of life must needs be enclosed by substantial, century-surviving walls of solid masonry.

The thoughtful matron, Mrs. MacLaren, with due consideration, hastens on refreshments, and after her guest has partaken of the same, conducts her to the apartment prepared for her, where she is left with strict charge to lie down and take a rest.

Though far away from her dear, native Scotland, Alda already feels stealing over her that unconstrained, at-home feeling, which enabled her to compose herself into a refreshing nap, from which she was by-and-bye awakened by the lowing of the cattle on their homeward way from pasture.

Bathing her scarcely opened eyes and smoothing her disordered tresses, she descends into the supper-room; and "Cousin Alda" is a stranger insomuch that she receives the largest share of attention, and she is not a stranger in that she is cordially accepted into the hearts of all.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

STRUGGLE AND TRIUMPH.

"WHAT has impressed me since coming to this island is that I do not observe upon it either of the extremes of position. If there are no palatial residences, with corresponding magnificence in style of living, there appears to be no utterly wretched hovels, wherein those who are willing to work are compelled to endure the pangs of hunger."

Thus remarked Alda to her Cousin Martin as, on a pleasant afternoon, they drove along the clover-clad banks which skirt fair Orwell Bay.

"Never having resided in the Old Country I cannot make comparisons; but, in respect to our small island, I fancy that you're right. There is more than sufficient productive land within its borders to afford maintenance for the whole of the resident population; and since the proprietors are now allowing tenants the option of purchase on their holdings, there is more inducement for individual exertion."

"I would think so. Why should tenants improve their farms if they possess no guarantee against being turned out of these? It is trouble of that kind which causes so much discontent in the Old Land."

"Are not the rights of a good tenant generally respected?"

"That depends entirely upon the landlord. One landlord may be a kind-hearted man; his successor may be the reverse. During the reign of Henry the Seventh, in England, the people made a direct appeal to the king for protection from their landlords, who were evicting them to make way for their own herds. Henry espoused the cause of the people, and threatened the landlords with the Tower if they persisted in evicting the tenants, declaring that the maintenance of the people thereon was the special purpose for which they, the landlords, were entrusted with the land."

"The American press asserts that the British agriculturist is little better in condition than the helot of old, and that the best type of the British farmer is being ousted from existence."

"That statement is beyond the mark. There are many just and philanthropic proprietors who are genuine benefactors to their poorer brethren, as are those enterprising manufacturers, etc., who enrich themselves through providing employment for others."

"A Land League is now formed upon this island, and it is expected that laws for compulsory sale of land will soon be passed. If not, our family will remove to the great North-West."

"Your lot is more comfortable than that of your parents could have been. All the hardships they must have endured upon coming to this tree-clad island!"

"Their intended destination, upon leaving Scotland, was the mainland; but my mother being much exhausted through prolonged sea-sickness during the tiresome, sailing-vessel voyage, they embraced the earliest opportunity to step ashore, while my uncle and his younger sister proceeded onward."

"It must have been a disagreeable change from their previous position in Skye."

"It was at first, but my parents were young and hopeful; and those who disembarked along with them, many acquaintances of a life-time, settled near by; thus they were not so lonely as they would otherwise have been in a strange country."

"They raised a cabin on the wild
In shade of branching tree,
And there the mother reared the child,
And time passed merrily.

"Toil reaped the gain of comfort sweet,
And, by the fireside blaze,
Glad souls went up in grateful psalm,
In voice of joy and praise.

"For denseness of the solemn pine
Came cheerful apple bloom,
And gleesome shouts of buoyant hearts
Outrang the sighs of gloom.

"For screeching owl and croaking frog
Came lowing of the cows,
As the merry bells went jingle
Beyond the ample mows.

My father lived to enjoy the fruits of his labor, and passed away in serene old age, with a conscience clear concerning the earthly and a soul happy in anticipation of the heavenly; and my mother, my dear, good mother! you see her now as she always has been, willing to comfort and serve her loved upon earth, and ever ready for the summons which will enable her to rejoin her beloved in heaven."

"What about schools and churches?"

"The schools were at first few and far between. For churches they were not so badly off, all denominations being represented."

"What of the climate?"

"The summer weather is all that could be desired. The winter, though long, does not seem thereby to impair health or shorten life. Moreover, all climates are represented in our great Dominion of Canada. On the Pacific Coast you have the warmth of Italy, nigher that of France and south of England; while our eastern coast, to my thinking, resembles more closely the north of Scotland."

"One prevalent idea in Europe is that Canada is simply a large corn-field."

"This notion is agreeably dispelled at sight of the splendid fruit crops which abound upon its surface. When the Israelites of old sent spies to report upon the nearing land of Canaan, they carried back the luscious grapes of Eshcol as a guarantee of health and plenty. So mote it be

with this newer, more extensive land of refuge. Let us send ample certificates of its worth in its divers fruits, in its fishing and farming productions, and in its live stock of horses and cattle, and ignorance and prejudice will soon vanish before genuine belief and hearty, whole-souled co-operation."

CHAPTER XXIX.

FURTHER WEST.

MONTREAL, the commercial capital of Canada, was the home of Alda's uncle.

The long delay consequent upon a sea, or, rather, river voyage, from Prince Edward Island is amply compensated for by the beauty of the scenery which borders the wide St. Lawrence, with the tiny, white-sheathed cottages of the *habitants* peeping out from their living background of many-shaded green, and over-canopied by their broad, clear arc of blue.

Crossing the Bay of Chaleur, they round the Gaspé Peninsula. There, to the right, is the solitary Isle of Anticosti, that isle upon which the haughty Viceroy, Count Roberval, so mercilessly deposited his fair, young niece, and left her to that dreadful fate, from which, after burying the two companions who had voluntarily shared her exile, she was at last rescued by the crew of a fishing craft and assisted back to her native France, there to relate her piteous tale of unparalleled suffering.

Onward they steam along the great expanse of waters, with the shore line of Rimouski to the left, and to the right the far-stretching, romantic coast of Saguenay, with its picturesque river and its storied Tadousac, site of the first Canadian church.

On, still on, till the narrowing flood conveys them ayond the Orleans Isle into the placid sheet of water beneath the high-throned city of Quebec, with its huge battlements looking down upon the voyager; its glittering, tin-roofed houses; its narrow, oft steep, winding streets, and its impregnable Citadel, from which stream forth those banners which led the brave British general to victory.

Still farther on and they reach the bustling wharves of Montreal.

Little could Sieur de Maisonneuve have prophesied, when, in the year 1642, he quitted La Belle France and his sunny home on the banks of the noble Seine, to embark upon that small vessel which would bear him to a distant, unexplored land, that from the persevering efforts of that energetic band of emigrants planted by him upon the tiny Isle de Marie should arise that wide and ever-widening entrance for the enterprise of nations, Montreal. Despite many warnings and relations of cruelties practised upon former missionaries, this intrepid pioneer would not be dissuaded from his pious intention, and the gratifying result was not only a fuller opening for Christianity, but a more favorable outlook for commerce as well.

"'I shall go,' said he, 'unto Montreal
Though each tree were an Iroquois!'
And the God of the dauntless hearkened his call,
The God of the martyred saw.
Now the great city smiles where the grim forest loomed,
And the red man boweth the knee;
And the Cross which was trampled in glory hath bloomed
From mountain to uttermost sea."

Pleased was Alda's uncle to welcome and entertain his namesake, and happy was his niece to accept of such a hearty reception into his elegant home.

For several years after settling in Canada the career of Donald Graeme had been one of constant endurance and unceasing activity. In the employ of a fur-trading company he had travelled in every direction and in all sorts of weather. Still in middle life, he was a noble-looking type of the genuine Highland gentleman. Large experience had richly developed his naturally able mind, and by keen observation he had acquired a vast amount of beneficial knowledge, which, with good conversational powers, rendered him a pleasing companion for both young and old.

Alda was afforded every opportunity of seeing as much as possible of the New World. With her uncle, she crossed the border line into the neighboring republic, and went as far as Washington, beyond which, on account of the Civil War, they did not venture.

They had sailed by torchlight within Kentucky's Mammoth Cave, had drunk of Saratoga's health-giving springs, and had stood in silent awe by that mighty waste of waters, whose sweeping surge sings out, in loudest strain, the majesty of a world's Creator. And she had walked the avenues of New York's Central Park, and gazed with sorrowful sympathy upon the black-robed mourners who met her there. For many were the homes in that sad year which cherished the " vacant chair."

But most of all did our visitor enjoy her trip through the scenic grandeur of the fair Canadian West.

She crossed those expansive bays and noble rivers wherein the myriad trout and salmon glide, and sailed upon those mighty lakes which stretch in endless chain toward the broad Atlantic, and admired the splendid cities upon their borders. Yet it was not of those cities, progressive as they seemed to be, that our heroine gravely pondered.

> For though she loved the olden land
> With love that knew no change,
> With fuller life her sympathies
> Had ta'en a broader range.

"Why," mused she, "should even the well-to-do class of agriculturists in Great Britain and Ireland be cramped within their limited acres, or spend their days and exhaust their energies in unceasing toil upon the property of others, when, in this boundless region, they could soon be the happy and undisputed owners of large estates; and with a slight part of the labor which they expend upon the farms that will, sooner or later, pass out of the hands of their families, they would very soon be not only independent, but wealthy?"

CHAPTER XXX.

SURPRISES.

It is the eve of Alda's birthday, which her uncle has decided to celebrate right royally.

Many are the invitations issued, and few are unaccepted, to partake of the hospitality of the distinguished member of Parliament and his gracious lady. The snow is quickly falling, yet the bells keep tingling cheerily, as sleigh after sleigh glides up before the door. Brothers and lovers are handing out fur-incased images, who, mounting the steps and emerging into the glow of the entrance hall, cast aside the outer crust and disclose to view smiling eyes and rosy lips, now again at liberty to indulge in a woman's special prerogative of chatting, without the risk of being partly suffocated by some rude snow-flake.

The magnificent parlors are crowded with guests. The tall, waxen tapers, sparkling from the massive silver candelabra, reflect in subdued splendor from the large mirrors the highly-polished furniture, the rich Persian carpet, and the choicely-gilded frames upon the wonderful productions of Europe's illustrious painters, both of the past and of the present age.

The popular host stands amid a group of politi-

cians, and as he courteously joins in the conversation, he keeps glancing beyond to the smiling band of unclouded faces which surrounds his much-loved niece.

See her now in her elegant silken robe, with its costly trimmings of valenciennes lace, and bandeau of pearls encircling and contrasting well with her glossy dark hair; while from her neck and arms gleam pearl and gold, the valuable birthday gifts of her generous uncle. They suit her queenly beauty well, for the slight and timid child has developed into the regal-looking, joy-dispensing woman.

Down to dinner. The guest of the evening is escorted by young Eames, the son of the Mayor, who pays her devoted attention, and is rewarded by perceiving that she does not appear to look for homage beyond his own.

Dinner is over at last, and the gentlemen have left their champagne and their discussions to join the ladies in the parlors.

Lawyer Eames hands Alda to the piano, and awaits in readiness to turn over the pages. But the music-sheet is not in the stand; she plays the accompaniment of an olden rhyme to the words of a new-made song:

OUR PRAIRIE HOME.

"Ho! voices of the western wind,
Why, with rejoicing strain
Loud pealing from Æolus' harp,
Seek ye the eastern main?

Blithe wanderers on zephyr wing,
Oh ! whither may ye roam,
Brimful of fragrant memories
From out the prairie home ?"

" We go, in flush of fervent youth,
To visit lands afar ;
Nor stilled our song 'fore ocean's wail,
Nor halt we 'neath eve's star,
Till high above an ancient world,
O'er many a storied clime,
We thrill the canopy of heaven
And wake the chords of time.

