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Amelia E. Barr**

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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK A DAUGHTER OF FIFE ***

A DAUGHTER OF FIFE

By Amelia E. Barr

Author Of "Jan Vedder's Wife"

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CHAPTER I. — THE BEACHING OF THE BOAT.

*"Thou old gray sea,
Thou broad briny water,
With thy ripple and thy plash,
And thy waves as they lash
The old gray rocks on the shore.
With thy tempests as they roar,
And thy crested billows hoar,
And thy tide evermore
Fresh and free."*

—*Dr. Blackie.*

On the shore of a little land-locked haven, into which the gulls and terns bring tidings of the sea, stands the fishing hamlet of Pittenloch. It is in the "East Neuk o' Fife," that bit of old Scotland "fronted with a girdle of little towns," of which Pittenloch is one of the smallest and the most characteristic. Some of the cottages stand upon the sands, others are grouped in a steep glen, and a few surmount the lofty sea-washed rocks.

To their inhabitants the sea is every thing. Their hopes and fears, their gains and losses, their joys and sorrows, are linked with it; and the largeness of the ocean has moulded their feelings and their characters. They are in a measure partakers of its immensity and its mystery. The commonest of their men have wrestled with the powers of the air, and the might of wind, and wave, and icy cold. The weakest of their women have felt the hallowing touch of sudden calamity, and of long, lonely, life-and-death, watches. They are intensely religious, they hold tenaciously to the modes of thought and speech, to the manner of living and dressing, and to all the household traditions which they have cherished for centuries.

Two voices only have had the power to move them from the even spirit of their life—the voice of Knox, and the voice of Chalmers. It was among the fishers of Fife that Knox began his crusade against popery; and from their very midst, in later days, sprang the champion of the Free Kirk. Otherwise rebellions and revolutions troubled them little. Whether Scotland's king sat in Edinburgh or London—whether Prince Charles or George of Hanover reigned, was to them of small importance. They lived apart from the battle of life, and only the things relating to their eternal salvation, or their daily bread, moved them.

Forty-two years ago there was no landward road to Pittenloch, unless you followed the goats down the steep rocks. There was not a horse or cart in the place; probably there was not a man in it who had ever seen a haymaking. If you went to Pittenloch, you went by the sea; if you left it, there was the same grand highway. And the great, bearded, sinewy men, bending to the oars, and sending the boat spinning through clouds of spindrift, made it, after all, a right royal road.

Forty-two years ago, one wild March afternoon, a young woman was standing on the beach of Pittenloch. There was an ominous wail in the sea, telling of the fierce tide yet to come; and all around her whirling wraiths of vapor sweeping across the level sands. From a little distance, she appeared like a woman standing amid gray clouds—a sombre, solid, figure; whose attitude was one of grave thoughtfulness. Approaching nearer, it was evident that her gaze was fixed upon a fishing boat which had been drawn high upon the shingle; and from which a party of heavy-footed fishermen were slowly retreating.

She was a beautiful woman; tall, supple, erect; with a positive splendor of health and color. Her dress was that of the Fife fisher-girl; a blue flannel jacket, a very short white and yellow petticoat, and a white cap drawn over her hair, and tied down with a lilac kerchief knotted under the chin. This kerchief outlined the superb oval of her face; and made more remarkable the large gray eyes, the red curved mouth, and the wide white brow. She was barefooted, and she tapped one foot restlessly upon the wet sands, to relieve, by physical motion, her mental tension and sorrow.

It was Maggie Promoter, and the boat which had just been so solemnly "beached" had been her father's. It was a good boat, strong in every timber, an old world Buckie skiff, notorious for fending in foundering seas; but it had failed Promoter in the last storm, and three days after he and his sons had gone to the bottom had been found floating in Largo Bay.

If it had been a conscious criminal, a boat which had wilfully and carelessly sacrificed life, it could hardly have been touched with more dislike; and in accordance with the ancient law of the Buchan and Fife fishers, it was "*put from the sea.*" Never again might it toss on the salt free waves, and be trusted with fishermen's

lives. Silently it was drawn high up on the desolate shingle, and left to its long and shameful decay.

Maggie had watched the ceremony from a little distance; but when the fishers had disappeared in the gathering mist, she slowly approached the boat. There it lay, upside down, black and lonely, far beyond the highest mark of any pitying tide. She fancied that the insensate timber had a look of shame and suffering, and she spoke to it, as if it had a soul to comprehend her:—

“Lizzie! Lizzie! What cam’ o’er you no to bide right side up? Four gude men to your keeping, Lizzie, and you lost them a’. Think shame o’ yersel’, think shame o’ yersel’, for the sorrow you hae brought! You’ll be a heart grief to me as long as you lie there; for I named you mysel’, little thinking o’ what would come o’ it.”

For a few minutes she stood looking at the condemned and unfortunate boat in silence; then she turned and began to walk rapidly toward the nearest cluster of cottages. The sea fog was rolling in thick, with the tide, and the air was cold and keen. A voice called her through it, and she answered the long-drawn “Maggie” with three cheerful words, “I’m coming, Davie.” Very soon Davie loomed through the fog, and throwing a plaid about her, said, “What for did you go near the boat, Maggie? When you ken where ill luck is, you should keep far from it.”

“A better looking or a bonnier boat I ne’er saw, Davie.”

“It’s wi’ boats, as it is wi’ men and women; some for destruction, some for salvation. The Powers above hae the ordering o’ it, and it’s a’ right, Maggie.”

“That’s what folks say. I’m dooting it mysel’. It’s our ain fault some way. Noo there would be a false plumb in yonder boat, though we didna ken it.”

“Weel, weel, she failed in what was expected o’ her, and she’s got her deserts. We must tak’ care o’ our ain job. But I hae news for you, and if you’ll mak’ a cup o’ tea, and toast a Finnin haddie, we’ll talk it o’er.”

The Promoter cottage was in a bend of the hills, but so near the sea that the full tide broke almost at its door, and then drew the tinkling pebbles down the beach after it. It was a low stone dwelling, white-washed, and heather-roofed, and containing only three rooms. David and Maggie entered the principal one together. Its deal furniture was spotless, its floor cleanly sanded, and a bright turf fire was burning on the brick hearth. Some oars and creels were hung against the wall, and on a pile of nets in the warmest corner, a little laddie belonging to a neighbor’s household was fast asleep.

Maggie quickly threw on more turf, and drew the crane above the fire, and hung the kettle upon it. Then with a light and active step she set about toasting the oat cake and the haddie, and making the tea, and setting the little round table. But her heart was heavy enough. Scarcely a week before her father and three eldest brothers had gone out to the fishing, and perished in a sudden storm; and the house place, so lately busy and noisy with the stir of nearly half-a-dozen menfolk, was now strangely still and lonely.

Maggie was a year older than her brother David, but she never thought of assuming any authority over him. In the first place, he had the privilege of sex; in the next, David Promoter was generally allowed to be “extr’onar’ wise-like and unwardly in a’ his ways.” In fact there had been an intention of breaking through the family traditions and sending him to the University of Aberdeen. Latterly old Promoter had smoked his pipe very often to the ambitious hope of a minister in his family. David’s brothers and sister had also learned to look upon the lad as destined by Providence to bring holy honors upon the household. No thought of jealousy had marred their intended self-denial in their younger brother’s behalf. Their stern Calvinism taught them that Jacob’s and Jesse’s families were not likely to be the only ones in which the younger sons should be chosen for vessels of honor; and Will Promoter, the eldest of the brothers, spoke for all, when he said, “Send Davie to Aberdeen, fayther; gladly we will a’ of us help wi’ the fees; and may be we shall live to see a great minister come oot o’ the fishing boats.”

But though the intended sacrifice had been a sincerely pure and unselfish one, it had nevertheless been refused. Why it had been refused, was the question filling David’s heart with doubt and despair, as he sat with his head in his hands, gazing into the fire that March afternoon. Maggie was watching him, though he did not perceive it, and by an almost unconscious mental act was comparing him with his dead brothers. They had been simply strong fair fishers, with that open air look men get who continually set their faces to the winds and waves. David was different altogether. He was exceedingly tall, and until years filled in his huge framework of bone and muscle, would very likely be called “gawky.” But he had the face of a mediaeval ecclesiastic; spare, and sallow, and pointed at the chin. His hair, black and exceeding fine, hung naturally in long, straggling masses; his mouth was straight and perhaps a little cruel; his black, deep set eyes had the glow in them of a passionate and mystical soul. Such a man, if he had not been reared in the strictest sect of Calvinism, would have adopted it—for it was his soul’s native air.

That he should go to the university and become a minister seemed to David as proper as that an apple tree should bear an apple. As soon as it was suggested, he felt himself in the moderator’s chair of the general assembly. “Why had such generous and holy hopes been destroyed?” Maggie knew the drift of his thoughts, and she hastened her preparations for tea; for though it is a humiliating thing to admit, the most sacred of our griefs are not independent of mere physical comforts. David’s and Maggie’s sorrow was a deep and poignant one, but the refreshing tea and cake and fish were at least the vehicle of consolation. As they ate they talked to one another, and David’s brooding despair was for the hour dissipated.

During the days of alternating hope and disappointment following the storm in which the Promoters perished, they had not permitted themselves to think, much less to speak of a future which did not include those who might yet return. But hope was over. When Promoter’s mates beached his boat, both David and Maggie understood the rite to be a funeral one. It was not customary for women to go to funerals, but Maggie, standing afar off, amid the gray thick fog, had watched the men drag the unfortunate craft “where a

boat ought never to be;" and when they had gone away, had stood by the lonely degraded thing, and felt as sad and hopeless, as if it had been the stone at a grave's mouth.

All the past was past; they had to begin a life set to new methods and motives: "and the sooner the better," thought Maggie, "if fayther were here, he wad say that."

"Davie?"

"Weel?"

"Is the tea gude? And the fish, and the cake?"

"Ay, they're gude. I didna think I was sae hungry. I'm maist 'shamed to enjoy them sae hearty."

"Life's wark wants life's food; and we canna sit wi' idle hands anither seven days. You were saying you had news, what will it be?"

"Ay, I had forgotten. Willie Johnson's Willie has brought back wi' him a young man. He wants a quiet room to himsel', and there's naebody in Pittenloch can gie him ane, if it be na us, or the Widow Thompson. He's offered a crown a week for ane."

"You should hae said instanter we'd be thankfu'. My certie! A crown a week, that's a fair godsend, Davie."

"The widow has the first right to the godsend; if she canna tak' it, she'll send it our way, Maggie."

"Davie, there is #50 in Largo Bank."

"I ken that."

"You'll tak' it. It will gie you a' the start you need at Aberdeen. Fayther said #30 a year wad do, wi' a carefu' hand to guide it. You'll be Helping yoursel' wi' a bit teaching afore it is a' gane."

"I'll no touch it. What are you talking about? Oor fayther saved it for his auld age and his burying."

"And he'll ne'er be auld now, Davie! and God has found him a grave that only He kens o'! I can spin, and weave, and sew, and the lasses roun' about have keepit my needle aye busy. Why not? I served my time in Largo, and I can cut a skirt or josey, and mak' a kirk gown, better than any one nearer."

"You'll be wanting to marry ere lang, Maggie. Angus Raith thinks much o' you; and #50 wad buy his share in Cupar's boat. I sall hae the cottage, and the #50 is to be for your wedding and plenishing."

"This is na a time to talk o' wedding, Davie; and there is na any promise made to Angus Raith! Go into Kinkell the morn and speak wi' the minister; he is a wise man, and we will baith o' us do the thing he says."

After this, the conversation drifted hither and thither, until the meal Was finished. Then while Maggie tidied up the room, David opened the door And stood thoughtfully within its shadow. "There's a voice in the sea to-night," he said mournfully, "and when the tide turns back, the wind will have its way."

"Can you see aught?"

"Naething. There's a heavy mist and a thick smur—but I hear steps on the shingle. I'm thinking it will be Johnson wi' the stranger I spoke o'."

"Ay, weel, I hae gotten my feet dressed," and she looked down with approval at her ribbed gray stockings, and low shoes, the brass clasps of which she had just latched.

David did not answer her, for he was bidding his visitors welcome. Then Maggie turned round with the freshly lit "cruisie" in her hand, and her eyes were caught by two other eyes, and held as if by a spell. She was conscious, as she stood blushing, that the stranger had been astonished at her appearance, but she certainly did not dream that it was her great beauty which had for one moment made him incapable of controlling his sense of it. It was only one moment, in the next he turned to David, and offered to pay him two shillings a day for the use of his vacant room, and a share of his simple fare.