" We shall not moan o'er ages past,
Nor crave for righted wrong ;
Old dynasties, through force of arms,
May hold position strong.
Nor shall we sigh o'er fortune's flight,
Nor ills impatient borne—
The blackest clouds of darksome night
Oft prelude clearest morn.

" But we shall sweetly sing of home,
Of plain, of teeming river,
Where mortal hand ne'er bars the feast
Spread of the bounteous Giver.
Where tyrant rides not gilded car,
Nor captive drags his chain,
Nor fetter crampeth mind nor soul
Through all the vast domain.

" We'll whisper in the ear of toil
Glad messages of cheer ;
Of peace and plenty where mankind
Is more than grouse or deer.
Where every man may word his thoughts
Who aims to do the right,

And all may conquer in the end
Who rank for honest fight.

"Then through the mists of many years,
As sunrift through a shower,
Shall stream the light o'er longing eyes,
And hope shall rise to power,
Till from the crowded city mart,
From rural ingle-side,
Shall surge across this western sea
A welcome human tide."

"Ho! voices of the western wind,
God speed ye on your way!
Sing out the dark night prejudice,
Sing in the fair new day.
Till far ayond the eastern wave,
To every breeze unfurled,
The beacon light on Freedom's flag
Illumes a longing world."

Whatever defect there might be in regard to the rendition, there was certainly none in respect to the feeling which inspired the song; and Alda was well rewarded for her inspiration by the gratified expression upon her uncle's face, which beamed upon her as she turned from the piano.

Soon the violins sound for a dance, and light-hearted couples go tripping it gaily over the polished floor of the spacious ball-room.

"Miss Graeme," said Alda's partner, as they rested for a space, "here comes Monsieur de Roche, a late addition to our Montreal world."

The stranger approached, and shortly after, upon

being introduced by his friend, requested the honor of our heroine's hand for the next "Lancers."

"I have already promised—"

"I shall release you, under your favor, of course."

Alda smiling consent, her late partner retired for a space to the smoking-room.

Despite his Frenchified English, there was something in the voice of M. de Roche that called up to her tones which she had, for a certainty, listened to before. Then his face, from the cautious glances she took at it, appeared strangely familiar.

When the quadrille had finished, M. de Roche led the young lady to an unoccupied ottoman, and, taking a seat beside her, proceeded coolly to reintroduce himself as her former admirer, Walter Bonner, son of the millionaire "Moneybags," of Glenmore.

"It's better," he said, in winding up, "to have the confession past and done with. I became so uneasy under your covert glances, and feared that, in some unguarded moment, you might betray me."

Alda was exceedingly shocked, and not less perplexed and annoyed. However, her natural good-feeling came to her aid, and, "Much as I abhor him," she concluded, "for the sake of his relatives I shall not expose him."

The young man seemed to read her mind, and to presume thereupon. "You don't know the trouble I had in getting an invitation for this evening," he said. "I tried to get round your uncle, but he gave me the cold shoulder—for what reason

I know not. Mr. Eames managed to get me an invite at the last moment by telling your aunt, what he really believes, how religious I am, that I attend church regularly, and so forth."

At a loss for reply, his companion unwittingly and rather bluntly gave expression to her thoughts in, "What brought you here?" Yet, scarcely had the words left her lips when she was mortified at herself by the quick retort:

"*You*, to be sure! I was in New York, when my mother, who supplies me with the needful, wrote me that you were in Montreal."

"Excuse me! My aunt is beckoning."

"One moment. I have something to tell you."

"I can hear it again."

"John Arnold and my sister Matilda are to be married soon. Though, if you don't care—"

Alda had moved away, and she contrived to keep away from Monsieur de Roche for the rest of the evening.

Standing by her aunt, she cannot avoid hearing the conversation carried on between Mr. Graeme and one of his guests, Lieut. Osborne, of H.M.S. *Neptune*, at present stationed in Halifax.

"How long is it since that engagement took place?"

"Only a few days ago. When the *Federal*, after a smart chase, came alongside, the pursued made a stout resistance, and in their attempt to board the vessel many of the victors were slain. Although in the hand-to-hand conflict which followed, the commander and chief officer of the 'blockade-runner'

were both despatched, their place was immediately taken by an underling, who, stripling as he was, led the defence most manfully, till, borne down by superior numbers, he was finally compelled to yield. The vessel was towed into Washington, where the defiant youth, one of your name, now lies prostrated from the wounds which he so foolishly courted."

"Are you certain as to the name?"

"Positively so. Being the same as yours, I was the more observant. And the Christian name struck me as peculiar—Wellesley, after the Iron Duke, I presume."

Alda had heard enough to send the hot blood from the burning cheeks back in swift tide to its fountain, and almost to freeze it there.

"Pardon my eavesdropping," she said. "Can you tell me anything more of that captive?"

"Not a great deal, Miss Graeme. The report favors the idea that he is some returned convict or bushranger from the wilds of Australia."

His listener's face turned pale.

"Why should you be thus affected by the miserable fate of a desperado who will likely soon meet with the recompense he deserves?"

"Heaven forfend!" ejaculated Alda; while the unimpressionable son of the sea gave a twirl to the corners of his much-prized moustache, and inwardly commenting, "Remawkably handsome1 only too much of the sentimentawl about her for my taste," departed in quest of the lady whom he had promised the honor of partnership for the next circle dance.

CHAPTER XXXI.

RESOLVES EFFECTED.

THE guests had departed, and Alda had retired to the sanctity of her own private apartment.

Divesting herself of her costly apparel, she flung on a loose wrapper, unwound the heavy coils of her luxuriant hair, and sat down to reflect upon what she had recently heard concerning the fate of the "convict or bushranger." Could he be one and the same with her long missed brother? Then, and need we wonder, up in her mind came that other piece of news, the intended marriage of John Arnold. Though Walter Bonner was a very unreliable informant, his mother could have no motive for misstatement. And why had her three last letters to John remained unanswered?

The more she tried to solve the mystery of her lover's silence, the more puzzled she became. "It seems most humiliating for us both, still I must make some enquiry through my friend, Mrs. Heath. Surely John would not be tempted away from me by Matilda Bonner's great wealth."

With this decision she brought her reverie to a close, and, undressing, moved quietly away to rest, fearful of disturbing her aunt, who occupied an adjoining chamber.

"Heigh o!" yawned Mr. Graeme, as, stretching his muscular arms, he entered the breakfast-room not a whit behind his usual hour. "What! you down already?" he exclaimed, as his niece came forward prepared to take her aunt's place at table.

"Yes, to do the honors instead of auntie."

"Who cannot brave a night's dissipation as easily as some folk that I know."

Alda smiled, and exerted herself to please the dear uncle by carrying on the repartee, yet, to his affectionate watchfulness, there was something amiss.

"Why so depressed? Have you been obliged to say 'No' to the persevering suit of some daring aspirant, or is it simply a revulsion of feeling after indulgence in gaiety?"

"Neither, uncle. It is something of far more importance."

"Far more importance! Really, you surprise me, Alda. What could possibly be of more importance than a fortunate settlement in life? Now, there's young Eames—"

"Oh, please don't mention him now. Pass me your cup."

She returned it, refilled with his favorite Mocha.

"I should like to keep you beside us, and fancy that marriage would be, of all means, the most certain to do so. I have already promised Mr. Eames to use my influence, though I dare not attempt to thwart your inclinations; you wouldn't be a Graeme if you hadn't a will of your own. Yet

the suit of my friend is well worthy your attention; he is of blameless character, ranks high in his profession, and is surely destined to rise with our rising country."

"Thank you, sincerely, for your kind consideration. As for Mr. Eames, though he is all that you take him to be, I cannot regard him in any other light than an agreeable acquaintance."

"I'm sorry. He's a fine, straightforward fellow, and I hate to be the medium in his disappointment."

"I guess he won't mind much. We are not long acquainted."

"That's so. Still, love can't be always measured by length of acquaintance."

Mr. Graeme arose, looked out upon the weather, then stepped out into the hall for his fur cap and overcoat.

"Just a few minutes!" begged his niece. "I have a matter to consult you about, that is much distressing my mind."

He re-entered the room.

Briefly she made known to him her desire to proceed at once to Washington and satisfy the yearning of her heart concerning the identity of the "blockade runner."

"What, Alda! You're surely in jest. These are not the days of mock courage and knight-errantry."

"Believe me, uncle mine! I'm in sober earnest. These are, sure enough, not the days when a man must needs thrust his rival through with a lance

in proof of his valor or affection, but they are the days in which we'd have him fight life's battle manfully for his own dear sake. Thanks to these later days the so-called weaker sex are both able to speak and to act for themselves."

"I heartily agree with you there," cheerfully responded Mr. Graeme, as he rose and buttoned up his coat. "As for that other unpleasant subject, let it be completely dismissed from your mind ere my return, and all those black looks, which so disfigure your bright face, along with it."

After he had gone, Alda re-perused the *Herald* despatch, which confirmed her previous supposition into actual belief, and to her uncle's astonishment, no sooner had he withdrawn from the dinner-table than the unpleasant subject of the morning was again introduced.

"Seriously, child, you cannot mean it. Travel so far at this unseasonable period, and for what? Be reasonable, and await the result of enquiry."

"Do not be vexed. I cannot delay."

"Have you considered the risk—snow-storms, blocked railways, etc.?"

"I have considered. I care for nothing save your permission."

"Well, if it must be so, I shall accompany you."

"There is not the slightest need. The journey will be nothing to me, seeing that we went that way before."

Preparations were speedily accomplished, and with many charges from her not altogether satis-

fied aunt as to taking particular care of herself, of her luggage, and also of the trusty French-Canadian maid who accompanied her, Alda and the girl, almost enveloped in furs, were comfortably ensconced in the back seat of a roomy sleigh, while Mr. Graeme seated himself by the driver and saw them safely on their way southward.

As he was bidding the party adieu, who should come upon the scene but Monsieur de Roche, who, however, did not presume upon his slight acquaintance with Mr. Graeme, merely passing with a respectful obeisance.

"That fellow seems to make his way with a good many in Montreal," remarked the gentleman. "As for me, I cannot take to him. Well for our youth that he'd remove himself and his alleged fortune to other quarters; we have no use for such as he in a new country."

CHAPTER XXXII.

A REVELATION.

THE old butler tapped lightly upon the library door; then, receiving no answer, opened it and peered searchingly around.

"What now, James?" enquired His Lordship, as he slipped into the open desk the letter which he had been intently perusing, so intently that he failed to hear the servant's knock.

"It's you that I was looking for, ma Lord. Young Arnold has arrived with all speed frae the licht-house. His mother has had anither o' her sick turns, and is no expected to live ower the nicht."

"What can they want of me? But stay, James, I'll see for myself. Where is John?"

"Doon in the hall. He wouldna come up to face Her Ladyship, as his eyes are swollen with cryin'."

The Earl descended. Short space sufficed for explanation.

"Order round the light chaise," he called to a footman who stood within hearing distance. "Quick as possible," he added, "I shall drive."

Taking his mantle from the valet, and leaving a message for the Countess, the Earl, with his young friend, passed out beneath the escutcheoned portal

and down the lofty, granite stairway which led from the balcony to the broad, gravelled carriage-drive beneath.

Motioning to John, then following into the chaise himself, His Lordship took the reins from the lackey, and was soon driving rapidly down the green-arched avenue, whence the majestic elms and the veteran oaks were softly sighing their vesper hymn, and through the superb gateway, with its massive, stone pillars, to the outer world, with its dusky plainness and its frowning, starless sky, then on across the wold, along the sea-shore, and into the grounds of the lighthouse.

Preceded by his companion, Lord Glenmore entered the dwelling, and, with reverent tread, followed him into the sick chamber.

Mrs. Arnold was recovering from a violent spasm, and breathed with difficulty. They had propped her up with pillows to afford her air, and her ghastly countenance and closed eyelids proclaimed that she was not long for this world. At one side of the bed stood her husband; beside him Father Gregory, who had arrived from Arbuthnot to dispense the last rites of the church to the dying woman.

"Mother," whispered John, "he is come."

"Who? Ah, I recollect. That is well."

The Earl moved forward, ready to attend to any instructions which might be confided to him.

His presence seemed to revive the sufferer. She looked up, and motioned him to be seated.

"Maria," she said, "fetch that box."

The daughter, following the direction of her mother's glance, removed from its place a small casket of cedar-wood, which, apparently by way of ornament, occupied a corner shelf, and placed it on the bed.

"I would speak to the Earl alone, or—Father Gregory and John, you may remain."

Maria and her father withdrew.

The sick woman attempted to unlock the box, but her trembling fingers refused. John turned the key.

Raising the lid, she took from the inside a choicely-carved ebony case, which she placed in Lord Glenmore's hand.

"My God!" he gasped, as, unclasping it, he started to his feet. "How came you by this?"

"*Deo gratias!* It is he. I can yet atone."

"For what? Speak! Haste!" urged the suddenly excited and bewildered man.

"Give me time. I shall reveal all."

"Time! Why delayed you till now?"

In his intense eagerness he forgot the woman's weak condition.

John picked up the case, which the Earl, in his agitation, had dropped.

It contained the likeness of a British officer in full regimentals. A noble-looking face it was, with fair, open forehead, thickly fringed with golden curls, sunny blue eyes, and honest, happy-hearted expression over all. Opposite was attached to the

velvet lining a gleaming diamond ring, and a tiny ringlet of the same bright locks displayed in the miniature.

"She who gave me these was Dona Inez de Farino. I knelt beside her when she closed her eyes in death."

"You! Oh, Inez, Inez!" groaned forth her astonished visitor, as he bowed his lordly head in anguish.

The invalid changed her position, sipped a little of the wine which her son held to her lips, then, drawing forth a plainly-written manuscript, "Read that aloud," she said, and handed it to the Earl.

His Lordship took the scroll, turned the pages, and noted the signature, "Carlotta Arnold," with the names of two respectable villagers attached as witnesses of the declaration. He read:

"My father served in the Farino household when I was young. The Farino children made of us playmates, for the grandees of Spain have not the same cold looks to their poor which the English have. I loved the Senorita Inez, and, when old enough, was pleased to be her hand-maiden. Afterwards I met Arnold, who came with a message to his Colonel, then visiting at our castle. We loved, we were married; the Senorita shed tears when I left her, to live in the city.

The days passed. One evening I sat by twilight near the open door. A shadow fell across the threshold. Uplifting mine eyes there stood my former mistress. The face that her dark eyes lit

was pale—pale as the silvery autumn moon, and her voice came sweet and low, as the sound of the summer breeze when it sighs amid the orange groves.

'Carlotta,' she said, 'I am weary; so weary! Let me rest.'

'My adored Senorita! My house is yours.'

I placed her on my couch, and hastened to serve refreshments.

'I am sick,' she said, 'sick unto death,' and she motioned them aside.

'*Madre de Dios!* Say not so.'

'Carlotta, come nigh,' she murmured. 'We were young together. I can trust you. I am married. Yes!' as I started. 'You remember the gay Inglese with the golden hair, whom I pointed out to you that day in Seville—I cannot tell all. We wedded in secret, as father would not consent. If you go to England, give him this,' and she drew from her bosom that ebony case. 'Let none of my kindred know,' she said, 'only Philip—Philip Seaton.' That was all. I never, for one moment, quitted her side until, in smiling upon the face of the newly-born, she gently closed her eyes and passed beyond all pain."

The reader paused as if overcome; then, with sudden recollection, "The child?" he asked.

"Is—now before you."

From the proof already afforded, as well as from the instinctive affection of the Earl for the young artist, it was easy for His Lordship to

believe Carlotta's statement; and half-dazed as he was over the wonderful discovery, he joyfully arose and embraced his son.

The Confessor moved forward and elevated the signal of comfort for the dying.

"A few moments, Father, and it is finished. Read on," she said, "only a little more."

The Earl resumed the narrative.

"My husband went to Grenada before Maria's birth, and had not returned. The better to conceal matters, I had the Senorita buried as my sister. The child I nursed with Maria. Ere my husband returned my mind was made up. I should call the infant boy my son till I should learn more of his father; for maybe the Dona Inez had been deceived in her marriage, else why should her husband go to his own land and leave her behind. Arnold was proud of his twin children, and specially pleased that the boy had his fair skin and golden hair. Years after, Arnold was discharged with a pension. We came to his native place. I had never met the Earl till that day of the shipwreck. Something in his appearance struck me; the mention of his full name gave me light. I examined the likeness. Its bright locks corresponded not with the Earl's grey hair, and there were no lines on that forehead, so I persuaded myself that our benefactor was not the person represented in the picture.

Only when John was entrusted with his mother's portrait to copy was I convinced. I made enquiries, and was confirmed in my belief. Justice

kept urging me to reveal the past, but my courage failed. I could not bear that, for my long deception, I should forego my filial child's affection."

The reading was at an end. The "child," who had been her earthly idol, dearer to her than her own flesh and blood, arose and crossed over to the bedside of the dying woman.

"Mother," he said, "you have always been a kind parent to me," and stooping, he imprinted a last, loving kiss upon the cold, pale forehead.

Carlotta faintly smiled, and pressed the warm, young hand with a feeble grasp, for the shadows were fast approaching.

"I have done, Father," she said; "I am ready."

The Earl, with his newly-found son, solemnly retired from the chamber of death.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

LOVE'S YOUNG DREAM.

OVERPOWERED and exhausted Lord Glenmore appeared to be, and John begged him to retire to rest in the small half-studio, half-chamber which he had ever been proud to call his own.

"I shall gladly rest," replied His Lordship, taking a seat upon the humble, but tidily covered, lounge, "although you can scarcely expect me to sleep. Neither, I think, will you. So we had better keep each other company for the night. If you care to listen I will reopen to you a chapter in my life, the story of your sainted mother."

John was only too glad to comply. He first brought in some light refreshments which Maria had prepared for their lordly visitor; and after he had partaken of the same, the Earl proceeded with his narration:

"It was in the year of our Lord, 1843. The regiment in which my father, at my earnest solicitation, had purchased me a commission, was ordered abroad. Well can I remember the delight with which I buckled on my new armor to set out for Southampton, where lay our transport ship, almost unheeding the grief of my devoted mother,

who had rarely before trusted her only child long out of her sight.

Reaching our new quarters at Gibraltar, my admiration of a soldier's career soon began to [illegible]en. The monotonous round of garrison life, with all its various attempts at pleasure, became most wearisome, and irksome was the constraint to one accustomed, as I had been, to the utmost freedom.

A bull-fight at Seville. That was something to arouse us. It was talked over, smoked over, and at last agreed upon that a company of us subalterns should satisfy our curiosity by beholding this cruel, though time-honored, sport.

My usually strict observance of the Lord's Day was set aside when a pleasant afternoon found our party pushing their way through the motley crowd which thronged the wide Alcala, and gaining admittance to the immense, white-washed edifice, with its several thousands of curious spectators of every possible rank, from the lofty grandee, in his gorgeous attire, to the lowly manola, in her gaudy cotton gown.

We had scarcely ascended to our box when the trumpet-blast announced the clearing of the ring. I need not describe the whole performance. Suffice to say that two acts in the tragedy had been played, *picadors* and *banderilleros* had attacked and provoked, horses had succumbed, after galloping madly around the arena with protruding bowels trailing along the gravel, and the courageous brute,

now one shining mass of gore, was about to engage in the last act.

Forward stepped the *matador*, made his brief speech, waved his blood-red *engano*, poised his weapon, and the eager crowd are impatient for the moment to pass when they can give vent to their pent-up emotions in loud *Valientes* and *Vivas*, and deluge the conqueror with a hurricane of floral and other more enduring offerings.

One moment's delay, and the victory is reversed. A rush, a toss of the horns, and the brave assailant lies trampled in the dust.

A piercing cry rang out across the arena, arrested the attention of the furious animal, and called forth angry comments from the ladies' gallery, whence the interruption proceeded. One among them had fainted, and as she was borne past they raised her veil to admit of the reviving air.

The glimpse I caught of that face outcast all else from my memory. During the crowding out of the gay assemblage I learned that the lady, whose fate was destined to be interwoven with mine, was the daughter of a grandee of the first rank, who dwelt upon his ancestral domain near the ancient city.

After some manœuvring I obtained an introduction to the family. You have heard what followed. As neither Inez nor I had experienced stronger affection than that within the family circle, our love was the more genuine, and also the more dominant. When, too late, her proud father sought

to separate us, I pleaded equality in birth and fortune. He declared my faith was the principal barrier; he would rather see his daughter united with an infidel than with an English heretic. He had already thus lost a sister, although in her case there was some excuse for the sacrifice; the officer whom she had married had fought gallantly on behalf of Spain when overrun by the French, during the Peninsular war.

Stung by his mortifying refusal, I discontinued my visits at the castle; but as Inez and I had pledged ourselves to remain faithful to each other, we still kept up correspondence, and now and then, with the connivance of her maid, effected a stolen meeting by the river's bank. Heaven's artist alone could portray the soft, mellow light of those Andalusian eves, whose ethereal atmosphere seemed to waft the soul beyond the things of earth, Heaven's Advocate alone could appreciate the depths of sincerity with which we breathed forth our vows of eternal fidelity.

Our meetings being discovered led to Inez being placed under strict surveillance and ultimately sent —I knew not whither; nor could any amount of offered bribe procure me the desired information. To add to my misery, tidings arrived of the ill-health of my beloved father, in event of whose decease I should be compelled to resign my commission and return home.

In hopes of diverting my thoughts, as also to

escape the, to me, aggravating hilarity of my comrades, I set out for a ride into the interior.

Passing the Convent of St. Cyr, a sweet, low melody, wafted through the surrounding foliage, arrested my progress and caused me to slacken pace and listen. The voice of the singer at once magnetized me. I drew near, and raising myself in the stirrups, peered through the heavy branches which overtopped the high wall.

There, by the side of the glittering fountain, whose sparkling waters showered the lovely, floating lilies in the basin beneath, her white dress gleaming amid the trailing vines, pure as the lilies which floated near, was the form of her I loved. She did not hear my approach, but knelt, with clasped hands, devoutly gazing up into the cloudless azure, as she softly breathed:

'Sub tuum praesidium confugimus,
Sancta Dei genitrix,
Nostras deprecationes ne.
Despiciis in necessitatibus nostris
Sed a periculas cunctis,
Libera nos semper, Virgo,
Gloriosa et benedicta,
O sanctissima! O purissima!
Ora, ora pro nobis!'

It seemed like profanity to intrude; yet, the opportunity presented, was it well to delay?

When she paused, I made a slight rustling among the leaves, which at once drew her attention.

'Inez,' I whispered, for there might be other listeners.

She started, turned, and—oh, the expression which lit up her beautiful countenance!

Briefly as possible she recounted the persecutions which she had undergone, and the intention of her father to keep her in close confinement till she should succumb to his wishes.

'And will you?' I anxiously enquired.

'No. By the Blessed Virgin, never! I am yours, *mi amado*, yours—in life or in death.'

'Amen, my beloved, my own!' I fervently responded. 'There is no other course. You must risk the future and take flight with me.'

We arranged to put our project in execution the following evening. When nearing the hour of vespers Inez was to feign sickness, and, withdrawing to her own apartment, disguise herself in servant's apparel, thus enabling her the more readily to elude observation during her attempt to escape. The after-arrangements were left wholly to my keeping, and needless to say that, glorified by the beams of love, the responsibilities of the future affected me but lightly.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE ESCAPE.