The interview lasted but a very short time. Maggie said, she could have the room ready for him by noon of the following day, and as soon as the matter was settled, he went.

He had not sat down, and so every one else had remained standing; but at the open door he caught Maggie's eyes once more, and with a slight movement of adieu to her, he disappeared. She trembled, and turned hot and cold, and felt as if she must cry. It was with difficulty she hid her emotion from her brother, who looked queerly at her as he said, "I ne'er saw any man look like that man."

"He had a bonnie braidcloth cloak on."

"Sae handsome and sae stately; and if kings hae any grander way, there's nae wonder folks bow down to them. I aye thocht that Dr. Balmuto had the maist compelling look wi' him; but I think yonder man wouldna fear him, e'en though the doctor had on his Geneva bands and his silk gown."

"What's his name, Davie?"

"I dinna ken. I never thocht to ask him."

Then a singular sadness, one quite distinct from the shadow of their known sorrow, settled upon both brother and sister. Was it a sorrow of apprehension? one of those divinations which we call presentiments. Neither David nor Maggie questioned it; they were not given to analyzing Their feelings, indeed they were totally unacquainted with this most useless of mental processes.

But nevertheless, the stranger had left an influence, and for half an hour they sat silently musing. Maggie was the first to break its spell. In a low voice, as she bent lower to the dying fire, she began to talk of the dead for whom "God had found graves;" and to recall little incidents of their hard unselfish lives, which particularly touched David's and her own experience.

"If they were here to-night, Davie—oot on the dark sea—tossed up and down—pulling in the nets or lines wi' freezing hands—hungry, anxious, fearfu' o' death—wad we wish it?"

"Na, na, na, Maggie! Where they are noo, the light doesna fade, and the heart doesna fail, and the full cup never breaks. Come, let us ask o' the Book thegither. I dinna doot, but we sall get just the word we are needing."

Maggie rose and took it from its place on the broad shelf by the window, and laid it down upon the table. David lifted the light and stood beside her. Then with a reverent upward glance, he opened the well-used leaves:—

"Maggie, what need we mair? Listen to the word o' the Lord;" and with a voice tender and triumphant he read aloud—

"Then are they glad because they be quiet: so He bringeth them unto their desired haven."

CHAPTER II. — THE UNKNOWN GUEST.

*"She was a form of life and light,
That seen, became a part of sight,
And rose where'er I turned mine eye,
The Morning Star of Memory."*

"Thou art more than all the shrines that hold thee."

The next morning was a very stormy one; there was an iron-gray sky above a black tumbling sea; and the rain, driven by a mad wind, smote the face like a blow from a passionate hand. The boats were all at anchor, with no prospect of a fishing that day; and the fishermen, gathered in little groups, were muttering over the bad weather. But their talk was not bitter, like the complaints which landsmen make over leveled crops. Regarding every thing that happened as the result of righteous decree, why should they rail at disappointment or misfortune? Some went slowly to a shed where boats were being built; others sat down within the doors of their cottages and began to knit their nets, or to mend such as were out of order.

David could take a landward route to Kinkell, among the shore rocks; for though the path was often a mere footing, it was well known to him; and as for the stormy weather, it seemed only a part of the darker and fiercer tempest in his own soul. He left Maggie early. She watched him climbing with bent head the misty heights, until a projecting rock hid him from view; then she went back to her household duties.

The first one was to prepare the room she had rented for its strange guest and it gave her many a pang to fold away the "kirk clothes" of her father and brothers and lock them from sight in the big "kist" that was the family wardrobe. For clothing has a woeful individuality, when we put it away forever; and the shoes of the dead men had a personality that almost terrified her. How pitiful, how forsaken, how almost sentient they looked! Blind with tears, she hid them from sight, and then turned, as the Bereaved must ever turn, back to the toil and need of daily life.

There was but one window in the room, a little one opening on hinges, and glazed with small diamond-shaped bits of glass. The driving storm had washed it clean, she hung a white curtain before it, and brought from the living room a pot of scarlet geranium, and a great sea shell, from whose mouth hung a luxuriant musk plant. Its cool fragrance filled the room, and gave an almost dainty feeling to the spotlessness of the deal furniture and the homespun linen. Before the turf fire there was a square of rag carpet, and the bits of blue and scarlet in it were pretty contrasts to the white wood of the chairs and table.

The stranger was to have come about noon, but it was the middle of the afternoon when he arrived. The storm was then nearly over, and there was a glint of watery sunshine athwart the cold; green, tossing sea. Maggie had grown anxious at his delay, and then a little cross. At two o'clock she gave a final peep into the room and said to herself,—"I'll just get on wi' my wark, let him come, or let him bide awa'. I canna waste my time waiting for folk that dinna ken the worth o' time."

So when her lodger stood at her door she was at her baking board, and patting the cakes so hard, that she did not hear him, until he said, "Good afternoon, Miss Promoter."

Then she turned sharply around, and answered, "Maggie Promoter, if it please you, sir."

"Very well," he said gravely, "good afternoon, Maggie. Is your brother at home?"

"No, sir; he's awa' to Kinkell. Your room is ready for you, sir." As she spoke she was rubbing the meal from

her hands, and he stood watching her with delight. He had wondered if her beauty would bear the test of daylight, or if it needed the broad shadows, and the dull glow of the burning turf and the oil cruise. But she stood directly in the band of sunshine, and was only the more brilliantly fair for it. He was not in love with her, he was sure of that, but he was interested by a life so vivid, so full of splendid color, grace, and vitality.

With a little pride she opened the door of his room, and stirred up the glowing peats, and put the big rush chair before them,—“And you can just call me, sir, when you want aught,” she said, “I’ll go ben noo, and finish my cake baking.”

“Maggie, this room is exactly what I wanted; so clean and quiet! I’m much obliged to you for allowing me to use it.” “You pay siller, sir, and there’s nae call to say thank you!” With the words she closed the door, and was gone. And somehow, the tone of reserve and the positive click of the latch made him feel that there would be limits he could not pass.

In a couple of hours he heard the little stir of David’s return, and the preparation for tea. Maggie brought his table to the fireside and covered it with a square of linen, and set upon it his cup and plate. He had a book in his hand and he pretended to be absorbed in it; but he did not lose a movement that she made.

“Your tea is a’ ready, sir.”

He lifted his eyes then, and again her clear candid gaze was caught by his own. Both were this time distinctly conscious of the meeting, and both were for the moment embarrassed.

“It looks good, Maggie, and I am hungry. Is your brother back?”

“David is hame, sir. It was a hard walk he had. He’s tired, I’m thinking.”

The last words were said more to herself than to her lodger. She was somewhat troubled by Davie’s face and manner. He had scarcely spoken to her since his return, but had sat thinking with his head in his hands. She longed to know what Dr. Balmuto had said to him, but she knew David would resent questioning, and likely punish her curiosity by restraining confidence with her for a day or two. So she spoke only of the storm, and of the things which had come into her life or knowledge during his absence.

“Kirsty Wilson has got a sweetheart, David, and her no sixteen yet.”

“Kirsty aye thocht a lad was perfect salvation. You shallna be mair than civil to her. She has heard tell o’ the man staying wi’ us. It wad be that brought her here nae doot.”

“She was not here at a’. Maggie Johnson telled me. Maggie cam’ to borrow a cup o’ sugar. She said Cupar’s boat tried to win out o’ harbor after the storm. It could not manage though.”

“It was wrang to try it. Folks shouldna tempt Providence.”

“The cakes baked weel to-day.”

“Ay, they are gude eating.”

Then she could think of nothing more to say, and she washed the cups, and watched the dark, sad man bending over the fire. A vulgar woman, a selfish woman, would have interrupted that solemn session at her hearth. She would have turned Inquisitor, and tortured him with questions. “What’s the matter?” “Is there anything wrong?” “Are you sick?” etc., etc. But when Maggie saw that her brother was not inclined to talk to her, she left him alone to follow out the drift of his own thoughts. He seemed unconscious of her presence, and when her active house duties were over, she quietly pulled her big wheel forward, and began to spin.

The turfs burned red, the cruise burned low, the wheel “hummed” monotonously, and Maggie stepped lightly to-and-fro before it. In an hour the silence became oppressive, she was sleepy, she wished Davie would speak to her. She laid her fingers on the broad wooden band and was just going to move, when the inner door was opened, and the stranger stood at it. His pause was but a momentary one, but the room was all picture to him, especially the tall fair woman with her hand upon the big wheel, and her face, sensitive and questioning, turned toward her brother.

“David Promoter.”

“Ay, sir.” He moved slowly like a man awakening from a sleep, but very quickly shook off the intense personality of his mood, and turned to the stranger with a shy and yet keen alertness.

“I dinna ken your name, sir, or I wad call you by it.”

“My name is Allan Campbell.”

“Sit down, sir. You are vera welcome. Can I do aught to pleasure you?”

“I want my trunk from Largo. Yesterday the sea was too heavy to bring it. Can you get it for me to-morrow?”

“An’ the sea be willing, sir.”

“There is a box of books also, but they are very heavy.”

“Books! We’ll try and bring them ony way.”

“You love books then?”

“Better than bread.”

"What have you read?"

"I have read my Bible, and The Institutes, and the Scot's Worthies, and pairt o' the Pilgrim's Progress. But I didna approve o' John Bunyan's doctrine. It's rank Armenianism."

"I have just finished a volume of Scott's poems. Have you read any of them?"

"Na, na; I hae nae skill o' poetry, sir, an' it be na the Psalms o' David."

"Let me read you a stanza, that I think you will enjoy."

He went for his book and drew a chair beside the little light, and read with a great deal of fire and feeling some passages from "The Lay of the Last Minstrel." He was soon sensible that he was gradually stirring in these two untutored souls, feelings of which they had hitherto been unconscious. He put more and more passion into the words, finally he threw down the book, and standing erect, recited them with outstretched arms and uplifted face. When he ceased, David was listening like one entranced; and Maggie's knitting had fallen to the floor: for she had unconsciously risen, and was gazing at the speaker with a face that reflected every change of his own. It was as if the strings of a harp had snapped, and left the souls of the listeners in mid-air. With an effort the enthusiasm was put aside, and after a minute's pause, David said, "I ne'er heard words like them words. Mony thanks to you, sir. I'm right glad it was a Scot wrote them," and he murmured softly—

*"O Caledonia stern and wild!
Land of brown heath and shaggy wood,
Land of the mountain and the flood."*

Still it was Maggie's shy, tremulous glance and luminous face, that Thanked and pleased Campbell most, and he lifted the book and went away, almost as much under the spell of the poet, as the two simple souls who had heard his music for the first time. There was a moment or two in which life seemed strange to the brother and sister. They had much the same feeling as those who awaken from a glorious dream and find sordid cares and weary pains waiting for them. David rose and shook himself impatiently, then began to walk about the narrow room. Maggie lifted her stocking and made an effort to knit, but it was a useless one. In a few minutes she laid it down, and asked in a low voice, "Will you have a plate o' parritch, Davie?"

"Ay; I'm hungry, Maggie; and he'll maybe like one too."

So the pan was hung over the fire, and the plates and bowls set; and while Maggie scattered in the meal, and went for the milk, Davie tried to Collect his thoughts, and get from under the spell of the Magician of his age. And though poetry and porridge seem far enough apart Campbell said a hearty "thank you" to the offer of a plate full. He wanted the food, and it was also a delight to watch Maggie spread his cloth, and bring in the hot savory dish of meal, and the bowl of milk. For her soul was still in her beautiful face, her eyes limpid and bright as stars, and the simple meal so served reminded him of the plain dignified feasts of the old rural deities. He told himself as he watched her, that he was living a fairer idyl than ever poet dreamed.

"Gude night, sir," she said softly, after she had served the food, "you took me into a new life the night, and thank you kindly, sir."

"It was a joy to me, Maggie. Good night."

She was a little afraid to speak to David; afraid of saying more than he would approve, and afraid of saying anything that would clash with the subject of his meditations. But she could not help noticing his restlessness and his silence; and she was wondering to herself, "why men-folk would be sae trying and contrary," when she heard him say—

"Grand words, and grand folk, Maggie; but there are far grander than thae be."

"Than kings, and queens, and braw knights and fair leddies?" "Ay, what are thae to angels and archangels, powers and dominions, purity, faith, hope, charity? Naething at a'."