My heart throbbed fast as, at the appointed moment, I approached the convent gate, also disguised in peasant array, which I had managed to borrow at a wayside cottage, leaving my undress and jewellery in pledge.

The huge iron bolt was noiselessly withdrawn, and Inez stood once more by my side. Silently I led the way to where my spiritcd steed awaited. She knelt upon the greensward—ah, me! I seem to see her now.

'My Father-God! forgive me,' she prayed, 'if I err. Holy Mother and all ye blessed saints, bear witness that I cheerfully resign kindred, country—all, save my most blessed faith, for him.'

We mounted, and short space saw us far beyond the reach of pursuers. I had provided an asylum, wherein my love could safely rest until, by the ceremonies of her own church and of mine, I had the right to remove her to the more abiding shelter of my own protection.

My cup of bliss was full. Those far-gone days come up to me now as a dream of paradise. I had but one painful reflection; that was as to how my

parents would accept the tidings, which I must of certainty impart, that I had united my future with one of that persuasion which I had ever heard hinted at as a species of idolatry.

A despatch arrived. My father was again prostrated; this time no hopes were entertained of his recovery. My immediate return was urged.

How should I act? I laid the matter, which caused me gravest apprehension, before my youthful wife.

'Go!' she answered. 'Delay not a moment. When the trouble is over, explain all, and come again for me.'

'Leave you! I cannot.'

'You must. I shall abide here in quietude, and daily pray for your safe return.'

Unwilling as I was to accept such advice, it was really, under existing circumstances, for the best.

Leaving my bride of five short months in charge of our chaplain, who promised to see that she lacked for no comfort, I bade her farewell, and went on board the vessel which would bear me to my native land and to the dear parents who awaited me there. But I weary you, my son?

'No, no! Assuredly not.'

Reaching England, I hastened onward to my father's bedside. He had somewhat rallied, though not sufficiently so to permit of my imparting any information which might agitate him. He lingered on for weeks, asserting that my longed-for reappearance had tended to spin out his thread of

life. My mother was too much absorbed in her own grief to observe that I was daily becoming more restless. At length, I concluded to divulge to her my secret, when suddenly my father became worse, and expired in her arms, with his last words blessing his only son, and commending the dear mother to his care.

When the obsequies were over, and my honored father lay peacefully beside the generations of his name whose dust reposes in the family vault, I determined to return at once for my wife. But again my intentions were frustrated by the serious illness of my remaining parent, who would not consent to my leaving her for any duration of time; and in her weak state I had not the cruelty to oppose her wishes. I therefore wrote to Inez, enquiring whether she could venture to travel alone; and if so, to come by a certain vessel, upon the arrival of which I would meet her.

In her reply, which I cherish as the last message from her beloved hands and warm, generous heart, she praised my filial piety, and assured me that she heartily approved of and acquiesced in my wishes. By a strange coincidence that letter was before me when you called me from its perusal to the wonderful disclosures afforded us.

Pleading an engagement, I left for Southampton to await the arrival of the SS. *Malta*, one of the British mail packets, which touched at Gibraltar on the homeward route from the East, for in her my wife had secured a passage. The vessel was

somewhat behind time; still, in those days a short delay was but lightly regarded. Scarcely had signs of unrest been displayed when another 'Homeward Bound' arrived, and reported the loss of the ill-fated vessel. She had sprung a leak in the Bay of Biscay, and, before assistance could be rendered, had sunk with all on board to a watery grave.

Tongue cannot describe the agony and remorse that took hold of me. Because of my foolish concealment I had lost my best earthly treasure, and had consigned to an early and a cruel death the being for whom I would gladly have sacrificed my own life. Grief and reproach of conscience threw me into a violent fever, during which my golden locks were bleached to white, the rosy hue of youth forever fled, and the vivacity of former years entirely quitted my frame.

One evening, as my mother tenderly lingered by my bedside, I revealed to her the bitter cause of my sufferings, and she mingled her tears with mine as we conversed about my beloved dead.

'My son,' she said, 'you acted most unwisely in retaining this harrowing secret from me. Was I ever a stern, exacting parent that you should have deemed me unworthy your confidence?'

'No, my noble mother! and for that very reason was I the more chary of imparting knowledge which might yield you sorrow.'

'It is no marvel, Philip,' she replied, 'that I should dearly love and fondly cling to that faith in defence of which my illustrious ancestor, he of the

Solemn League and Covenant, so fearlessly shed his blood. Still, God forbid that I should judge between any soul and its Omniscient Creator, who alone is competent to look beyond all the externals of worship to the purity and sincerity of the inner shrine.'

I wrote to my friend in Gibraltar, and ascertained that he had attended my wife on board the steamship agreed upon, and had remained beside her till close upon sailing time. Then I had no possible ground left for doubt as to her unhappy fate, which I have never ceased to deplore. It affords no trifling measure of consolation to find that matters were not as I imagined. Inez must have had presentiments of approaching illness, and so, at the last moment, returned on shore and found her way in her extremity to her former faithful maid, Carlotta, whom, in deference to my wishes as to strict privacy, she had not previously visited.

Now, my son, you know the chapter in my history most worth the knowing. You cannot supply the place of her I lost, no mortal ever will; but you can be to me the joy of my manhood and the staff of my declining years."

In the adjoining apartment an early dawn was beginning to dim the brightness of the surrounding tapers which reflected upon the lately-anointed, still, pale face of the unwaking sleeper.

CHAPTER XXXV.

IN WASHINGTON.

As our traveller approached the front of the Executive Mansion, familiar to the world at that unhappy period, round from the back premises issued a little lad, who, as he turned his frank, intelligent gaze upon the face of the stranger, appeared to invite her confidence.

Judging from his at-home appearance that he was a member of the Lincoln household, Alda paused and made enquiry as to whether the President reserved special hours for callers.

"I guess not," was the prompt reply. "He sees them at all hours, except when he's asleep."

"I wish I could see him now. I want his assistance."

"You'll have it, then; for father always does help if he can."

Alda looked up at the big house before her, evidently collecting her mind for the important interview.

With a momentary impulse the kind-hearted child seized hold of her hand.

"Come with me!" he said, and he drew her right along past the armed sentinels who kept guard at the portal, and into the Audience Chamber, where

sat the Chief, along with his secretary rapidly yet carefully scanning several newly-arrived despatches from the seat of war.

Unceremoniously the lively boy led his companion close up behind, and commenced to attract attention by a rather forcible pull of his father's coat-sleeve.

Turning, the grave face relaxed into a smile.

"Come, come, Tad! You mustn't interrupt me at present. I'll listen to you again."

"But, father," pleaded the undaunted one, "here's a lady wishing to speak to you."

The father could not resist. With a slight inclination of the head he awaited the stranger's request.

Quickly Alda imparted to him her desire. As she did so the pleasant face of the listener resumed its serious air, and contracted with a disappointed expression; for he had supposed that she was only an enquiring relative of some one engaged in the last conflict.

"Our rules in regard to blockade-runners are most stringent. Their constant infringement of the principle of neutrality has helped to prolong the war. Still, there can be no harm in your visiting the hospital."

The good President spoke a word to his secretary, who immediately prepared an order for admission.

"Painful, madam, are the duties often assigned me; yet, in times like these, private feeling must always yield to public interests."

Thanking him, she moved aside, to make way for some other suppliant; for Lincoln's official duties were constantly broken in upon by the presentation of private requests, and, to his blessed remembrance be it borne in mind, as Tad remarked, "Father always does help, if he can."

Alda drove straight to the hospital for the wounded. Armed with the invincible order, she soon obtained admittance, and, after waiting a space in the ante-room, was relieved by the entrance of a middle-aged lady, dressed in the now common garb of mourning, which was somewhat softened by the conventional white cap and apron.

"The patient has just fallen asleep," was her answer, upon Alda's explaining the object of her visit. "You could now take the opportunity of convincing yourself."

The nurse arose, and, inviting the visitor to follow, ascended the broad staircase. Gently opening the door of Ward 6, she invited her to enter, and, having first ascertained whether the patient still slept, beckoned her forward to the bedside.

"It is well these opiates take such good effect. Poor fellow! he'd have no rest without their aid."

As the words left the nurse's lips, the sufferer turned uneasily upon his pillow, and, bending over, Alda could plainly descry a now almost imperceptible line across the left cheek, the result of a severe wound received in boyhood's play, and rather rudely drawn together by the village sur-

geon. Scarcely could she restrain her emotions; but a touch of the lips from the nurse warned her that, for the present, she had better retire.

She had barely time to do so when the patient awoke.

"I had such a pleasant dream; how different the reality."

The wise and careful nurse held a glass of pure water to his lips; then, moistening a soft cloth in a bay rum mixture, gently cooled therewith the speaker's forehead and his hands.

"Now you may tell me your dream," she said, after she had seen him in as comfortable a position as his wounds would permit of.

"It was of my early days—of my sister."

"Who bears the name of Alda, which you repeated so often."

"I did! If I could only see her once more. Still, better as it is."

"Do not give way to despair. The war will come to an end some of these days; and as for your sister, she may hear of your case and come here to make enquiry."

The good matron won her charge again and again to converse upon the same subject, until at last returning strength warranted her in making the announcement that his sister was in the city, and merely awaited permission to place herself by his side.

"How did she learn of my fate?"

"From her own lips you may hear the story."

"When?"

"Whenever you feel able for an interview."

"I am able now."

The nurse gave a touch to the counterpane, and readjusted the pillows, then passed out into the corridor.

Shortly thereafter to the listening ear came the sound of a light footstep, the door was gently opened, a figure glided into the room, and the two, so long since parted, were locked in each other's embrace.

Besides suffering from severe flesh wounds, Wellesley had undergone the painful operation of having a deeply-lodged ball extracted, and his amendment was, in consequence, very slow.

By degrees he detailed his experience. Life with him had been most changeful at the Australian gold-fields, his destination upon leaving his ship, six years before, at Melbourne. A repetition of success and failure had disheartened him from writing home. At last, by what is termed a "stroke of luck," he had acquired a competency. "This," he said, "I forwarded to the Bank of England, and returned to my native land, but only to learn that my sister had recently quitted it. I resolved to cross the Atlantic and give you a joyful surprise, and had reached Liverpool with that intent, when, meeting a former school-mate, I was induced by him to try one trip in a blockade-runner. And this is the end of my folly."

"It might have turned out worse. We have much to be thankful for," replied his hopeful sister.

The weeks wore on. It was a mild afternoon in the sweet spring month of April, and Wellesley was able to move about again by the support of crutches.

"Whatever fate is in store for me, I'll soon have to meet it," he said, as Alda, who had just come in, was congratulating Mrs. Lyman over her brother's convalescence; "my strength is fast returning."

"There is great excitement at present; your case will probably be overlooked," was the encouraging reply.

"Will you continue at your vocation, Mrs. Lyman, should the war come to an end?" asked Wellesley of his late nurse.

"Until the hospital closes, I expect."

"And afterward?"

"I have shared enough in this world's gaieties to be tired of them, and intend to join a sisterhood whose members devote their lives to the work in which I find comfort.

"A peace there is in sacrifice secluded,
A life subdued, from will and passion free;
'Tis not the peace which over Eden brooded,
But that which triumphed in Gethsemane."

"You have no fixed home; no family?"

"I have had neither for several years."

"Would you not come with us. You have been

more than a mother to me in my sore distress. You know that Alda and I are orphans; that is to say, our father died when we were young, and our mother— Mrs. Lyman, what would you think of a woman who could leave her good husband and her little children, and never afterwards repent of the wrong, not even after her husband died of a broken heart; at least we were told so, in after years."

"Perhaps she did repent."

"Then why didn't she try to make amends?"