"Maybe; but I wish I could see them, and I wish I could see the man who wrote anent them, and I wish you could write a book like it, Davie."

"Me! I have an ambition beyond the like o' that. To be His messenger and speak the words o' truth and salvation to the people! Oh Maggie, if I could win at that office, I wouldna envy king nor knight, no, nor the poet himsel'."

"Did you see the minister?"

"Ay; bring your chair near me, and I'll tell you what he said. You'll be to hear it, and as weel now, as again."

"Surely he had the kind word to-day, and you that fu' o' sorrow?"

"He meant to be kind. Surely he meant to be kind. He sent me word to come up to his study, and wee Mysie Balmuto took me there. Eh, Maggie, if I had a room like that! It was fu' o' books; books frae the floor to the roof-place. He was standing on the hearth wi' his back to the fire, and you ken hoo he looks at folk, through and through. 'Weel, Davie,' he said, what's brought you o'er the hills through wind and rain pour? Had you work that must be pushed in spite o' His work?"

"I felt kind o' shamed then at my hurry, and I said, 'Doctor, you'll hae heard tell o' the calamity that has come to our house?' And he answered, I hae heard; but we willna call it a calamity, David, seeing that it was o' His ordering.'"

"It was very suddent, sir," I said, and he lookit at me, and said, "His messengers fly very swiftly. Your father was ready, and I do not think He calls the young men, unless He wants them. It was not of the dead you came to talk with me?" I said, "No, sir, I came to ask you about Maggie and myself."

"Then I told him hoo I longed to be a minister, and hoo fayther and the rest had planned to send me to Aberdeen this vera year, and hoo there was still #50 which you wanted me to take, and he never said a word, but just let me go blethering and blundering through the story, till I felt like I was the maist selfish and foolish o' mortals. When I couldna find anither word, he spake up kind o' stern like—"

"What did he say? You be to tell me that noo."

"He said, 'David Promoter, you'll no dare to touch the #50 this year. Go back to the boats, and serve the Lord upon the sea for a twelve months. Go back to the boats and learn how to face hunger, and cold, and weariness, with patience; learn to look upon death, and not to fear him. Forbye you cannot leave your sister her lane. Lassies marry young among your folk, and she'll need some plenishing. You would not surely send her from you with empty hands. You cannot right your own like with wrangling hers, not even by a bawbee.'"

"He shouldna hae said the like o' that. The siller isna mine, nor wasna meant for me, and I'll ne'er touch it. That I wont." "Marry Angus Raith, and tak' it, Maggie. He loves you weel."

"Angus Raith isna to be thocht o', and it's ill-luck mixing wedding talk wi' death talk. The minister is right; whatna for are we hurrying up the future? Let us be still and wait; good, as well as evil comes, and us not looking for it. I'm sorry you didna hae a pleasanter visit."

"It wasna just unpleasant. I ken weel the minister is right. Put on a covering turf noo, Maggie, for the tide serves at six o'clock, and I'll be awa' to Largo the morn."

Maggie was up at gray dawn next morning, while yet the sea birds were dozing on their perches, looking like patches of late snow in the crannies of the black rocks. There was no wrath in the tide, only an irresistible set shoreward. When David was ready for his breakfast, Campbell was ready also; he said he wished to go with the boat, and David's face lighted up with satisfaction at the proposal. And Maggie was not ill-pleased to be left alone. She was restless, and full of strange thoughts, and needed the calm and strength of solitude.

It was an exquisite morning; the sea was dimpling and laughing in the sunrise, and great flocks of hungry white sea-birds were making for the Firth. Maggie folded her plaid around her, and walked to the little pier to see the boat away; and as she stood there, the wind blew the kerchief off her head into the water; and she saw Campbell lean forward and pick it up, and then nod back to her an assurance of its safety. She turned away half angry at herself for the thrill of pleasure the trifling incident had given her. "It's my ain folk I ought to be thinking o', and no strangers; it's the dead, and no the living that ought to be in my heart. Oh Maggie Promoter, whate'er has come o'er you!"

To such reflections she was hasting with bent head back to her cottage, And trying to avoid a meeting with any of the few men and women about so early. But she was soon sensible of a rapid step following her, and before she could turn her head, a large hand was laid upon her shoulder, and Angus Raith was at her side.

"Sae you thocht to shun me, Maggie."

"You are wrang there, I didna even see you, Angus."

"That's the God's truth. You havena e'en for any body noo, but that proud, fine gentleman that's staying wi' you."

"Be quiet, Angus. Hoo daur you say the like o' that? I ne'er saw the man's face until yestreen; you shouldna think ill o' folk sae easy."

"What does he want here amang fishers? They dinna want him, I'm vera sure. There's nae room for gentlemen in Pittenloch."

"Ask him what he wants. He pays for his room at Pittenloch; fourteen white shillings every week, he agreed wi' Davie for."

"Fourteen shillings!"

The magnitude of the sum astonished him. He walked silently by Maggie's side until she came to her doorstep. He was a heavy-faced Celt; sallow, and dark-eyed; with the impatient look of a selfish greedy man. Maggie's resolute stand at her door-stone angered him, "I'm coming in a wee," he said dourly, "there are words to be said between us."

"You are wrang there too, Angus. I hae neither this, nor that, to say to you; and I'm busy the day."

"I spoke to your fayther and your brother Will, anent a marriage between us, and you heard tell o' it."

"Ay, they told me."

"And you let me walk wi' you frae the kirk on the next Sabbath.—I'm no going to be jilted, Maggie Promoter, by you."

"Dinna daur to speak that way to me, Angus. I never said I wad wed you, and I dinna believe I ever sall say it. Think shame o' yoursel' for speaking o' marrying before the tide has washed the footmarks o' the dead off the sea sands. Let go my hand, Angus."

"It is my hand, and I'll claim it as long as you live. And it will be ill for any ither body that daurs to touch it."

"Daur's indeed! I'll no be daured by any body, manfolk or womanfolk. You hae gi'en me an insult, Angus Raith, and dinna cross my door-stane any more, till you get the invite to do so."

She stepped within her open door and faced him. Her eyes blazed, her whole attitude was that of defiance. The passions, which in well-bred women are educated clean down out of sight, were in Maggie Promoter's tongue tip and finger tips. Angus saw it would not do to anger her further, and he said, "I meant nae harm, Maggie."

"I'll no answer you anither word. And mind what I told you. Dinna cross my doorstane. You'll get the red face if you try it." She could have shut the door, but she would have thought the act a kind of humiliation. She preferred to stand guard at its threshold, until Angus, with a black scowl and some muttered words of anger, walked away. She watched him until he leaped into his boat; until he was fairly out to sea. Then she shut and barred the door; and sitting down in her father's chair, wept passionately; wept as women weep, before they have learned the uselessness of tears, and the strength of self-restraint.

CHAPTER III. — THE CAMPBELLS OF MERITON.

*"We figure to ourselves
The thing we like, and then we build it up
As chance will have it, on the rock or sand."*

*"About some act,
That has no relish of salvation in it."*

Upon the shores of Bute, opposite the rugged, heathery hills of Cowal, John Campbell had built himself a splendid habitation. People going up and Down the Kyles were in the habit of pointing out Meriton Mansion, and of asserting that the owner had risen from extreme poverty to his enviable position. There was not a word of truth in this story. John Campbell was the youngest son of Campbell of Drumloch, a gentleman of ancient lineage, and of considerable wealth. Alexander, his elder son, inherited from him the castle of Drumloch and the lands pertaining to the name and the estate; to his younger son John he gave a large sum of money. With this money he opened a shipping house on the Broomilaw of Glasgow, and gradually built a fleet of trading vessels, which traversed every known sea. John Campbell's name had indeed become synonymous for enterprise, wealth and commercial honor.

The tie between the brothers was always an affectionate one; and when Alexander died early in life, he left his child and the estate in charge of John. The estate was much embarrassed, the child was a delicate girl of nine years. But when ten years had passed the conditions of both were changed; Mary Campbell had grown to a sweet and charming womanhood, and Drumloch had paid off its last shilling of mortgage, and was as desirable an estate as could be found in the west of Scotland.

During these ten years, one desire had dominated all others in John Campbell's heart—the marriage of his son Allan to the heiress of Drumloch. It seemed to him the most natural of events, and also the most desirable. It would keep the old family and name, in the old home. It had been his brother's dying wish. He might buy his son a much larger and finer estate, but with gold he could not buy the family associations, and the long, honorable lineage of Drumloch. The old keep could be enlarged and beautified; the lands lying far and near could be bought and added to its domain; and yet Allan could lawfully call himself, "Campbell of Drumloch."

Thus to establish on a broader and richer basis the old home of his Fathers was the grand object of John Campbell's life. He thought of it until it became almost a sacred duty in his eyes. For the Scotsman's acquisitiveness is very rarely destitute of some nobler underlying motive. In fact, his granite nature is finely marbled throughout with veins of poetry and romance. His native land is never forgotten. His father's hearth is as sacred as an altar in his memory. A bluebell or a bit of heather can bring tears to his eyes; and the lilt of a Jacobite song make his heart thrill with an impossible loyalty. Those who saw John Campbell on the Broomilaw would have judged him to be a man indifferent to all things but money and bills of lading. Those who saw him softly stepping through the old halls of Drumloch, or standing almost reverently before the hard grim faces of his ancestors, would have called him an aristocrat who held all things cheap but an ancient home and a noble family. His son Allan, as the future Campbell of Drumloch, was an important person in his eyes; he took care that he was well educated, and early made familiar with the leisure and means of a fine gentleman. And as Allan was intelligent and handsome, with a stately carriage and courtly manners, there seemed no reason why the old root should not produce a new and far more splendid line.

When Mary Campbell was nineteen, and her estate perfectly clear, it seemed to her uncle a proper time to consummate the hopes for which he had toiled and planned. He explained them fully to his son, and then said, "Now, Allan, go and ask Mary to be your wife. The sooner I see you in your own place, the happier I shall be."

A spirit of contradiction sprang up in the young man's heart, as soon as the words were uttered. Probably, it was but the development of an antagonism that had been lying latent for years. He remained silent so long, that his father's anger rose.

"Have you nothing to say, sir?" he asked. "A good wife and an old and honorable estate are worth a few words of acknowledgment."

"I do not wish to marry Drumloch, sir." John Campbell turned white, and the paper in his hand shook violently. "Do you mean me to understand that I have been working ten years for a disappointment? I will not have ten Years of my life wasted to pleasure a foolish youth."

"Is it right for me to marry a woman I do not love, and so waste my whole life?"

A conversation begun in such a spirit was not likely to end satisfactorily. Indeed it closed in great anger, and the renewal of the subject day after day, only made both men more determined to stand by the position they had taken toward each other. Allan almost wondered at his own obstinacy. Before his father had so broadly stated the case to him, he had rather liked his cousin. She was a calm, cheerful, sensible girl, with very beautiful eyes, and that caressing, thoughtful manner which is so comfortable in household life. He believed that if he had been left any freedom of choice, he would have desired only Mary Campbell to be his wife. But he told himself that he would not be ordered into matrimony, or compelled to sacrifice his right of choice, for any number of dead-and-gone Campbells.

There was no prospect of any reconciliation between father and son, except by Allan's unconditional surrender. Allan did not regard this step as impossible in the future, but for the present he knew it was. He decided to leave home for a few months, and when the subject was opened again to be himself the person to move the question. He felt that in the matter of his own marriage he ought at least to make the proposition; it was enough for his father to agree to it. The trouble had arisen from the reversal of this natural order.

Mary had perceived that there was dissension between her uncle and cousin, but she had not associated herself with it. She was sure that it was about money, for evidently Allan had lived an extravagant life when he was abroad. So, when he said to her one morning, "Mary, father and I cannot agree at present, and I think I will go away for a few weeks;" she answered,

"I think you are right, Allan. If one has a hurt, it does not do to be always looking at it, and touching it. If you have a quarrel with uncle, let it rest, and then it will heal. Do you want—any money, Cousin Allan? I have plenty, and I do not use it."

She spoke shyly with hesitation and blushes, but he felt all the kindness of the question. He took her hand and kissed it. At that moment she looked lovely to him.

"I have no need of money, Mary. I only ask for your kind remembrance."

"That is ever yours. Do not go far away."

"Not far. You shall hear from me soon."