"Wellesley," interrupted Alda, "it grates upon my feelings to hear you speak thus of our poor, unhappy mother. Besides, it is neither pleasant nor polite to discuss family affairs before strangers, who cannot be expected to have interest in them."

"But Mrs. Lyman is not a stranger, and she is interested."

"Well, let me explain that my mother did try to 'make amends,' but was most rudely repulsed by pretentiously Christian people. If my dear, injured father could forgive and bless her, as he did with almost his latest breath, why should we dare to sit in judgment—"

"You were always a 'softy,' Alda. As for me, the woman who would act as my mother did—God might forgive her, but I never should."

The lips of the nurse remained sealed, and a deathly pallor overspread her countenance.

"What is it, Mrs. Lyman? Oh, Wellesley! your rudeness has shocked our friend."

"No, no Miss Graeme! Alda, have pity on me! I deserve it all; yet—Oh, my boy! my boy!"

A daughter's gentle hand held the glass of water to the lips of the fainting mother, and a son's repentant and affectionate glance met hers, as, with returning consciousness, she heard, "I take back all my cruel words; you came to me when I needed you most."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE OLD AND THE NEW.

THREE months from the date of her departure beheld the return to Montreal of our heroine, accompanied by her almost recovered brother.

Their mother did not form one of the party. "I am wanted here yet awhile," she said, "but will shortly follow you, though not to the residence of your father's relations. I have vowed myself to the service of God in the church of my ancestors. Still, I hope to be near you in any time of trouble."

From the rash immersion into which her overstrained feelings had hurried her, Mrs. Graeme had veritably arisen into a new existence. Noiselessly and unobserved, during the night succeeding that of her timely rescue, she stole out of her apartments in the Hotel l'Anglaise, and left the old life behind her forever.

Finding shelter in the neighboring convent, she was kindly assisted on by its inmates to the ancestral castle in Normandy, whence she crossed the Channel and procured that interview which Mrs. Aiken had confided to Alda. Calling at Clintonvale, the lonely penitent was refused admittance, and again returned to France, where she remained for years as companion to her aged grandmother.

At last Squire Clinton, struck with paralysis, in his weakness and loneliness bethought himself of his still unpardoned daughter, and, broken down both in mind and body, despatched a messenger entreating her to return to her early home without delay.

She gladly obeyed the summons, and, upon a respite of her parent's weakness, embraced the opportunity again to visit Scotland in quest of her children. But her second attempt proved quite as unsuccessful as the first.

Afterwards, while sojourning in Italy, she and her father had seen and admired Alda's portrait in the studio of John Arnold, from whom she had, unsuspected by him, gleaned much of the school-day life of her children.

Upon the death of the Squire, Mrs. Graeme discovered that her son had long before gone to sea and had since been lost trace of, and that her daughter had recently left for Canada. "I shall not be defeated this time," she resolved, and along with an American lady, who had formerly been her fellow-pupil in a *pension* in Normandy, she sailed for New York. It was while resting in that city that news reached her which turned her face to the South instead of in the other direction—the news that a young man, by name Wellesley Graeme, lay wounded, probably dying, in Washington.

The rest we know, with the exception that the delicate, pinkish hue had long faded out of the lady's cheeks, that her accent bore a strong flavor

of the Norman-French, and that her still golden hair had been carefully dyed a deep black, to save her intended patient a discovery which might injure him, the discovery that, in his weakness, he was at the mercy of a woman whom he had been taught to look upon as the incarnation of evil.

The sheet of ice which had surrounded Montreal when Alda left was gone, and the dancing wavelets of the early summer were now washing its busy shores. Their Uncle Graeme had come to the boundary line to meet the travellers, and as from the wharf his carriage rolled up through the centre of commerce, many a head was respectfully uncovered in honor of the worthy Representative and his joyfully-expected visitors.

As they turned into the square whereon Mr. Graeme's residence was situated, a splendid bouquet of pink and white rose-buds, arranged in a setting of green, was adroitly thrown into the carriage, and fell at Alda's feet.

"Your admirers haven't forgotten you," remarked Mr. Graeme, as, picking up the beauteous floral offering, he handed it to his niece.

"Every one seems to guess my favorite flower. How delicious!" and she bathed her blushing face in the gorgeous mass of fragrance.

Luxurious as city life was, Wellesley craved for the retirement of the country, and shortly after their arrival, the brother and sister were deputed to go down to their uncle's summer residence on the banks of the St. Lawrence.

Oh, what a season of delight! Inhaling the sweet odor of the flowers and the pure breath of the atmosphere, the wanderer from the southern seas could ramble with his faithful companion by the sparkling rivulet which meandered through the vale, or sit with her beneath the spreading foliage of the boundless woodland, where flitted, in their rightful freedom, the heaven-tinted jay, the rosy red-breast, and that tiny speck of living gold, the wild canary, whilst they cheerily recalled their childhood's days or made the forest arches ring with the joy-inspiring lays of "bonnie Scotland."

Now and again a shade would overcloud the face of our heroine as she reflected upon the words contained in that letter in her bureau drawer—the words of the reliable Mrs. Heath: "I'm afraid it's only too true about John Arnold. I see him often in company with Miss Bonner," etc.

Then, through the gloom would come up this consideration, "I have my mother and brother, why shouldn't I be satisfied? Still—but John could not have cared for me as I fancied he did." And with this attempted consolation the heart's longing was partially pacified.

One short year, and yet how much had been accomplished since Alda set foot upon the shore of a western world.

She and her brother sat on the vine-wreathed verandah enjoying the cool evening breeze which, sweet with the fragrant scent off the clover, was flapping the awning overhead. Wellesley, hitherto

apparently satisfied in his new location, abruptly asked his sister when it would suit her to return to Scotland.

Alda could not at once frame a reply. "How glad," she mused, "would this question have made me some time ago; but now—"

"Why, sister, do you hesitate? Have you no wish to go home again?"

"We have no home in the Old Land now."

"But we can easily make one. I shall buy back the family estate, and so realize the vision which nerved me through my hard course at the diggings."

"I do not know that it is worth your while. Nearly all the people of Kilmona district are moving from the locality, and as for Dunvalloch, I was quite disappointed."

"Surely you are not going to throw cold water on my pet scheme?"

"Purchase the property if you will, and prove a God-send to the few cottars and crofters that remain thereon; but I would rather remove further west on this great continent, and purchase a more extensive 'Dunvalloch' on the boundless prairie lands, then fetch out those old adherents of the family from their present poverty-stricken holdings to the brightness of a newer, larger sphere."

"You wax eloquent, sister; I fear that you've somehow got under the influence of the Communists. Your sentiments are not becoming the daughter of a Highland laird."

"After the manner of St. Paul, I have every reason to be a 'Tory of the Tories,' but, like our sainted father, my heart and mind are not proof against the miserable sights my eyes have witnessed. A Highland lady, whom I met in the South, actually implored me to 'keep my thumb down' on what I had observed of causeless destitution in the North of Scotland."

"Perhaps the class you refer to as suffering would not benefit themselves by coming out here."

"Grant them the opportunity. See, for example, that small island of Prince Edward, in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Think of the energy and perseverance of those intrepid men who left their small patch of cultivated ground and their slight chances at the fishing, to confront those leagues of wilderness overgrown with the giant trees of the centuries —think of the indomitable courage which set to work and felled the forest and reclaimed the swamp, and literally caused the desert places 'to rejoice and blossom as the rose.'"

"The forest does not require to be combated in the North-West."

"No; that would be one great advantage."

"I had heard, but it sounded like some far-away echo, of the destitution prevailing in Ireland and in the Highlands of Scotland, yet never really comprehended the facts until I visited both countries and had scenes imprinted on my memory which time will never efface."

"Don't you think, calmly speaking, that you are too hard on your own country? What is it the poet says of England, 'With all thy faults I love thee still,' or something to that effect."

"Is it proof of dislike to my country that I wish her to stand peerless among the nations of the earth or is it a sign of hatred of my friends that I try to help them clear the stigma which attaches to their otherwise unimpeachable character?"

CHAPTER XXXVII.

WALTER BONNER.

BEAUTIFUL was the face of nature. The smiling sun of the fair Canadian clime beamed down upon the glossy hair and the pensive countenance of her who sat, wrapped in reverie and apparently unconscious of the gorgeous vista which stretched away before; the noble river, with its wealth-laden vessels gliding in to their landing, or heading for the broad Atlantic, and the intervening panorama of various-tinted woodland and rich, rolling meadow, from which the countless varieties of wild-flowers peep up, star-like, their beauteous heads.

"A penny for your thoughts!" gaily exclaimed Wellesley, as he seated himself in luxurious idleness on the upper step of the verandah at his sister's feet.

"You won't reckon them worth that much. I was reflecting upon the Old Land and planning for the New; studying by what means I could assist to swell the tide of emigration to this vaster Britain of the West."

"The inspiration will, doubtless, descend upon you in due time, sister; meanwhile, let us have a chat about something nearer home. I have news for you."

Alda's heart gave a sudden throb, but she "possessed her soul in patience."

"You won't guess who was here when you were in town yesterday?"

A long breath—was it disappointment?

"What's wrong?"

"Oh, nothing! only you told me to guess who was here during my absence. Probably the driver of the mail-gig, or the butcher's boy, or Tilly's young man, or—"

Wellesley glanced up at his sister. Affected drollery was certainly not her *forte*.

"You're far astray," he answered. "I may as well enlighten you. You remember Walter Bonner?"

"Did he really come out here? I'm glad that I was away. I hope you did not invite him to return."

"The very thing I did. He looked so woe-begone at not finding you, that I asked him to stay and spend the afternoon. He did so, and I appreciated his kindness very much, more especially as he was brimful of the very latest news from Glenmore."

"I wouldn't place much confidence in any news that Walter Bonner would furnish."

"He showed me a letter from his mother which told of the approaching marriage of his eldest sister to John Arnold, or, to give him his proper title. Lord Seaton. Isn't John's story a most wonderful one? But, *en passant*, Bonner informed me that

the artist and he were formerly rivals for your affection. The former has got over *his* affection nicely."

"His affection was worth something while it lasted, which is more than can be said of Walter Bonner's. I feel mean in being forced to expose him, but, among the other news, did the 'rival' inform you how he has molested me with his so-called affection since childhood, cropping up, like some evil sprite, in the very centre of special enjoyment Did he tell you that his 'affection' inspired him to seize me rudely on the river's bridge and frighten me almost out of my wits, until, through his rival's affection, or, rather, manly sense of honor, he was dealt such a blow as sent him reeling down to a proper ducking in the flood beneath—"

"Stop, stop, Alda!" laughingly interrupted her brother. "I've heard enough of the poor fellow's enormities to cause me to reconsider my promise."

"What promise?"

"Well, compose yourself, like a good sister, and I'll tell you. But, really, I had not the faintest idea of the persecutions you had undergone. Why didn't you let me know before now?"

"The subject is not very interesting; at least, not to me. Then, uncle has some instinctive dislike to Walter Bonner, mainly, I infer, from his being a confirmed idler, and has forbidden him the *entrée* of his residence."

"That's why he came prowling out here, I daresay. 'John Arnold' and he must have changed

considerably since I met them last if the blackguardly Bonner has ripened into a saint and the hard-working and upright-souled Arnold into a fortune-hunter. Yet the fellow came to me with such a meek and suppliant expression on his countenance that I actually believed the boisterous lion had, by miraculous influence, been transformed into the gentle lamb."

"What about your promise?"

"I'm coming to that. After telling me of his past, which contains one very ugly episode, he took from his pocket a small, silver snuff-box, and what do you think it contained?"

"I couldn't imagine what."

"A curl of dark hair from that same shining head," and Wellesley looked up smilingly into the face above. "He stole it, to your great indignation, one day during recess, in the school-grounds."

"Oh, dear! this is too silly."

"Exactly what I thought, though I didn't like to hurt the poor chap's feelings by saying so. We are not all minded alike; that sort of thing seems foolery to me. But then, I haven't a soft spot in my whole composition, save where a certain sister is concerned."

"Have pity on her, then, and let us hear no more of Walter Bonner, in connection with myself, at least. There is one matter I'd gladly be clear upon. Whether correctly or not, I have always

suspected that same party of the murder of the Hermit."

"You are not far astray. He made a clean breast of the whole affair yesterday."

"He did! That's more than I would have given him credit for."

"You're very vindictive, Alda."

"It's in the family. The Graemes either love or hate; there's no mincing matters with them."

"Don't plead guilty to the savage in your nature, sister. For fashion's sake even we must learn to control our utterance."

Little thought the well-attended-to brother how, in deference to his feelings, his sister had controlled herself, and made no complaint of the bitterness she was experiencing through that "hope deferred which maketh the heart sick."

"You appear dull over it, Alda. We'll leave Bonner's account of his troubles for another time, and—here comes Dick with the mail-bag."

Both brother and sister were relieved by the agreeable diversion.

"A foreign letter!" exclaimed Alda. "Queerly addressed, too."

She broke the ponderous seal, and found that it had enclosed a letter from an Edinburgh Writer to the Signet, stating that her late father's first cousin, Chisholm of Glenfairn, had, shortly before his demise, purchased the estate of Dunvalloch, which he had "unreservedly bequeathed as a token of

good-will to Donalda Alexandra Graeme, daughter of the last laird of that ilk, to furnish a field wherein that same young lady might have scope to carry out her democratic principles."

"Dear old Glenfairn! And he used to tease me so. Well, well, 'It never rains but it pours,' says the proverb. A little while ago I was motherless, brotherless, friendless, and well-nigh penniless; now, thank heaven! I am rich in all that makes life worth the living for."

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE BIRTHRIGHT.

UPON the death of Mrs. Arnold the reputed son of the lighthouse-keeper was at once installed into his birthright as heir to the Earldom of Glenmore.

Unbounded was the joy and gratitude which filled the heart of the noble Countess when she was informed of the identity of her grandson with him who had already won so large a share in her esteem; while the tenantry on the estate and the servants of the household looked up to and recognized in their young master, so lately a commoner, "a born gentleman and every inch a lord."

The confession of Carlotta was a terrible blow to the fearless and upright man who had always acted for the best in all the relations of life. However, like a valiant soldier and a generous man, he fought his disappointment bravely, and, admiring the nobility of Carlotta's faithfulness to her mistress, forgave her dissimulation to himself, and thus allowed no jealous regrets to mingle with the honest tears which he shed over his beloved and ever-lamented dead. The Earl invited him to remove from the now solitary lighthouse and come to reside at the Castle; but Arnold firmly declined; "he knew his place better than that."

The aged factor upon the estate wisning to retire, a suitable position was thereby opened up for Arnold; and, though outward relations were changed between him and the artist, the son of the Earl was never ashamed to be known as the foster-son of the factor, and the mutual feeling of affection and respect continued through life the same.

The unexpected change of prospect for Sir Andrew Maitland, the former heir-presumptive to the estate, was so far mitigated by the fact that to the fortunate introduction given by the new-found heir his eldest daughter was indebted for her brilliant expectations as the *fiancée* of one of England's wealthiest sons, who had been the artist's close companion during years of study.

As for society—well, society always crowds upon the heels of success; and the less one is dependent upon society or its opinions, the more will society follow in his tracks and render him that obsequious homage which mere unostentatious merit could never hope to obtain.

Yet, despite his unexpected elevation, with all its attendant privileges, John's happiness was incomplete. Riches and honors were his, but the crown had fallen from his head, the grander by far than an earldom's crown—the resplendent diadem of a pure-souled, high-spirited woman's love.

He had regularly heard from his betrothed for the few months succeeding her arrival in Canada; then her letters had ceased, and, by degrees, his

foster-sister imparted to him the news which had reached the village, that Miss Graeme was an acknowledged belle in the city of Montreal, and that she was promised in marriage to one of the leading politicians of Canada.

And now a new trouble came upon the already perplexed, though much-envied, young man.

Mr. Bonner's surprising kindness at the period of "John Arnold's" hapless imprisonment was not the result of pure generosity. It was apparent to all, save the unsuspecting victim, that he had long been destined for the honorable position of son-in-law of the millionaire. Feeling himself ill-used under Alda's treatment, he had the more readily fallen into the trap by accepting the patronage in art of the father and the hospitable invitations of the mother; therefore, was often to be seen in the company of the daughter. Mrs. Bonner would graciously have condescended to accept the now distinguished artist for his personal merits and because of the love borne him by her daughter; but since his "coming to his rights," her eagerness to see the handsome Matilda a member of the aristocracy real had quite overcome her prudence, and, finding that her broadest hints were not taken advantage of, and fearful lest some foreign interloper might carry off the prize, she at last screwed up her courage, cornered his young Lordship, and, in the most choicely-persuasive words she could think of—proposed.

Astonished, shocked, and grieved as he was, her

hearer collected himself enough to assure the bitterly disappointed woman that, however much he might admire and esteem her amiable daughter, marriage with her was entirely out of the question, he being already engaged to another.

And now, conscience-debarred from the neighborhood of his recent stupidity, his whole soul reverted to the one love of his life.

He could not turn into any path which he and Alda had not trod together, nor gaze upon any beauteous scene which had not irradiated her eyes with joy. Every nook in the village spoke of her; even the tiny brook seemed to warble of the days when he steadied her steps across the shivering plank which served for a bridge, and the sea-grass-covered heights still re-echoed the merry peals of laughter in which they indulged while recalling exploits of their childhood's days, those bright and happy days when the senses are unblunted and the mind unseared by continual contact with a soured and sorrowing world.

"I must seek comfort in change," decided the over-worried heir, and so he resolved to travel.

As Miss Prophet, in her maiden loneliness, often sighed, "Men are but types of the pig creation; wish them to go in one direction, they're sure to go in the other."

Was it because he had resolved to banish all thoughts of Alda from his future that, before leaving, he must needs find himself upon the door-step

from which she had so often wished him a pleasant "Good-night"?

A trim maiden opened the door for Lord Seaton, for such was now John's recognized title, and ushered him into the neat drawing-room, where Mrs. Heath sat perusing the latest edition of the *Courier*.

The lady, though somewhat surprised upon the entrance of her visitor, treated him with utmost civility, and congratulated him upon his recent acquisition of title and fortune.

"I thank you sincerely; still, with much to be thankful for, I am truly miserable," was the unexpected reply.

"Miserable!" repeated the astonished lady.

"You may well express surprise, although you won't blame me when you know the reason."

John informed his much-interested listener of the unaccountable silence which had fallen betwixt Alda and himself.

"Strange that she writes to the same effect. Her constancy to you is remarkable, in view of your apparent neglect."

"Is it possible that she is still faithful to her promise; that she is not engaged to a Canadian?"

"The best answer I can furnish is in the fact that Alda has repeatedly written to you since her reception of your last letter. She can scarcely give credit to the rumor concerning your marriage to Miss Bonner, and as for your recent elevation—"

"Has that unfounded rumor reached her? And as for my recent elevation, I imagine a daughter of the ancient House of Dunvalloch is match enough for Britain's noblest peer."

"I agree with you there. Still, you must admit that appearances have, of late, been much against you."

"There will be no more misleading appearances upon my part. Having loved Alda, I have never been able, even when I tried to, to unlove her; neither have I bestowed a single thought upon any other since that first day when I beheld her, as a little child, clinging to the hand of her three years' older brother."

"God bless you for a truly noble man!" fervently responded his listener; "noble beyond all that riches and title can make you."

The much-relieved caller arose.

"Good-bye!" and as the sympathetic friend of both lovers gave the extended hand a hearty shake, she encouragingly added, "All will come right. Whom God hath destined for each other, no mortal power may separate."

"The stars come nightly to the sky,
The tidal wave unto the sea;
Nor time, nor space, nor deep, nor high
Can keep my own away from me."

CHAPTER XXXIX.

WEDDED.

"FINISH up about Walter Bonner now," suggested Alda, the morning after that on which we saw the sister and brother last.

"He told me," resumed Wellesley, "that 'John Arnold' and he had always been rivals for your affection, and that, as the son of a wealthy man, he imagined that he could easily outdo the son of an old soldier, who would not presume to declare his affection until he had bettered his position. From the first, Bonner says, you recoiled from his advances, and this only rendered him the more determined, and was, doubtless, the reason for his unintentional killing of the man who had never wronged him."

"I cannot understand—"

"Walter was passing the Hermit's abode when he saw 'Arnold' beside him; but, as he approached, the artist moved away. He then addressed the old man, who praised his rival, and recrimination ensued. Bonner always had a dreadful temper, and when aroused, lost all control over it. Getting furious, he used a most abusive term to his opponent, which was scarcely answered when a

terrible blow from the butt end of the golf club in Bonner's hand, across the old man's head, laid him low.

In sudden terror the assailant flung the body inside the shanty, and speedily returned home, where, with the assistance of his terrified mother, he contrived to have the suit which he had that day worn deposited on the seashore to favor the impression that he had committed suicide by drowning. Meanwhile, disguised in the livery of a footman, he boarded the train at a wayside station, and never stopped his journey till he had put the sea betwixt him and his crime."

"I was in Glenmore at that time, and never heard Bonner's name connected with the deed. His clothes were found on the shore, and it was the general belief that he had been accidentally drowned while bathing. You may guess the fright I got when he abruptly appeared before me in Montreal."

"He deplores his rash act so much that I feel inclined to forgive him. Still, one of his nature would be rather an unsafe companion for life. Eh, sister?"

"Yet you could recommend him."

"Oh, no! I simply delivered his message."

"A note was conveyed inside that bouquet which he threw into our carriage the day we arrived from Washington. I answered it, and begged him to desist from further persecution. He has not regarded my request."

"The poor fellow is possessed—of a mania, I

mean. However, he'll scarcely have courage to follow you across the ocean."

"That's one comfort. Once across we'll have no more of Walter Bonner, nor of his messages, either."

They descend the verandah steps, and stroll leisurely across the lawn.

"We ought to go into town and apprise uncle of our good fortune—about Dunvalloch—"

"Hush! I hear the sound of wheels. If it isn't Uncle Donald himself, and some one along with him."

"Who can have coaxed him to take a holiday?"

The question is soon answered. The driver stops the conveyance, and the passengers are coming towards them.

"John!" "Alda!" That is all, with a quiet hand-shaking all round. No "foolery," as Wellesley would term it; instead, a genuine Scotch down-keeping of display, even though the inter-mixed feelings of joy and wonder and intensity of thankfulness are almost too great to be suppressed.

"Come round to the stables, Wellesley. I want your opinion of my latest investment in horse-flesh," said Mr. Graeme to his nephew, and to Alda, "I dare say you can dispense with our company for a little while. Don't look so shy, lassie," he added, as he moved away, "I know all about it."

The knowing and most accommodating uncle, along with Wellesley, remained long enough at the stables to permit of all the troubles of the past

being smoothed away. Then the "lassie," having recovered from her "shyness," and with a countenance from which every trace of perplexity had vanished, rejoins them, along with her ever-constant lover and her only love-crowned king.

There was a grand wedding; no meanness should follow in the wake of a Graeme.

Not every day would Montreal behold the daughter of one of the oldest Scotch families, whose forefathers had not only distinguished themselves in the arena of politics and in the fields of literature, but had also bravely led the van in their country's battles, wedded to the talented heir of one of the noblest earldoms in her native land.