The thought of a correspondence struck him very pleasantly. He might thus—if he liked the idea upon future reflection—arrange the whole matter with Mary, and return home as her expected husband. That would be a sufficient assertion of his own individuality.

He went to Edinburgh. He had no definite plan, only that he felt a desire for seclusion, and he knew fewer people in Edinburgh than in Glasgow or London. The day after his arrival there he accompanied a casual acquaintance to Leith pier, from which place the latter was going to sail for London. As he stood watching the vessel away, his hat blew off and a fisherman brought it back to him. It was Will Johnson of Pittenloch, and he was not a man to whom Allan felt he could offer money. But he stood talking with him about the Fife fishing towns, until he became intensely interested in their life. "I want to see them," he said to Will; "let me have a couple of hours to get my trunks, and I will go with you to Pittenloch."

There are very few men who have not a native longing for the ocean; who do not love to go

*"—back to the great, sweet Mother,
Mother and lover of men, the sea;"*

and Allan forgot all his annoyances, as soon as he felt the bound of the boat under him. Johnson had to touch at Largo, but ere they reached it the wind rose, and it was with some difficulty the harbor was made. But during the rough journey Allan got very near to the men in the boat; he looked forward to a stay at Pittenloch with pleasure; and afterward, events would doubtless shape themselves better than he could at that time determine them.

It had been a sudden decision, and made very much in that spirit which leads men to toss up a penny for an oracle. And sometimes it seems as if a Fate, wise or otherwise, answers the call so recklessly made. If he lived for a century Allan knew that he would never forget that first walk to Promoters—the big fisherman at his side, the ocean roaring in his ears, the lights from the cottage windows dully gleaming through the black darkness—never forget that moment in which Maggie Promoter turned from the fire with the "cruise" in her hand, the very incarnation of womanhood, crowned with perfect health and splendid beauty.

It was Allan's nature to drift with events, and to easily accommodate himself to circumstances. In France he had been a gay, fashionable trifler; in Germany cloudy philosophies and musical ideas had fascinated him; in Rome he had dreamed in old temples, and painted and smoked with the artists in their lofty shabby studios. He was equally ready to share the stirring danger and freedom of the fisher's life, for he was yet young

enough to feel delight in physical exertion, and in physical danger.

When the boat went hammering through cheerless seas, and the lines were heavy with great ling fish, it was pleasure to match his young supple thews with those of the strongest men. And it was pleasure, when hungry and weary, to turn shoreward, and feel the smell of the peat smoke on the south-west wind, bringing the cottage hearth, and the welcome meal, and the beautiful face of Maggie Promoter nearer. Even when the weather was stormy, and it was a hurl down one sea, and a hoist up the next, when the forty foot mast had to be lowered and lashed down, and the heavy mizzen set in its place, Allan soon grew to enjoy the tumult and the fight, and his hand was always ready to do its share.

Very soon after going to the Promoters he procured himself some suits of fishers' clothing; and Maggie often thought when he came in from the sea, rosy and glowing, with his brown hair wet with the spindrift, nets on his shoulders, or lines in his hands, that he was the handsomest fisher-lad that ever sailed the Frith of Forth. David and Allan were much together, for David had gone back to the boats as the minister bade him, yet the duty had been made far easier than he expected. For when Allan understood how the Promoters' boat had failed them, he purchased a fishing skiff of his own, and David, and the men whom David hired, sailed her for her owner. David had his certain wage, the men had the fish, and Allan had a delight in the whole situation far greater than any mere pleasure yacht could possibly have given him.

Where there is plenty of money, events do not lag. In a couple of months the Promoters' cottage was apparently as settled to its new life as ever it had been to the old one. The "Allan Campbell" was a recognized craft in the fishing fleet, and generally Allan sailed with her as faithfully as if his life depended upon the catching of the gray fish. And when the sea-mood was not on him, he had another all-sufficing occupation. For he was a good amateur painter, and he was surrounded by studies almost irresistible to an artistic soul.

The simple folk of Pittenloch looked dubiously at him when he stood before his easel. There was to them something wonderful, mysterious, almost uncanny, in the life-like reproduction of themselves and their boats, their bits of cottages, and their bare-footed bairns—in the painted glimpses of the broad-billowed ocean; and the desolate old hills, with such forlorn lights on their scarps, as the gloom of primeval tempests might have cast.

The controversy about these bits of painted canvas interested every one in the village; for though Allan talked beautifully about "looking up" through nature unto nature's God, it was a new doctrine to the Fife fishers; who had always looked for God in their Bibles, and their consciences. Except in rare cases, it was impossible for them to conceive how painting might be a Gate Beautiful to the temple.

Indeed Elder John Mackelvine, a dour, stern, old Calvinist, was of opinion that every picture was a breaking of the second commandment—"A makin' o' an image and likeness o' the warks o' God, and sae, neither mair nor less than idolatry. Forbye, pictur's are pairfectly ridic'lus," he continued; "what for, will you want the image o' a thing, when you hae the thing itsel'?" John Knox kent weel what he was doing when he dinged doon a' the pictur's and images in thae auld kirks. He kent men were aye mair pleased to worship their ain handywark, than the Creator's."

David listened with many misgivings, but he ventured to say that, "there was nae thocht o' idolatry in Allan Campbell's heart."

"You'll dootless ken a' about it, Davie," answered Mackelvine scornfully; "but you'll no deny that he was sae set up wi' the pictur' he made o' Largo Bay, that he might just as weel hae bowed doon to it. The Everlasting hills! The everlasting seas!" said the old fisher, man, rising and stretching upward and outward his bare, brown arm, "put them in a paintin'! Pairfect nonsense! Even-down sin!"

From this conversation David went directly home. It was Saturday night and the boats all in harbor for the Sabbath day. The house place was spotlessly clean, the evening meal waiting. As soon as David spoke to his sister, Allan opened his door and called him. "Come here, David Promoter, I want to show you something."

David guessed that it was a new picture, and he went a little reluctantly.

"This is an 'interior', David," he said excitedly; "it is the first I have ever tried, and I am so pleased with the result;—what do you think of it?"

David slowly approached the easel. The picture represented faithfully the living room of his own cottage. All its breadths of light and shade, all its telling contrasts, were used skilfully as a background for Maggie. She was gazing with a white anxious face out of the little window seaward, watching the gathering storm, and the fishing boats trying to make the harbor through it.

"What do you think of it, David?"

"It is wonderfu', sir; but I dinna approve o' it. I think you will hae nae right to put the fear o' death and dool, and the breaking hearts o' women into a pictur'. Forbye, you might sell it, and I wouldna like my sister—no to speak o' my hame—to be turned into siller. And there's mair to say, sir. Some o' oor folk think it isna lawfu' in the sight o' God to mak' the image o' anything; and seeing, sir, that I humbly hope some day to stand upon the altar steps, it would ill become me to hurt the conscience o' auld or young. I must walk circumspect for the vera hope's sake."

"I never thought of selling a picture, David; I would not sell one with your sister in it, for all the gold in Scotland. And this is the first time I have heard of your intention regarding the ministry. Why did you not tell me before? How gladly I would have helped you!"

"It is a hope I dinna let mysel' think o' just yet, sir. Dr. Balmuto bid me bide in the boats for a twelve months, and, you ken, I couldna leave Maggie her lane, here."

"Perhaps Maggie will marry." He dropped each word slowly, as if it gave him pain.

"Ay; I hope she will. There was mair than one word spoken about a lad in the village; but after oor great loss, she wouldna hear tell o' any lad; and the minister thocht we might weel wait thegither for one year onyway. He'd be right, dootless."

"David, after tea let us take a walk on the beach together. I have something to say to you."

CHAPTER IV. — MAGGIE AND ANGUS.

*"What thing thou doest, bravely do;
When Heaven's clear call hath found thee"*

*"All thoughts, all passions, all delights
Whatever stirs this mortal frame,
All are but ministers of Love,
And feed his sacred flame."*

It was an exquisite evening toward the end of May; with a purple sunset brightening the seaward stretches, and the gathering herring fleet slowly drifting in the placid harbor. They walked silently toward a little rocky promontory, and there sat down. Allan's face was turned full toward his companion.

"David," he said, "I have lived with you ten weeks; slept under your roof, and eaten of your bread. I want you to remember how many happy hours we have spent together. At your fireside, where I have read aloud, and Maggie and you have listened—"

"Ay, sir. We hae had some fine company there. Poets, preachers, great thinkers and warkers o' all kinds. I'll ne'er forget thae hours."

"Happy hours also, David, when we have drifted together through starlight and moonlight, on the calm sea; and happy hours when we have made harbor together in the very teeth of death. I owe to you, David, some of the purest, healthiest and best moments of my life. I like to owe them to you. I don't mind the obligation at all. But I would be glad to show you that I am grateful. Let me pay your university fees. Borrow them of me. I am a rich man. I waste upon trifles and foolishness every year more than enough. You can give me this great honor and pleasure, David; don't let any false pride stand between us." He laid his hand upon David's hand, and looked steadily in his face for the answer.

"God, dootless, put the thocht in your heart. I gie Him and you thanks for it. And I'll be glad o' your help. Dr. Balmuto spake o' a year in the boats; when it is gane I'll tak' your offer, sir."

"You must not wait a year, David. You must try and be ready to go to Aberdeen, or Edinburgh, or Glasgow in the autumn. What do you think of Glasgow? The dear gray old college in the High Street! I went there myself, David, and I have many friends among its professors."

"I'd like Glasca',—fine."

"Then it shall be Glasgow; and I will see Dr. Balmuto. He will not oppose your going, I am sure."

"About Maggie, sir? I couldna seek my ain pleasure or profit at her loss. She doesna tak', like other lasses do, to the thocht o' marriage; and I canna bear to say a cross word to her. She is a' I have."

"There must be some way of arranging that matter. Tell Maggie what I have said, and talk affairs over with her. She will be sure to find out a way."

The conversation was continued for hours. Every contingency was fully discussed, and Allan was much pleased with David's prudence and unselfishness. "I think you will make a good minister," he said, "and we will all yet be very proud of you."

"I sall do my duty, sir, all o' it. I sall neither spare sin nor sinner. My ain right eye sall nae be dear to me, if it wad win a thocht frae His wark."

His pale face was lit as by some interior light, his eyes full of enthusiasm. He sat asking questions concerning the manners and methods of universities, the professors and lectures, and books and students, until the late moon rose red and solemn, above the sea and sky line, and Allan knew then it was almost midnight.

"We must go home, David. Maggie will wonder what has happened. We should have thought of her before this hour."

Indeed when they came near the cottage they saw Maggie standing at the door watching for them. She went in and closed it as soon as she perceived that all was well, and when the laggards would have explained their delay, she was too cross to listen to them.

"It's maist the Sabbath day," she said, hiding her fretfulness behind conscientious scruples, as all of us are ready to do. "I hope it wasna your ain thoughts and words you were sae ta'en up wi'; but I'm feared it was. You wadna hae staid sae lang, wi' better anes."

She would not look at Allan, and it pained him to see upon her face the traces of anxiety and disappointment.

Far through the night he sat at his open window, gazing out upon the sea, which was breaking almost below it. The unshed tears in Maggie's eyes, and her evident trouble at his absence, had given him a heart pain that he could not misunderstand. He knew that night that he loved the woman. Not with that low, earthy affection, which is satisfied with youth, or beauty of form or color. His soul clave unto her soul. He longed to kiss her heavy eyes and troubled mouth, not because they were lovely, but because his heart ached to soothe the sorrow he had given her, and longed to comfort her with happy hopes for the future.

But he had seen enough of these honest-hearted fisher-women, to know that the smallest act of tenderness was regarded by them as a promise. Of that frivolous abuse of the sweetest things which is called flirtation, Maggie had not the faintest conception. If it could have been explained to her, she would have recoiled from it with shame and indignation.

She would not have comprehended that a man should admire her, and tell her that he loved her, unless he intended to make her his wife.

And Allan was not prepared to admit this conclusion to the intercourse which had been so sweet, so inexpressibly sweet. He knew that her simple presence was a joy to him. He could see that her shining eyes grew brighter at his approach, and that her face broke up like happy music as he talked to her. "She is the other half of my own soul," he said, "and my life can never be complete without her. But what a mockery of Fate to bring us together. I cannot fall to her station; I cannot raise her to mine. I ought to go away, and I will. In a little while she will forget me."