A thoroughly representative crowd, consisting of all creeds and classes, assemble in St. Paul's, where the Bishop conducts the marriage ceremonies, and many are the encomiums passed upon the dark-eyed bride and the noble bridegroom, whose artist eye and skilful hand will yet make familiar to the world many a gorgeous Canadian scene.

It is over. The crowd disperses, and the bride and bridegroom arrive at and are about to enter the flower-bedecked mansion of their uncle. A click of the hammer, a sharp report, and a curling cloud of smoke; but the pistol has been knocked upwards by the vigilant hand of the groomsman, and, with a volley of curses over his thwarted attempt, the intending assassin is thrust aside.

The newly-wedded pass in along with the guests, while Wellesley turns toward the assailant, who

has been secured and pinioned by the police. "Curse his good fortune!" was the imprecation which greeted the groomsman's ears, "that she should hang on his arm and smile up into his—fool's face, while she shrank from me as from a leper."

Raving and struggling, the prisoner was conveyed to the police station, where his conduct still proving outrageous, a medical man was summoned, who, upon examination, ordered the speedy removal of M. de Roche, *alias* Walter Bonner, to a lunatic asylum.

A short period given to sight-seeing and visiting of friends throughout Canada and the neighboring Republic, and Lord and Lady Seaton are on board a homeward-bound steamer in the busy port of Halifax.

The steam-whistle shrieks and the white clouds ascend with the black, and attendant friends bid farewell. Our company say "Good-bye!" and Alda tries to exact a promise from her uncle, who has accompanied them thus far, that he will soon retire from the activities of life and come to rest beside them in the Motherland.

"Maybe I will, child! Maybe I will," responded the noble patriot, "come to lay my bones alongside those of my kin who sleep anear the soughing branches in the auld kirkyard; though, as long as I have energies left it behooves me to devote them to the service of this great, rising country which has been such a good foster-mother to me."

CHAPTER XL.

GRATEFUL HEARTS.

MERRILY chime the church-bells this fair Sunday morn.

Our friend of former years, Robbie, wears a peculiarly satisfied look upon his withered countenance as, with right good-will, he tugs the bell-rope. Rows of happy young faces hasten along, each passing with a friendly bow, or a blithe "Good-morning" to the aged ones who follow, with slower step, towards the sacred edifice on the height.

See those two elderly females, dressed in sober black, each carrying a Bible and a clean, precisely square-folded handkerchief in one hand, and a sprig of rosemary, or a trifle of mignonette and sweet-william in the other. How interesting seems their converse.

"A gladsome sicht will it be for my auld een, Mrs. Mason. Little wot I when I tended him in the fever and wiped the cauld sweat off his wee, thin face, and gied him the doctor's drugs tae coax the sleep that wouldna come, and at last saw his bonnie blue eyes close like the gaun oot o' the brichtest candle—ah! little wot I tae see this day."

"Aweel, Eppie, ye hae muckle tae be thankful for, and sae hae I. But, between ourselves, do ye

no think that Mrs. Aiken was inclined tae pin her faith ower muckle on doctors? College lear is a grand thing, but ye ken, Eppie, an ass will aye be an ass, though he glean fodder in a' the colleges in Christendom."

"Still, it's a braw notion tae hae a handle tae yere name; and doctors maun live as weel as ither folk, and they maun tak their chance that deal wi' them."

"That's sae, Eppie. As for me, by dint o' moderate eatin' and drinkin', I hae managed thus far withoot them. And when Dawvid caucht cauld wi' overwark, I joost bathed his feet in hot water, and mixed him a tumblerful o' guid whusky toddy, then sent him aff tae bed, and he was a' richt in the morning."

"I'll no argue the maitter with you, Mrs. Mason. But the doctors are not a whit worse than the lawyers, and, bad as they are, ye'll find a guid ane here and there."

"It's to be hoped this century will no produce sic anither rogue as Finlay, the godly-faced robber o' the widow and orphan. The lawyers canna weel cheat withoot yere finding it oot, even if ower late; but the quack can kill withoot being accountable tae ony, so lang as he keeps his ain secrets, and gies his useless compositions thae Latinized names sic like as he gies the diseases that attack the human frame."

"I missed the Aikens sairly. After Geordie gaed tae Canada, Archie used tae answer his letters,

and, though I couldna mak the sense o' his lang-nibbed words, dootless Geordie would, for callants that gang tae foreign pairts come hame speakin' sic unco language their ain mithers canna understand them."

"My leddy telled me that when the ill-tempered jade, Jean, wouldna alloo the laddies aboot the hoose, ye lent them yere spinning-wheel tae mak twine for their kites. Bless her bonnie een! to think that for a few nichts' shelter and a bite of common food, me and my auld man should noo hae a hoose o' oor ain."

"Yes, mistress. The ways o' the Lord are wonderful. But hoo eam she tae find ye out?"

"I was sittin' ae eauld winter's day by my lonely fireside, and dull and waesome was I, thinking o' my laddie that was lost at sea. Ye may suppose hoo amazed I was when a carriage and pair, wi' coachman and flunky, dressed oot in span bricht livery, drew up fornent my puir door, and out o' it steppit a braw leddy, dressed up in silks and velvet. But mair sae was I confused when I heard a sweet voice enquire at Neebor Brown's if any one o' the name o' Mason lived here. I had barely time tae gi' my auld cap a straighten when I heard the rustlin' o' the silks and was elaspit in the airms o' the stranger. It eam on me sae unawares that I fairly lost my breath, and I couldna weel imagine what it all meant till she smiled with her father's ain cheery smile, as she said. 'Have ye forgotten wee Alda Graeme, who used to sup out of yere

porridge bowl?' 'And it's really you, ma dearie!' quoth I, 'yet hoo could I discover ma wee, fatherless lassie, amang all these feathers and laces?' And oh, but she lauched merrily as she made answer, 'That's nothing, Mrs. Mason, my dress may be different, but my heart is the same.'"

"She was aye a winsome wean. Are they gaun tae Canada this summer?"

"I hear they're gaun to the Heelands. It's reported that Graeme o' Dunvalloch is to be married. Lady Seaton is unco proud o't, they say."

"Ech sirce! What for would she like her braw brither tae get marriet?"

"Losh, ye ken, Eppie! She's come o' an auld family, and has some pride in her maiden name."

"Is't true that she and her ain guidman, His Lordship, were like tae gang through't because o' the drunken body o' a postman stealing their letters when they were far separate?"

"Dinna be sae hard on the auld man, Eppie. My version o' the story is that Miss Bonner, having a notion o' His Lordship frae the days he was a puir lad, bribed the postman tae keep the correspondence, so that she micht do Miss Graeme oot."

"That's liker the thing. Men may be bad eneuch, but ye generally find that a woman's at the root o' all mischief. But aboot Her Ladyship's brither—I dinna approve o' relations getting married. Lady Seaton is a cousin o' her ain man, isna she?"

"No exactly that. It's this way, if I can gang

through't. The young Laird's mither was the brither's daughter o' Lady Seaton's grandmother."

"Weel, weel! I scarce comprehend ye, but I ken they're connected somehoo, if not within the forbidden degrees."

"We shouldna creeticize oor betters. Just think hoo the Lord sent Isaac to mairry his ain first cousin."

"And muckle peace he got thereby. Besides—but, hush! here comes the minister."

The bell stops. The pastor, arrayed in his new vestments, emerges from the vestry, and, following old Robbie's stiffening gait, moves slowly up the aisle. The aged women rise off the crowded stairway to let them pass; they ascend, and the preacher, entering the pulpit, bends his head in silent prayer; then, rising, gives out the opening hymn.

Know you that talented divine, who has preferred the healthy and encouraging atmosphere of Glenmore to the richer and more restful city parish? Well do the villagers know. It is Archibald Aiken, who, along with his widowed mother, has returned, by cordial invitation, to his native place.

We look around, but we look in vain for many of the faces which aforetime made home-like the ancient building. Mrs. Henderson is there, overtopped by her stalwart sons and buxom daughters, but the sturdy and hard-working sire will wield the hammer no more. Mr. Bonner is there with his still unmarried daughters, but the idolized son

and brother has never returned to his magnificent home, and the wife and mother lies resting from earthly sorrow aneath the marble slab outside. The sunny-tempered Soutar Thomson has smiled his last upon earth; Miss Prophet's shrill voice is unheard, and Miss Peebles sits no more in her hard-backed pew.

But in that pew behind, in that softly-cushioned, crimson-lined pew, we recognize a somewhat familiar countenance. We look a little nearer. Yes—it is the face of the late Miss Peebles, now the face of the present Mrs. Elder Forbes.

After six decades of serene bachelorhood, it had suddenly dawned upon the upright, though rather close-fisted elder that it "was not good for man to be alone," and with that energy which had enabled him to exist for three-score years without a help-mate, he donned a choice-drawn linen shirt-front of his mother's spinning, and his carefully preserved forty-years-old suit of broadcloth, and, with a stout walking-stick in his hand, tramped quickly along the seven miles of road which intervened between his farm and the residence of Miss Jannetta Peebles. And, finding that lady at home, and in a condescending humor (she had sold an unusually large quantity of berries that day), before allowing his ardor to cool, he courageously disclosed his message—to beg for the "honor of her hand in marriage."

Miss Peebles set down the fruit-jar she was hold-

ing, and put her hand to her forehead. There seemed to be a great buzzing somewhere. Had the bees escaped, and were they swarming round her?

Nothing so lively; only a still, tall figure in black, who stood patiently awaiting an answer to the most momentous question he had ever asked a woman.

Miss Peebles looked at the figure; then she looked at her hands—those bronze-colored, toil-hardened hands which had never been pressed in a lover's palm through forty long years of loneliness.

"So you want to marry me?" she asked.

"I do."

"Will you ever cast up my age again?"

"Not if you live to be as old as Methusaleh."

And he never did. No happier, "sonsier" couple than Elder Forbes and his thrifty wife are to be met with on all the country-side.

We had almost forgotten that important personage, Jean, the terror of Alda's childhood. Faithful was she, with all her shortcomings, to the Aiken family, never having contemplated any change of quarters, whatever the inducement offered. As she grew older, however, her temper, never of the sweetest, sometimes waxed unbearable; so much so that, at last, Mrs. Aiken ventured to suggest that she retire, to rest upon her earnings.

"Rest!" exclaimed the invincible servitor; "that micht do very weel for me, but what about you? Wha would find yere specks when ye tyned them,

or look aifter the hoose when ye gaed stravaglin? I'll allow I'm no sae particular as I have been, and joost a wheen cranky forbye, but ye ken ye were aye a fiky body, and ye're no improvin' with age. Still, for a' that, we've tholed ilk other ower lang tae speak o' separatin' now." And with this winding up side-thrust, Jean, "as a warrior worthy of his steel," walked triumphantly off the battlefield.

CHAPTER XLI.

PASSING ONWARD.

THE nearer we approach to the boundary of our years, the better we understand the apparently contradictory answer given by the patriarch to the imperial ruler of Egypt, when the latter, in saluting the aged man, asked the very ordinary question, "How old art thou?" Looking forward how long, looking backward how short, appear the "days of the years."

Many a summer's sun has set since the truly wedded were welcomed home with the shouts of the peasantry and the quieter joy of the Castle occupants. The aged Countess has serenely and contentedly passed the bourne to the realization of the larger life. Her son has thrown open his London mansion, and his daughter-in-law therein presides, for a short space, during the season. The responsibilities of an avowedly Christian life she cannot idly deal with, and her projects for the elevation of others preclude over-indulgence of self.

"Alda," in the cheerful accents of the Earl, "our artist awaits your coming."

"Here we are, Grandpa!" and disengaging the arms of the younger Marion from her neck, Lady Seaton emerges from the garden bower.

"Leave the bairn with me," said the Earl, and the "bairn," nothing loath, remains to list some oft-repeated story of the olden days; while the mother proceeds toward the balcony, ascends and enters by a side door, which leads to the studio of the artist. A picture stands on the easel, but the painter is not to be seen.