The thought angered and troubled him; he tossed restlessly to and fro until daybreak, and then fell into a heavy slumber. And he dreamed of Mary Campbell. His heart was full of Maggie, but he dreamed of Mary; and he wondered at the circumstance, and though he was hardly conscious of the fact, it made him a trifle cooler and more restrained in his intercourse with Maggie. And Maggie thought of her bad temper the previous night, and she was ashamed and miserable.

At irregular intervals, as occasion served, he had gone into Edinburgh, and when there, he had always made an opportunity for writing to Meriton. Mary therefore concluded that he was staying in Edinburgh, and John Campbell did not fret much over the absence of a son who could be recalled easily in a few hours. He understood that Allan was in correspondence with his Cousin Mary, and he would not admit a doubt of the final settlement of the Drumloch succession in the way he desired.

And undoubtedly the result of Allan's long self-examination was a resolve to tear himself away from Maggie Promoter, and return to his home and his evident duty. He could show his regard for the Promoters by interesting himself in David's advancement. Maggie would understand his motives. She would know what he suffered by her own sufferings, but the weary ache would die out finally, and leave only in each heart a tender memory which perhaps they might carry into another life, "if both should not forget." He almost wept as he made this mental funeral of his dearest hopes; yet he made it frequently during the following days, and he was making it so earnestly as he walked into Kinkell to see Dr. Balmuto, that he was at the manse before he had realized that he was on the road to it.

The doctor had seen him frequently in Kirk, but always in such clothes as the fishers wore. He glanced at the elegantly dressed young man and recognized him. Then he lifted the card which Allan had sent in as his introduction, and said sharply, "Good morning, Mr. Campbell. I have seen you often lately—in fisher's dress. I hope you have a good reason for the masquerade, for let me tell you, I know something of John Campbell, your father, and I doubt if you have his approval."

"I must ask you, doctor, to take my motives on trust for the present. I assure you I think they are good ones. But I came here this morning to speak of David Promoter. I have been staying with him for some weeks. I respect and admire him. I desire out of my abundance to help him."

"He is a proud lad. I doubt if he will let you."

"He is quite willing that I should have this pleasure, if he has your permission. I wish him to go to Glasgow this autumn; he says you told him to stay in the boats for a year."

"I did; but I may have made a mistake. I thought he was a little uplifted with himself. He spoke as if he were needful to the church—but the lad may have felt the spirit in him. I would not dare to try and quench it. Your offer is a providence; it is as if God put out his own hand and Opened the kirk door for him. Tell David Promoter I said, 'Go to Glasgow, and the Lord go with thee.' But what is to come of his sister? She is a very handsome girl," and he looked sharply at Allan, "is she going to marry?"

"I have asked nothing concerning that question, sir."

"I am very glad to hear you say that; glad for her sake, glad for yours also."

Then the subject of the Promoters was gradually dropped; although Allan spent the day at Kinkell manse. For the doctor was a man with a vivid mind. Though he was old he liked to talk to young men, liked to hear them tell of their studies, and friendships, and travels, and taste through their eager conversation the flavor of their fresher life. Allan remained with him until near sunset, then in the warm, calm gloaming, he slowly took the homeward route, down the precipitous crags and hills.

At a sudden turn of the path near the beach, he saw Maggie. She sat upon a rock so directly beneath him that he could have let his handkerchief fall into her lap. Her arms were dropped, her attitude listless; without seeing her face, Allan was certain that her eyes were sad, and her long gaze at the incoming tide full of melancholy. He was just going to speak, when he saw a man coming toward her at a rapid pace. It was Angus Raith, and Allan was conscious of a sharp pang of annoyance and jealousy.

He had no intention to watch them, neither had he any desire to meet Angus while he was with Maggie. That would have been a little triumph for Angus, which Allan did not intend to give him. So he determined to remain where he was until they had either parted or gone away together. He was undoubtedly angry. It never struck him that the meeting might be an accidental one. He was certain that, for some reason or other, Maggie had an appointment with her well-known admirer; and he said bitterly to himself, "Like to like, why should I have the heart-ache about her?"

The sound of their voices, in an indistinct, fitful way, reached him where he sat. At first there was nothing peculiar in the tone, but in a few minutes it was evident that Maggie was getting angry. Allan rose then and went slowly toward them. Where the hill touched the beach it terminated in a point of jagged rocks about seven feet high. Maggie and Angus stood on one side of them, Allan on the other. He was as yet unseen, but half-a-dozen steps would bring them together. Maggie was by this time in a passion.

"It is weel for you, Angus Raith, that my fayther is at the bottom o' the sea," she said. "If Will was alive, or John, or Sandy, this day, ye hadna daured to open your ill mouth to me."

"Why dinna you tell your fine brother Davie?"

"Davie is aboon sorting the like o' you. Do you think I wad hae hands that are for the Ordinances touch you, you—born deevil?"

"Tell Maister Allan Campbell then. If a's true that's said to be true—"

"Dinna say it, Angus! Dinna say it! I warn you to keep a still tongue in your head."

"If he isna your man, he ought to be."

In a moment she had struck him on the mouth a blow so swift and stinging that it staggered him. Allan heard it; he stepped quickly forward and put his hand upon her shoulder. She was quivering like a wounded bird. But she drew herself proudly away from Allan's touch and faced Angus in a blaze of scornful passion.

"Ay; strike me back! It wad be like you!" For the first impulse of the man on recovering himself had been to raise his hand. "But I'd rayther you struck me dead at your feet, than to be your wife for ane five minutes."

Angus laughed mockingly. "You kent wha was behind the rock dootless! The blank—blank—blank fine gentleman! The—the—the—the—" and a volley of epithets and imprecations followed which made Maggie put her hands to her ears.

"Let me take you home." It was Allan who spoke, and again he laid his hand gently upon her. She shook it angrily off. "Dinna touch me, sir!" she cried, "I hae had scorn and sorrow in plenty for you. I can tak' mysel' hame finely;" and she walked rapidly away with her head flung proudly backward.

The girl had never been taught to control her feelings. She was a natural woman suffering under a sense of insult and injustice, and resenting it. And she was angry at Allan for being a witness to her emotion. His very calmness had seemed like a reproof to her. Wrath, chagrin, shame, resentment, swept in hot passionate waves over her; and the very intensity of her mental anguish imparted to her body a kind of majesty that perforce commanded respect.

Never had Allan thought her so beautiful. The words of irrevocable Devotion were on his lips. But at that moment had he been king of Scotland, Maggie Promoter would not have stayed to listen to them. So he turned to Angus. The man, with an insolent, defiant face, stood leaning against the rock. He had taken out his pipe, and with an assumption of indifference was trying to light it. Every trick of self-defence was known to Allan. He could have flung Angus to the ground as easily as a Cumberland shepherd throws the untrained wrestler, but how little honor, and how much shame, there would be in such an encounter! He looked steadily at the cowardly bully for a moment, and then turning on his heel, followed Maggie. The mocking laugh which Angus sent after him, did not move any feeling but contempt; he was far more anxious to comfort and conciliate the suffering, angry woman, than to revenge himself upon so despicable an enemy.

But when he arrived at the cottage the door was shut. This was so rarely its condition that he could not help feeling that Maggie had intentionally put him away from her presence. He was miserable in his uncertainty, he longed to comfort the womanhood he had heard outraged, but he was not selfish enough to intrude upon a desired solitude, although as he slowly walked up and down before the closed door, he almost felt the chafing of the wounded heart behind it.

And Maggie, in all her anger and humiliation, was not insensible to Allan's position. As she rocked herself to and fro, and wept and moaned without restraint, she was conscious of the man who respected her unjust humiliation too much to intrude upon it, even with his sympathy: who comprehended her so well, as to understand that even condolence might be an additional offence. She could not have put the feeling into words, and yet she clearly understood that there are some sorrows which it is the truest kindness to ignore.

In about half-an-hour the first vehemence of her grief was over. She stood up and smoothly snooded back her hair; she dried her eyes, and then looked cautiously out of the window. In the dim light, Allan's tall graceful figure had a commanding aspect, greatly increased in Maggie's eyes by the fashionable clothing he wore that day. As she watched him, he stood still and looked toward the sea; and his attitude had an air of despondency that she could not endure to witness. She went to the door, set it wide open, and stood upon its

threshold until Allan came near.

"I dinna mean to shut you oot, sir," she said sadly, "you are aye welcome."

"Thank you, Maggie."

His voice was grave, almost sorrowful, and he went at once to his own room. That was precisely what Maggie felt he ought under the circumstances to do; and yet she had a perverse anger at him for doing it.

"He might hae said, 'it's a fine night;' or 'has Davie come hame?' or the like o' that," she whispered; "I'll hae lost his liking forever mair, anda' for Angus Raith's ill tongue. I wish I had keep't my temper, but that is past wishing for." Then a sudden thought struck her, and she knocked gently at Allan's door.

"Is that you, Maggie?"

"Yes, sir. I want to speak a word wi' you. Will you come ben a minute?"

He responded at once to her desire—"What is it, Maggie?" he asked.

"If it please you, sir, I dinna want Davie to ken anything anent to-night's ill-words and ill-wark."

"I think that is a very wise decision."

"No gude can come o' telling what's ill, and if you wad believe me, sir, I'm vera, vera sorry, for my share in it."

Her eyelids were dropped, they trembled visibly, and there was a pathetic trouble and humiliation in her beautiful face. Allan was sick with restrained emotion. He longed to fold the trembling, wounded woman to his heart. He fully believed that he had the power to kiss back the splendor of beauty and joy into her pale face; and it would have been the greatest felicity earth could grant him, to do so. Yet, for honor's sake, he repressed the love and the longing in his heart, and stood almost cold and unresponsive before her.

"I am vera, vera sorry," she repeated. "The man said words I couldna thole, and sae—I struck him."

"I do not blame you, Maggie. It would be a delight to me to strike him as he deserves to be struck. For your sake, I kept my hands off the wretch. To-morrow, before all his mates, if you say so, I will punish him."

"Na, na, na; that is the thing I'm feared for I dinna want my name in everybody's lips; and you ken, sir, hoo women-folks talk anent women. They'd say; 'Weel, weel, there's aye fire where there's smoke,' and the like o' that, and they wad shake their heads, and look oot o' the corner o' their e'en, and I couldna thole it, sir."

"There is David to remember also. Dr. Balmuto thinks with me. He is to go to Glasgow College in the autumn, and a quarrel might now be a bad thing for his whole life. He wants every hour for study, he has no time for Angus Raith I think."

"Thank you, sir—and if you wad try and forget the shame put upon me, and no quite tak' away the gude will you had for me, I'd be vera grateful and happy." And she covered her eyes with her left hand, and shyly put out the right one to Allan.

"Oh, Maggie! Maggie!" he said almost in a whisper, "you little know how you try me! Dear girl, forget all, and be happy!" And as her hand lay in his hand, his eyes fell upon it. It was a brown hand, large, but finely formed, the hand of a sensitive, honorable, capable woman. It was the hand with which she had struck Angus Raith; yet Allan bowed his head to it, and left both a kiss and a tear on its palm.

CHAPTER V. — A PARTING.

*"Each on his own strict line we move
And some find death ere they find love,
So far apart their lives are thrown
From the twin soul that halves their own."*

*"Oh, nearest, farthest! Can there be
At length some hard-earned heart-won home,
Where—exile changed for Sanctuary—
Our lot may fill indeed its sum,
And you may wait and I may come?"*

About twelve o'clock the wind rose, there was a rattling breeze and a tossing sea all night; and David did not return until the early morning tide. Allan was roused from sleep by young Johnson singing,

"We cast our line in Largo Bay."

and soon after he heard David greet Maggie in an unusually cheerful manner. He was impatient to tell him the good news, and he dressed hurriedly, and went into the house place. Maggie was scattering the meal into the boiling water for breakfast; and David, weary with his night work, sat drowsing in his father's big chair. Maggie had already been out in the fresh, wet breeze, and she had a pink kerchief tied over her hair; but she blushed a deeper pink, as she shyly said, "Gude morning, sir."

Then David roused himself—"Hech, sir!" he cried, "I wish you had been wi' us last night. It was just a joy to feel the clouds laying their cheeks to the floods, and the sea laying its shouther to the shore; I sat a' night wi' the helm-heft in my hand, singing o'er and o'er again King David's grand sea sang—

*"The floods, O Lord, hae lifted up
They lifted up their voice;
The floods have lifted up their waves
And made a mighty noise.
But yet the Lord, that is on high,
Is more of might by far
Than noise of many waters is,
Or great sea-billows are."*

[Footnote: Psalm 93. Version allowed by General Assembly of the Kirk of Scotland.]

"And I couldna help thinking," he continued, "that the Angels o' Power, doing His will, wad be likely aye to tak' the sea road. It's freer o' men-folk, and its mair fu' o' the glory o' God."

"I am glad you had such a grand night, David. It is well to take a fine farewell of anything, and it was your last fishing. Dr. Balmuto sends you this word about Glasgow University—'go, and the Lord go with thee.' He has given me a letter to a professor there, who will choose the books you want, and set you the lessons you are to learn between now and the opening of the classes in September. The books are to be the doctor's gift to you. He would hear tell of nothing else."

David was as one that dreams for a moment; but his excitement soon conquered his happy amazement. He had to put his breakfast aside.

"I dinna want to eat," he said, "my soul is satisfied. I feel as if I ne'er could be hungry any mair." He was particularly delighted at the minister's kindness, and said fervently, "I thank him for the books, far mair for the blessing." He took all the favors to be done him without dispute or apology, just as a candid, unselfish child, takes what love gives it. He was so anxious to get to work, that he would liked to have left at once for Glasgow; but Allan was not ready to leave. Indeed he was "swithering" whether, or not, he should take this opportunity of bidding farewell to Pittenloch.

After breakfast they went to the boat together. The decks were covered With a mass of glinting, shimmering fish, that looked like molten silver in the sunshine. "David," said Allan, "make the boys clean her thoroughly, and in smooth water you can now use her as a study. Maggie dislikes men about the house all day; you can bring your books and papers to the boat and drift about in smooth water. On the sea there will be no crying children and scolding mothers to disturb you."

The idea delighted David; he began at once to carry it out; but Allan took no further interest in the matter, and went strolling up the beach until he came to the spot where the quarrel of the preceding evening had taken place. Here he stood leaning against the rock unconscious of outside influences for neatly two hours. He asked himself "did he love Maggie Promoter?" "Did she love him?" "Was there any hope in the future for their marriage?"

Then he acknowledged to his soul that the woman was inexpressibly dear to him. As for Maggie's love of himself, he hoped, and yet he feared it; feared it, because he loved her so well that he did not like to think of the suffering she must bear with him. He felt that no prospect of their marriage could be entertained. He loved his father, and not only respected, but also in some measure shared his family pride. He felt that it would be a sin to desert him, and for his own private pleasure crumble the unselfish life-work of so many years to pieces. Then also, beautiful as Maggie was in her cot at Pittenloch, she would be sadly out of place in the splendid rooms at Meriton. Sweet, intoxicatingly sweet, the cup which he had been drinking, but he felt that he must put it away from his own, and also from Maggie's lips. It would be fatal to the welfare of both.

Thinking such thoughts, he finally went back to the cottage. It was about ten o'clock; Maggie's house work was all "redd up;" and she was standing at her wheel spinning, when Allan's shadow fell across the sanded floor, and she turned to see him standing watching her.

"You are hame soon, sir. Is a' well wi' you?"

"No, Maggie, all is not well. If all had been well, I had never been in Pittenloch." She stopped her wheel and stood looking at him. Then he plunged at once into the story, which he had determined to tell her. "I had a quarrel with my father and I left home. He does not know where I am."

"You hae done very wrang I'm fearing, sir. He'll hae been a gude fayther to you?"

"Yes, very good. He has given me love, education, travel, leisure, wealth, my own way, in all things but one."

"Then, you be to call yoursel' a bad son. I didna think it o' you, sir."

"But, Maggie, that one thing includes all my future life. If I obey him, I must always be miserable."

"It will be about some leddy?" asked Maggie, and she spoke in a low restrained voice.

"Yes, about my cousin. She is very rich, and if I marry her, Maggie, I shall unite the two branches of our family, and take it back to its ancient home."

"Your fayther has the right to ask that much o' you. He's been lang gude to you."

"I did not ask him to be good. I did not ask for my life, but life having been given me, I think I have the right to do as I desire with it."

"There is nane o' us, sir, hae the right to live for, or to, oursel's. A tree doesna ask to be planted, but when it is planted, it bears fruit, and gies shadow, cheerfully. It tholes storms, and is glad in the sunshine, and if it didna bear fruit, when it was weel cared for, it wad deserve to be cut doon and burnt. My bonnie rose bush didna ask me to plant it, yet it is bending wi' flowers for my pleasure. Your fayther will hae the right to say what you shall do to pay back his love and care."

"But when I do not love the lady I am desired to marry?"

"Tuts!" She flung her head back a little scornfully with the word. "There's few folks ken what love is."

"Do you, Maggie?"

"What for wad I ken? Is the leddy bonnie?"

"Very sweet and gentle and kind."

"Does she like you?"

"We have been long together. She likes me, as you like David."

"Will she want to be your wife? That's what I mean, sir."

"I think not. A man cannot know such a thing as that, until he asks."

She looked sharply at him, and blushed crimson. "Then you hae never asked her?"

"I have never asked her. My father wants me to do so, and I refused."

"You are feared she'll tak' you?"

"Just so, Maggie. Now what would you advise me to do?"

"You wouldna do the thing I told you. Whatna for then, should I say a word?"

"I think I should do what you told me. I have a great respect for your good sense, Maggie. I have never told my trouble to anyone but you."

"To naebody?"

"Not to any one."

"Wait a wee then, while I think it o'er. I must be sure to gie you true counsel, when you come to me sae trustful."

She set the wheel going and turned her face to it for about five minutes. Then she stilled it, and Allan saw that the hand she laid upon it trembled violently.

"You should gae hame, sir; and you should be as plain and trustful wi' your cousin, as you hae been wi' me. Tell the leddy just hoo you love her, and ask her to tak' you, even though you arena deserving o' her. Your fayther canna blame you if she willna be your wife. And sae, whether she says 'na,' or 'yes,' there will be peace between you twa."

"That is cutting a knot with a vengeance, Maggie."

"Life isna lang enough to untie some knots."

Then with her head still resolutely turned from Allan, she put by the wheel, and went into her room, and locked its door. Her face was as gray as ashes. She sat with clenched hands, and tight-drawn lips, and swayed her body backwards and forwards like one in an extremity of physical anguish.

"Oh Allan! Allan! You hae killed me!" she whispered; "you hae broken my heart in twa."

As she did not return to him, Allan went to his room also, and fell asleep; a sleep of exhaustion, not indifference. Maggie's plan had struck him at first as one entirely impracticable with a refined, conventional girl like Mary Campbell; but when a long dreamless rest had cleared and refreshed his mind, he began to think that the plan, primitive as it was, might be a good one. In love, as well as geometry, the straight line might be the easiest and best.

But he had no further opportunity to discuss it with her. David's trip to Glasgow was a very important affair to him, and he stayed at home in the afternoon to prepare for it. Then Maggie had her first hard lesson in self-restraint. All her other sorrows had touched lives beside her own; tears and lamentations had not only been natural, they had been expected of her. But now she was brought face to face with a grief she must hide from every eye. If a child is punished, and yet forbidden to weep, what a tumult of reproach and anguish and resentment is in the small pathetic face! Maggie's face was the reflex of a soul in just such a position. She

blamed Allan, and she excused him in the same moment. The cry in her heart was "why didna he tell me? Why didna he tell me before it was o'er late? He kent weel a woman be to love him! He should hae spoken afore this! But it's my ain fault! My ain fault! I ought to think shame o' mysel' for giving what was ne'er sought."

David noticed the pale anguish of her cheeks and mouth, and the look of terror in her eyes, but he thought her trouble was entirely on his own account. "Dinna fret about me, Maggie," he said kindly, "I am going where I hae been sent, and there's nae ill thing will come to me. And we sall Hae the summer thegither, and plenty o' time to sort the future comfortable for you. Why, lassie, you sall come wi' me to Glasca', rayther than I'll hae you looking sae broken-hearted."

It was not a pleasant evening. Allan was packing his best pictures and Some clothing. David was also busy. The house was upside down, and there was no peace anywhere. Maggie's one hope was, that she would be able to bear up until they were gone. Fortunately the tide served very early, and almost at daylight she called the travelers for their breakfast. They were both silent, and perhaps no one was sorry when those few terrible minutes of approaching farewells were over. At the last, with all her efforts, Maggie could not keep back her tears, and David's black, shiny eyes were dim and misty also.

"Few men hae sae kind-hearted a sister as I hae," he said gratefully. Scotch families are not demonstrative in their affections; very seldom in all her life had Maggie kissed her brother, but when he stood with his bonnet in his hand, and the "good-bye" on his lips, she lifted her face and kissed him tenderly. Allan tried to make the parting a matter of little consequence. "We shall be back in a few days, Maggie;" he said cheerily. "David is only going for a pleasuring"—and he held out his hand and looked her brightly in the face. So they went into the boat, and she watched them out of harbor; and Allan long remembered how grandly beautiful she was, standing at the very edge of the land, with the sunshine falling all over her, the wind blowing backward her hair and her plaid, and her white bare arm raised above her head in a last adieu. He saw her turn slowly away, and he knew how her heart ached by the sharpness of the pain in his own.

She went back to the desolate untidy house and fastened the door, and drew the curtains, and sat down full of misery, that took all light and hope out of her life. She did not lose herself in analysis; the tide of sorrow went on rising, rising, until it submerged her. Accustomed to draw all her reflections from the Bible, she moaned out "Lover and friend thou hast put far from me." Ah! there is no funeral so sad to follow as the funeral of our first love, and all its wonderful hopes.

In a little while there was a knock at the door, and she had to dry her eyes and open to the neighbors, who had many curiosities to satisfy. David and "Maister Campbell" were gone, and they did not fear Maggie. She had to enter common life again, to listen to wonderings, and congratulations, and wearisome jokes. To smile, to answer questions, and yet, to hear amid all the tumult of words and laughter, always one voice, the sound of which penetrated all other sounds; to be conscious of only one thought, which she had to guard jealously, with constant care, lest she should let it slip amid the clash of thoughts around her.

Oh, how she hated the sunshine and the noisy babble of it! How feverishly she longed for the night, for the shadows in which she could weep, for the darkness in which she could be herself, for the isolation in which she could escape from slavery! It was an entirely new, strange feeling to her. In that simple community; joys and sorrows were not for secrecy. A wedding or a funeral was the affair of every one. Women were expected to weep publicly, and if they wore sackcloth and ashes, to wear it in the sight of every one. Love affairs were discussed without ceremony, and often arranged in full family conclaves. All married strictly within their own rank; not once in a generation did a fisher-girl marry "out of the boats."

Maggie would have been really afraid to speak of her love for a gentleman like Allan Campbell. She knew well what a storm of advices, perhaps even of scorn and reproaches, her confidence would be met with. Yet she would talk freely enough about Angus Raith, and when Christie Buchan told her Raith's version of their quarrel, she did not hesitate to fly into a passion of indignation, and stigmatize him freely as "a liar and a cowardly ne'er-do-weel."

"You'll mak' it up," said Christie, "and marry him when the year is oot. Deed you'll be kind o' forced to, for he'll let nae other lad come Speiring after you."

"I'll ne'er mak' it up wi' him; no, not for a' the gold in Fife; and you may tell him if he ever speaks o' me again, I'll strike the lies aff his black mouth wi' my ain hand." She found a safe vent for her emotions in the subject, and she continued it until her visitors went. But it was an unwise thing. Raith had kin and friends in Pittenloch; all that she had said in her excited mental condition was in time repeated to them, and she was eventually made to feel that there was a "set" who regarded her with active ill will.

In the meantime, Allan and David had a pleasant sail to Leith; and during it Allan made David's position perfectly clear to him. "Dr. Balmuto has taken for himself the pleasure of buying your first books, David," he said; "you must let me select your first scholastic wardrobe; or rather we will go together to my tailor, for he will know exactly what is necessary for you. The square cap of your college, and its scarlet gown, we shall procure best in Glasgow."

"I'll do whate'er you say, sir." "You see, David, the respectability of the theological class must be kept up, and it will be better that Professor Laird sees you first dressed as a student, rather than as a fisher. Then, as one never knows what may happen, I shall deposit to your credit in the Western Bank of Glasgow, the sum of #400. It will be for your fees, and board, and books, and dress. You will have to be very careful, David. I wanted to make it #500, but Dr. Balmuto said you would like better the idea of economy. Not one word, David. I know all you feel. I am happier than you are; and if the obligation ever becomes a painful one to you, why pay me back when you get a kirk and a good stipend."