"Excuse me, Alda!" as he appears from the front hall, "the mail-bag has arrived, and contains letters for you; so the sitting will have to be postponed."

Lady Seaton is gratified by a goodly showing of letters and newspapers.

The first envelope to be opened was addressed in that fair Italian hand in which was penned, "Though we lived together for one hundred years we could not understand each other." But, oh! they understand each other now.

"Poor mother!" exclaimed Alda, in vain endeavoring to repress her emotions, "she is away ministering among the Indians. I wish well to all sorts of people, but I couldn't go to live among these creatures!"

The lover-husband looked up from the note he was perusing, and with one of his quiet but much-meaning smiles, "I cannot blame you, Alda," he said, "human nature naturally shrinks from unpleasant occupation. Still, I believe that, should duty call for the sacrifice, you have both nerve and will enough to accomplish it."

"I'm afraid not. Yet, mother does not term it 'sacrifice.' She appears to be contented, and even happy."

"And she doubtless is so. It was no common grant of grace which enabled your beautiful and accomplished mother, more delicately reared than either of us, to act the good Samaritan for the meanest of our kind."

"I seem to have everything, while she—"

"Do not repine, my darling wife, on her account. Her life is quite as complete as yours in the manner she desires it to be. Indeed, you and I, and all of ours, have every reason to thank God for the way by which He hath led us, for surely 'goodness and mercy have followed us all the days of our lives.'"

Lady Seaton picked up another letter. "I am glad," she said, "that we made over Dunvalloch to Wellesley. His wife is more at home in Skye than I could ever be."

Smilingly she read the news, and was at last compelled to laugh outright when she came to the graphic description of a visit to one of the aged cottars. "I tried to keep my gravity," wrote her lively sister-in-law, daughter of Chisholm of Strathgay, "when, during the old lady's recital of the wondrous deeds of the centuries of Graemes, Wellesley turned nervous and looked like language unutterable. She dilated over the great Christopher the sage; the gallant Colonel, your grandfather; your granduncle, who astonished Dr. Johnson, etc., till my good husband could bear it no longer, and startled the old lady no less than he shocked myself,

by the abrupt exclamation, 'Cut the story short, Granny! I've heard it a hundred times.'"

But, raising her eyes, Her Ladyship observed no signs of mirth responsive on her husband's countenance.

"Why! What makes you look so glum, John?"

"I have been glancing over this Canadian journal."

"Does it contain bad news?"

"I observe a notice of the untimely death of Walter Bonner," and he passed over the newspaper. "For all your very excusable dislike to him, you'll feel sorry for his unfortunate ending."

Eagerly was the report scanned.

Walter Bonner, discharged as cured from the lunatic asylum, had resorted to his former loose style of living, until, through the death of his mother, and subsequent loss of his father's fortune through the failure of Scotland's greatest bank, the Western, he was reduced to the necessity of earning his own living. Mr. Graeme, who had never favored the young man in his palmier days, came to his assistance, and, supplying him with needful funds and much good counsel, sent him away from former bad influences to a good situation which he had procured for him in that progressive city of learning, Toronto, the Edinburgh of Canada.

Change improved Bonner only for a short time. His old habits overcame him, and, through engaging in a street brawl, he found himself lodged in

the penitentiary, whence, after his release, he was kindly conducted to the Shelter of the Salvation Army. Under their Christian treatment, he professed repentance; but once more broke loose from restraint, and, eluding the search of the Army officers, met the tragic fate recorded in the Montreal *Herald*, death through asphyxia, while passing the night upon a lounge in a drinking saloon, where his boon companions had left him.

"Poor Walter!" and, woman-like, tears streamed from the eyes of her whom he had formerly persecuted to the uttermost; "he was not wisely brought up."

"There was something in that. The poor fellow must have had a miserable experience lately. We can well afford to forget all his faults, and leave him, as the Hermit did, to the mercy of his God."

The sound of prattling childhood floated sweetly down the hall, and the mother wiped away her tears and smiled a joyous welcome.

The time-honored village school is replaced by a more pretentious structure; but, like all that fitly fill the niche God meant them for, aye treasured is its memory.

The minds of outsiders having been opened up to the often illiberal treatment accorded the descendants of heroes in the Scottish Highlands, a Royal Commission was instituted, which resulted in benefit for the oppressed.

Prince Edward Island was annexed to the Dominion of Canada in the year 1873, and a bill

was shortly thereafter passed in Parliament compelling proprietors to sell their lands, at fair valuation, so that every farmer may now own the land which he cultivates; and widely famed as the most health-inspiring of sea-girt islands, thousands of sojourners annually seek its shores. And from that speck upon the ocean, that smallest of all the provinces of Canada, some have gone forth to sacrifice young life in upholding the Empire's glory; while such as the sublime philosopher and soulful poet-archbishop, O'Brien; the scholarly university president, Schurman; the gifted statesman, Sir L. H. Davies; the upright-minded ex-Governor Laird, and others, have made their mark, amid the world's ablest competitors, afar beyond the island of their birth.

But how rapidly have the seasons improved the aspect of the continent. Forests have disappeared before the axe of the woodman, and the timber therefrom has been borne away to assist the varied enterprises of many a distant realm. That gigantic and most patriotic achievement, the Canadian Pacific Railway, of which Mr. Graeme was the chief promoter, has opened up vistas formerly undreamt of all along its line, from the fertile farming districts of the midland and further-off ranches of the North-West, to the extensive fisheries of the Pacific Coast, where teeming waters offer rich reward for the hands of the active fisherman.

Those loftier hours draw nigh when all the

cultured of the Motherland will be able to tell of their sojourn in this newer sphere; and if, as the stranger stands by Niagara's flood, or skims the tide around the Thousand Isles, or strays along the shining shores of the broad Pacific, he perceives no glittering pagoda of idol worship and lists no distorted legends of the past, he shall witness, in every settlement, the activity of hopeful enterprise, and hark, in every breeze that sways the forest branches and in every plash that beats upon the furrowed strand, the song of advent for those days to be when the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man shall be the universal creed and vital guiding-spring of action, and through all our broad Dominion shall permeate that unimpeachable righteousness which, above all else, truly "exalteth a nation."

CHAPTER XLII.

EVENING'S CALM.

YOUNG as the great Dominion is, compared with the empires and kingdoms across the wave, full many a lustrous name is engraven upon its records; for long is its honor roll of heroes, martyrs, sages, patriotic statesmen, public-spirited business men, successful artisans and farmers, scholars, zealous ecclesiastics and generous-hearted philanthropists; but brightest of all is the laurel which encircles the silvered head of the beloved of the people and the honored of his Sovereign; for the years will come and go, and generation after generation will be born to live and die upon this greater Britain, but never, while the maple reddeneth or the golden glory gleams athwart our sea-wide lakes, shall the name of Donald Graeme, the brave and generous upbuilder of his adopted country, be forgotten.

It was near the end of the eighties. A pestilence broke out on a West India island, and terror reigned supreme. Closed were the churches and schools, and deserted were the streets, for absolute fear had taken possession of the masses.

A hospital was improvised by some courageous medical men, but nurses were not to be procured.

Forward came three figures in grey; in the midst the still erect form of Sister St. Anthony. Look at her well! for this is the last glimpse you shall ever have of one of the fairest types of all God's fair creation. The beautiful face, seraphic now with an aureole from the nearing heaven, is set toward the lazar-house, and she and her devoted companions, in the name of a pitying Saviour, enter therein.

They watched and comforted and served through the lingering weeks of torture, till Mercy ceased the plague. Then, worn and weary, walked forth —two of the Sisters. The third— Who shall say that the Christ-redeemed soul of the willing martyr, purified through service and sanctified through suffering, is not accepted before God's holy altar?

And now of her who, forty years agone, wept the orphan's bitter tear over the grave of her beloved father. The seasons have dealt tenderly with her. The coronet of a Countess, with its strawberry leaves o'ertopped with pearlets rare, gleams brightly upon the now silvering tresses, and abundant wealth has crowned her lot. But the chief cause for thankfulness on the part of the now Countess of Glenmore, "Canada's Countess," thus styled because of her own and her father's hobby, is that opportunity has been afforded her to carry out the aspirations of her youth. She has gathered of the friendless of the overcrowded cities and of the so-called surplus population of the rural districts in the olden land, and has assisted, out of her largess, their removal to the broad, free land which

she will never cease to love. Her daughters, imbued with her spirit, lead on in the modern march of improvement; and with the yet abounding enthusiasm of her youth, she fondly encourages her two powerful ally sons, the one to plead the people's cause in the Parliament of Great Britain, and the other to dignify labor by engaging in the extensive fish and fruit-canning industries of the Pacific Coast.

Every alternate autumn's sun sheds its genial rays upon Glenmore's gifted Earl and his devoted wife, as they sit upon the piazza of Captain Wellesley Graeme's Canadian home, the newer Dunvalloch, looking abroad over the richest grain-fields under all the blue arc of heaven, upon which the crofters from the far-off Isle of Skye are busily reaping the golden harvest. And there, looking back in thankfulness, looking forward in hopefulness, crowned with richer far than an earldom's crown, the love of earth's lowliest and the favor of heaven's Highest, we bid them a last farewell.

A dignified gentleman stands on the corn-field, talking to the overseer, whose good-natured countenance reminds one forcibly of a certain Master Crumbie, *alias* Tam Crum, the waif of bygone days in the distant village of Glenmore. The visitor has grasped the horny hand in his soft, white palm, and introduced himself, in the guid braid Scottish tongue," as Geordie, the son of Eppie, the hard-working widow of old.

Though "Geordie" did not fulfil his mother's

sanguine expectations as to "thumping the pulpit Bible," her gifted son had mounted the ladder in the profession of his choice, until, at last, he has gained that prize so coveted by the learned in the law, the position of Judge of the Supreme Court. Yet "Geordie," in his success, has not forgotten the day when the sturdy young shipwright was suddenly struck down by a broken spar and borne home from the building-yard to rest upon the couch from which he would never again rise, and the advice then imparted to his son has been a certain aid to that son's steady conduct and persevering upward career.

Often the earnest climber felt that dying father's bronzed hand upon his flaxen curls, and heard again, "Geordie! I am gaun to leave you. I would fain hae seen ye reared, but the Lord wills otherwise. I hae naething to leave ye beyond my blessing. Fear the Lord, and be kind tae yere mither, and aye remember to do the richt; for greatness is only mortal, but guidness is eternal. Keep a firm grip o' the Ten Commandments, and attend ye aye tae the sailing orders o' the Great Commander. Then, though the voyage o' life be lang, and the storms be mony, ye'll anchor safe at last."

A kite is soaring away into the pinkish-white clouds that flit across the tender blue, and the aforetime Geordie turns to the smiling face of the lad who tightly holds the string.

"Times have changed, my boy! You know nothing of the difficulties which your father and I

experienced ere we could float our kites. First, to work for the money to purchase thread; then to coax my thrifty though affectionate mother into allowing us to twist the same upon her spinning-wheel; then, last of all, the oft disappointing efforts to mount our kites through the rime which so often brooded over our seaside village."

"That's so," added his genial host; "despite the discouraging wail of the pessimist, the world moves on to betterment; and, as with the kite, so with many a specimen of the human race. Beneath the depressing conservatism of an olden clime one fails to mount into a higher altitude, but in this great and ever-enlarging sphere of action he may arise, as on buoyant wings, to heights well-nigh supernal."

"Or, to put it mair plainly, Maister," broke in a hearty, healthy-lunged voice at "Dunvalloch's" elbow, "men that are willing tae work may gang idle and stairve in the auld countrie; but, wi' the help o' the Lord, every honest man can mak a guid living in Canada."