"I hear you, sir, and I'm gratefu' as man can be."

"Very likely Professor Laird may wish you to stay a week with him. He will want to find out what you know, and what studies you can be pursuing this summer. If he does so, I shall take that opportunity to visit my friends. Then we can return to Pittenloch until the classes open. I look forward to some calm, happy weeks, David; and perhaps I shall be able to help you with your Latin and Greek. I wasn't a bad scholar two years ago."

"Is your hame far awa', sir?"

"I dare say, David, you think it strange I do not ask you to go with me there."

"It wad ill set me to hae such thochts, sir. I hope you dinna put them to me."

"The truth is, David, I have had a little trouble with my family. If you won't mind my secrecy, I should prefer not to speak of it."

"I hae naething to do wi' your private affairs, sir. I wad think it the height o' dishonor to mak' any inquiry concerning them."

Then the subject was readily turned, for David's mind and imagination was full of the lovely and grand city in which he found himself. He had never been beyond the small fishing towns of Fife, and the ancient castle and palace, the fine terraces of handsome houses, the marching to and fro of soldiers, the streets and kirks made sacred by the sufferings of the Covenanters and the voice of Knox, filled his soul with unspeakable emotions. Glasgow, at first, almost terrified him. "It's the City o' Human Power," he wrote to Maggie. "It is fu' o' hurrying crowds, and harsh alarms, and contentious noises. And the horses and the carriages! They are maist fearsome! Also the drivers o' them are a fierce and insolent race o' men; and I tak' credit to mysel', that I hae not been quite dumfounded wi' the noise o' it."

Allan had a private interview with Professor Laird before he introduced David to him; and doubtless satisfactory arrangements were made, for David received a cordial welcome to his house. He had taken naturally to his black clothes; never for a moment had he felt or appeared out of place in them; and the professor, after a keen look at his new student, said in an aside to Allan—

"A born ecclesiastic, a natural theologian; where did you find him, Mr. Campbell?"

"Where Christ found some apostles, in the fishing boats. He will do, I think."

"Do! He is one of those men who will walk up to fame as they would to a friend in their own home."

CHAPTER V. — OFF WITH THE OLD LOVE.

*"There is a change in every hour's recall,
And the last cowslip in the fields we see
On the same day with the first corn poppy.
Alas for hourly change, Alas for all
The loves that from his hand proud Youth lets fall,
Even as the beads of a told rosary!"*

The next day Allan bade David "good-bye," for a week. He went first to his father's office; where he received a glad welcome. Their dispute did not interfere with the courtesies of life; nor indeed, had it in any degree dulled the sincere affection between father and son. As they stood a moment hand-fast, they looked into each other's face, and in the mutual look there was a dumb acknowledgment of a love which could not be easily shadowed, and which no circumstances could altogether extinguish.

"Where have you been so long, Allan? I have wearied to see you."

"I was on the East coast, father."

"Trying to find out what you really wanted?"

"That, and also making some fine studies. I have brought back with me a few pictures which I hope you will like. Shall I take the noon boat to Meriton, or wait for you?"

"Go at noon. I may stop at Largo to see a yacht I think of buying."

"How is Mary?"

"Well and bonnie. She will be glad to see you. She has been glad always to see a letter with the Edinburgh postmark. James Sinclair is waiting for advices, so 'good-bye' until we meet at Meriton. Just tell MacRoy to let us have a bottle of the 'comet' [Footnote: *Comet wine*, that of 1811, the year of the comet, and the best vintage on record; famed for its delicate aroma.] Madeira tonight. The occasion will excuse it." Allan felt grateful, for he knew what the order really meant—it was the wine of homecoming, and rejoicing, and gratitude. And afterall, he had been something of a prodigal, and his father's greeting, so full of regard, so

destitute of reproach, had touched him very much. How beautiful was Clyde side! How homelike the heathery hills, the dimpling bays, the luxuriant stretches of wood, the stately dwellings crowning the smooth green, sloping lawns! The bold rocks of Fife, the bellowing waves, the plaintive cries of the fishermen, the salt and sparkle of the great sea, the rocking, bounding boat upon it, all these things slipped from his memory in the charm of the present picture.

He was impatient to reach his home, and glad to see the coachman and a phaeton waiting, when the steamer touched the little jetty. The man raised his hat with a pleasure there was no mistaking. "I came my ways doon on a may be, 'sir," he said proudly, "I jist had a feeling o' being wanted here. Whiles, thae feelings are as gude as a positive order. You'll be come to stay, Mr. Allan, surely, sir. There'll be a sight o' birds in the heather this year."

"My stay depends on this and that, Archibald. Is there any change round Meriton?"

"Nane worth the praising, sir. We hae a new minister. I dinna think much o' him."

"Not orthodox, I suppose."

"A puir body, sir, a puir body at a sermon. I like a gun and a minister to shoot close. Dr. MacDonald is an awfu' scattering man. He'll be frae Genesis to Revelations in the same discourse, sir."

They were passing between plantations of young larch; the great hills rose behind them, the songs of a multitude of birds filled the warm, sweet air. The horses tossed their heads, and lifted proudly their prancing feet. Allan had a keen sense of the easy, swift motion through the balmy atmosphere. As he leaned back against the comfortably cushioned vehicle, he could not help contrasting the circumstances with the hoary sea-shattering rocks of Fife, the tossing ocean, the tugging oars, and the fisherman's open boat. He did not try to decide upon the merits of the different situations; he simply realized the present, and enjoyed it.

The great doors of Meriton House stood open, and a soft-treading footman met him with bows and smiles, and lifted his cloak and luggage, and made him understand that he had again entered a life in which he was expected to be unable to wait upon himself. It gave him no trouble to accept the conditions; he fell at once into the lofty leisurely way of a man accustomed to being served. He had dismissed his valet in Edinburgh, when he determined to go to Pittenloch, but he watched his father's servant brushing his dinner suit, and preparing his bath and toilet, without one dissenting feeling as to the absolute fitness of the attention. The lofty rooms, the splendor and repose, the unobtrusive but perfect service, were the very antipodes of the life he had just left. He smiled to himself as he lazily made contrasts of them. But Fife and the ways of Fife seemed far away. It was like a dream from which he had awakened, and Meriton was the actual and the present.

He knew that he would meet Mary Campbell very soon, and he was not indifferent to the meeting. He could not help glancing with complaisance at the new evening suit he had brought with him; and looking a little ruefully at his browned and hardened hands, and the tan of wind and weather on his face. He hoped he would meet Mary before his father's arrival; so that he could get accustomed to the situation before he had to exhibit himself in it to those keen and critical observers, the servants.

He went early into the dining-room, and found Mary already there. She had some ferns and roses in her hands, and was mingling them, for the adornment of the dinner table. She put them down, and went to meet him with a smile like sunshine. Her small, slender figure clothed in white India mull had a peculiarly fragile appearance; but Allan watched her, as she glided about the room filling the crystal vases, with a restful content. He thought how intelligent her face is! How graceful her diction, how charming her low, sweet voice!

The dinner was a kind of festival. Mac Roy made every one feel so, when he served with careful and elaborate ceremonies the famous wine. Allan felt almost pained by the significance given to his return. It roused the first feeling of opposition in him. "I will not float with the current unless I wish to do so," was his mental determination; "and I will not have it supposed that my return home is a surrender of my inclinations." Unfortunately John Campbell regarded it as such; and his desire was to adequately show his appreciation of the concession. Before Allan had been at home three days, he perceived that his father was restless and impatient. He had watched and waited so long, he could not help feeling that Allan was unkind to keep a question of such importance in abeyance and uncertainty.

But the week Allan had allowed himself nearly passed and he had not been able to say a word to Mary on the subject pressing him so closely. He felt that he must have more time, and he went into Glasgow to see David. He found him in Professor Laird's study hard at work; and he saw at a glance the easy attitude of the young man among his new surroundings. When the servant said, "Here is a gentleman to call on you, Mr. Promoter," David rose without the slightest embarrassment to welcome his visitor; though when the door was closed, he said with a smile, "I let them call me Mister Promoter; I must consider the office I'm seeking and gie it honor; but it sounds unca strange, sir. Whiles, I feel as if I wad be glad to hear somebody say 'David' to me."

"Well, David, have you had a good week?"

"A week fu' o' grand promises, sir. I hae had a glint inside spacious halls o' delightfu' stillness and wonderfu' wisdom. I'll ne'er forget the joy o' it."

"We promised Maggie to return in seven days. I shall not be able to keep my promise, but I think it will be right for you to do so."

"I wad be glad if you were going wi' me."

"I shall follow ere long; and even if I should never see you again, David, I think your future is assured. Would you like me to go with you as far as Edinburgh?"

"I wad like it, but there is nae occasion for it. The city doesna fright me noo. If I couldna find my way to Pittenloch wi' a gude Scot's tongue in my mouth, and siller in my purse, I wad hae little hope of ever finding my way into a pulpit. Thank you kindly, sir."

"Then good-bye for the present, Davie, and give my regards to your sister."

He felt like a traitor to Maggie and to his own heart, but what was there else for him to say. When he reached the street the whole atmosphere of life seemed to have changed. A sudden weariness of the placid existence at Meriton attacked him. Was he to go on, year after year, dressing and visiting, and taking little rows in land-locked bays, and little rides and drives with Mary Campbell? "I would rather fling a net in the stormiest sea that ever roared, for my daily bread," he said. Yet he went on dressing, and rowing, and riding, and visiting for many more weeks; sometimes resenting the idle, purposeless life as thoroughly enervating; more frequently, drifting in its sunshiny current, and hardly caring to oppose it, though he suspected it was leading him to Drumloch.

What curious "asides" and soliloquies of the soul are dreams! Perhaps if we cared to study them more conscientiously they would reveal us to ourselves in many startling ways. The deep, real feelings which we will not recognize while awake, take possession of us when we sleep; and the cup-bearer who was slain for dreaming that he poisoned the king was, very likely, righteously slain. The dream had but revealed the secret thought of his soul. "We sleep, but our heart waketh," and though

*"Calm and still may be the sleeping face
In the moonlight pale,
The heart waketh in her secret place
Within the veil.
And agonies are suffered in the night;
Or joys embraced too keen for waking sight."*

One morning, just at the gray dawn, Allan had a dream of this kind. He saw Maggie on the sea alone, and he was sailing away from her. She stood upright in a little open boat, which the waves tossed to and fro:—a speechless, woe-stricken woman, who watched him with sorrow-haunted eyes, but neither by word, look, nor movement called him to her.

He awoke, and could sleep no more. The dream had revealed him to himself. Who was there in all the world as dear to him as Maggie was? He felt that she was wretched, and he hated himself for having made her so. That very hour he wrote to David, and said all that he might say, to give her hope and comfort, and over and over he declared his purpose of being in Pittenloch, before David left it for Glasgow. How soon David might get the letter was a very uncertain thing, but still he could not rest until he had written it.

He was dull and silent at breakfast, and hid himself and his moody temper behind his favorite newspaper. Mary had often noticed that men like to be quiet in the early morning; she gave them naturally all the benefit they claim from the pressure of unread mails and doubtful affairs. If her cousin was quiet and sombre, he might have half-a-dozen innocent reasons for the humor; when he felt more social, he would be sure to seek her. And when she saw him sauntering toward her favorite retreat she was nothing astonished. It was the fulfillment of as natural an expectation as that the clock should strike at the full hour.

"I am glad to see you, Allan," she said, with a charming serenity of manner. "We shall not now have many days as fair as this one is." She wore a gown of pale blue lawn, and had a great cluster of scarlet fuchsias in her hand. Behind the garden bench on which she sat, there was a hedge of fuchsias seven feet high and very thick. Her small dark head rested against its green and scarlet masses. The little bay tinkled and murmured among the pebbles at her feet. She had a book, but she was not reading. She had some crochet, but she was not working. Allan thought he had never seen her look so piquant and interesting; but she had no power to move him. The lonely, splendid beauty of the woman he had seen in his morning vision filled his heart. He sought Mary that hour only for Maggie's sake.

While he was wondering how he could best introduce the conversation he desired, Mary broke the silence by a sudden question. "Cousin Allan, where were you this spring? I have often wanted to ask you."

"Why did you not ask me? I wish you had, I should like to have talked on that subject. I was in the Fife fishing district."

"Oh!"

"Why do you feel curious, Mary?"

"I have always thought there was something singular about that journey. What took you to Fife? I never heard you speak of Fife before."

"It was an accident. My hat blew off, a Fife fisherman got it for me. I liked the man, and went back to Fife with him."

"Accidents open the door to Fate. Now then, what singular thing happened to you in Fife?"

"Nothing unusual happened. Is this my catechism or yours, Mary?"

"We can divide it. It is your turn to question."

"Do you know why I left home?"

"You had a 'difference' with Uncle John."

"What about?"

"Money, I dare say. I feel sure you were very extravagant while you were abroad."

"It was not about money."

"About going into business then? You ought to do something, Allan. It is a shame for you to be so lazy."

"It was not about business. It was about you."

"Me!"

"My dear Mary, for what I am going to say, I beg your pardon in advance, for I feel keenly the position in which I must appear before you. You know that the welfare of Drumloch has been my father's object by day, and his dream by night. He cannot bear to think of a stranger or a strange name in its old rooms. Long ago, when we were little children, our marriage was planned, and when the place was clear, and you had grown to a beautiful womanhood, and I had completed my education, father longed to see us in Drumloch. There were points we could not agree upon. He was angry, I was obstinate—Mary, I know not how to tell you; how to ask you—"

"Allan, my dear brother Allan, spare yourself and me any more words." She looked up with clear, candid eyes, and laid her hand upon his. "Uncle is not unjust in his expectations. His outlay, his cares, his labor, have saved Drumloch to the family. It is as much his purchase as if he had bought every acre at public rousp. And he has been a second father to me; kind, generous, thoughtful. It is hard enough for him that his plans must fail; it would be cruel indeed if he were parted from a son he loves so tenderly as he loves you, Allan. Let me bear the blame. Let it be my fault his hopes cannot be realized."

"Can they not be realized, Mary?"

"Do you mean by that question to offer me your hand, Allan? At any rate I will consider it a fulfillment of your father's desire. No, they cannot be realized. You are to me as a brother. I distinctly refuse to accept you as a husband. Uncle John is a gentleman; he will consider my 'no' as final; and he is too just to blame you, because I decline to be your wife. Nor shall we be any worse friends, Allan, for this honest talk, I am sure of that." She smiled bravely in his face, and he did not suspect how deeply both her affections and her pride had been wounded.

"Let us go back to the house; the air is heavy and hot, we may have a storm."

Allan was thoroughly miserable and unsettled. As soon as Mary had so positively refused him, he began to have doubts and longings. "Drumloch was a fine estate—the name was old and honorable, and in a fair way for greater honors—Mary was sweet and sensible, and a woman to be desired above all other women—except Maggie. Yet, after all, was he not paying a great price for his pearl?" Mary and Maggie were both difficult to resign. He began to grumble at events and to blame every one but himself. "If his father had not been so unreasonable, he never would have gone to Edinburgh at the time he did—never would have gone to Pittenloch—never would have met Maggie Promoter."

John Campbell came home in unusually high spirits. He had made a profitable contract, and he had done a kindness to an old friend. Both circumstances had been mental tonics to him. He felt himself a happy man. The atmosphere of the dinner table chilled him a little, but for once the subject on which he was always hoping and fearing did not enter his mind. When Mary left the room, he said cheerfully, "We will be with you anon, dearie, and then you shall sing for us, '*The Lass O' Gowrie*,'" and he began to hum the pretty melody as he poured out for himself another glass of port. "Help yourself, Allan. You do not seem very bright to-night."

"I do not feel very bright. Mary told me positively this morning that she would not marry me."

"What! Not marry you? Did you ask her?"

"She said 'no'."

"Oh, but she be to marry you! Your father would not have taken 'no', sir."

"A man cannot force a rich girl to be his wife. If you will speak to Mary, you will understand how useless any further hope is."

"I will speak to her. I can hardly believe this sorrow has really come to me."

He rose and went to his niece. "Come here, Mary, and sit down beside me. Allan tells me you will not have him for your husband. Your decision is a sore trouble to me; almost the worst trouble that could come to me. Oh, Mary, what is the matter? Is not Allan handsome, and kind, and good, and rich enough to mate you? And he loves you, too; I am sure he loves you; he could not help it."

"But, uncle, what if he loves some other girl better than me?"

"That isn't possible. Did he tell you such a thing as that?"

"No; but I am sure it is so. However, Allan is the second thought, uncle; Drumloch is the first. We must save Drumloch for the Campbells, uncle."

"You dear lassie! But how can that be done if Allan is not in the same mind?"

"Three things may happen, uncle. I may remain unmarried, I may marry, I may die. If I remain unmarried, I am only the steward of Drumloch; I shall save it for Allan or Allan's children. If I die, its disposition will be the same. If I marry into a strange name or family, I will sell Drumloch to you before I change my name."

"You are a wise, kindly little woman; and you have found a drop of comfort for me. I will buy Drumloch any day you wish to sell it. May be then I'll be Campbell of Drumloch myself."

"Drumloch will be well off with such a laird. I would not fret yourself one moment, uncle. There is more good in a disappointment than can be seen."

"God bless you, my dearie! Allan is blind, and deaf, and foolish, or he would never have taken 'no' from you."

"He is in love, uncle. That accounts for everything. Do you know where he was during his last absence?"

"On the east coast, making pictures. The two he gave me are wonderful. He has genius certainly; the Campbells mostly have genius. I had siller to make, or I could have painted pictures myself. I have a remarkable perception anent color."

"He was in the Fife fishing villages."

"And a very good place for subjects. The Fife fishers are a fine race —faithful, religious, handsome."

"Very handsome, I should think. Did you notice the woman in the pictures Allan gave you?"

"Yes, I did; a splendid study in both cases."

"Have you been in Allan's room lately?"

"Not since he returned home."

"Go to it to-night. You will find the walls covered with studies from Fife. In nearly every study the same figure reappears. That is the woman Allan loves. I am right, uncle; I feel I am."

"A fisher-girl!"

"Perhaps; but what a fisher-girl! The mother of men must have been like her. There is one picture in which she leans against a jagged mass of rocks, gazing over the sea. The face is so splendid, the figure so fine, the sense of life so ample, that it haunts you. And every likeness of her has just that tinge of melancholy which lies at the bottom of all things that are truly happy, or truly beautiful. How could Allan care for any other woman, having seen her?"

"You are a quick observer, Mary."

"The heart has its oracles as well as the head, uncle."

She spoke sadly, and John Campbell looked with a kindly curiosity at her. He felt almost certain that she had suffered a keen disappointment, as well as himself. "But she would die before she would make a complaint," he thought, "and I may learn a lesson from her. It is a weak soul that is not capable of its own consolation. She has evidently determined to make the best of things beyond her sorting."

After a short silence, Mary slipped quietly from the room. John Campbell scarcely noticed her departure. He had the heartache, and men of sixty have it far worse than men of twenty. When their hopes fail, they have no time left, often no ability left to renew them. To make the best of things was all that now remained; and he was the more able to do this because of Mary's promise to him. But it is always hard to feel in the evening that our day's work has been unsuccessful, and that resignation, and not success, must make the best of the hours remaining.

As he mused the storm, which had threatened all the afternoon, broke. The swash and patter of the rain against the windows, and the moaning of the trees on the lawn, made a dreary accompaniment to his melancholy musings. It grew chill, and a footman entered, put a match to the laid fuel, and lighted the gas. Then John Campbell made an effort to shake off the influence which oppressed him. He laid down the ivory paper knife, which he had been turning mechanically in his fingers, rose, and went to the window. How dark it was! The dripping outlook made him shiver, and he turned back to the slowly burning fire. But solitude and inaction became unbearable. "Regretting never mended wrong; if I cannot get the best, I can try for the second best. And perhaps the lad is not beyond reasoning with." Then he rose, and with a decided air and step went straight to Allan's room.

CHAPTER VI. — MAGGIE.

*"O, Love! let this my lady's picture glow
Under my hand to praise her name, and show
Even of her inner self a perfect whole
That he who seeks her beauty's furthest goal,*

*Beyond the light that the sweet glances throw
And refluent wave of the sweet smile, may know
The very sky and sea-line of her soul"*

The suite of rooms which belonged especially to the heir of Meriton were very handsome ones, and their long, lofty parlor was full of art treasures gathered from the various cities which Allan had visited. The fire in this room had been lighted for some time and was burning cheerily, and the young man sat in its ruddy glow when his father entered.

"I was lonely to-night, Allan, so I have come to make you a visit."

"You do me a great honor, sir, and are most welcome." And he went to meet him gladly. But as Blair, his valet, was softly moving about in an inner room, conversation was confined to conventional grooves until the servant with a low "good night, sir," glided away. As soon as they were alone the effort to conceal emotion was mutually abandoned. John Campbell sat on one side of the hearth, with his head dropped toward his folded hands. Allan kept his eyes fixed upon the glowing coals; but he was painfully aware of his father's unhappy presence, and waiting for him to open the conversation which he saw was inevitable.

"I have had a knock-me-down blow to-night, son Allan."

"And I am much to blame for it; that is what grieves me, father."

"You are altogether to blame for it, Allan. I thought Mary loved you when you came home this summer; to-night I am sure she loves you. You must have made some great blunder or she would have married you."

"There was a great blunder. I did the thing accidentally which I had often had in my heart to do, but which I am very certain would have been impossible to me, had it not blundered out in a very miserable way. We were speaking of my late absence, and I let her know that she had been the cause of our dispute, the reason why I had left home."

"If you had planned to get 'no,' you could have taken no better way. What girl worth having would take you after you had let her understand you preferred a quarrel with your father, and an exile from your home, to a marriage with her?"

"I would, for your sake, father, unsay the words if I could. Is there any excuse, any—"

"There is no excuse but time and absence. Mary loves you; go away from her sight and hearing until she forgets the insult you have given her. I don't mean go away to the east or to the west coast, or even to London or Paris. I mean go far away—to China or Russia; or, better still, to America. I have friends in every large seaport. You shall have all that my name and money can do to make your absence happy—and women forgive! Yes, they forget also; wipe the fault quite out, and believe again and again. God bless them! You can write to Mary. Where a lover cannot go he can send, and you need not blunder into insults when you write your words. You have time to think and to rewrite. I shall have to part with you again, son Allan. I feel it very bitterly."

Allan did not answer at once. He sat looking at his father's bent face and heavy eyes. The blow had really aged him, for "'tis the heart holds up the body." And to-night John Campbell's heart had failed him. He realized fully that the absence and interval necessary to heal Mary's sense of wrong and insult might also be full of other elements equally inimical to his plans. Besides, he had a real joy in his son's presence. He loved him tenderly; it maimed every pleasure he had to give him up.

"What do you say, Allan? There has been a mistake, and we must make the best of the chances left us. Had you not better go away? Mary will forgive you sooner at a distance."

Allan bit his lips, and looked steadily at the kind, sorrowful face opposite him. Then he answered, "You are too good a father to deceive, sir. I will not do you that wrong, however angry you may be with me. I love another woman. I never can marry Mary without wronging both her and myself."

"That alters everything, Allan. How long have you loved this other woman?"

"Since I left home last March."

"You cannot be sure of a love only a few months old. Will you tell me who she is?"

Allan took a taper and lit every gas-jet in the room. "Look around, father, you will see her everywhere." He led him first to the picture still upon his easel—Maggie, in her long, brown merino kirk dress; with linen cuffs folded back over the tight, plain sleeves! and a small, turned down linen collar at the throat. She had a seashell in her open left palm, and she was looking at it, with that faint melancholy smile Allan always chose for her face! He asked for no criticism, and John Campbell made none. Silently the two men passed from picture to picture. Maggie always. Maggie baking the oat cakes. Maggie at the wheel. Maggie mending the nets. Maggie peering through misty gloom for the boats, out on the angry sea. Maggie bending over the open Bible. Maggie with a neighbor's baby cuddled up to her breast. Maggie rowing, with the wind blowing her fine hair like a cloud around her. Maggie knitting by the fireside, her face beaming with sisterly love on the pale dark face of her brother David. As Allan had said, "Maggie everywhere."

The elder man went back to look at several of the pictures; he stood long before the one on the easel. He sat down again, still silent; but Allan saw that there was no anger on his face.

"Well, father?"

"She is a grand looking woman. No one can deny that. A peasant woman, though?"

"Yes, sir, a peasant woman; the daughter of a Fife fisherman."

"She is not a common peasant woman. You could not believe that she would ever kick her heels in a 'foursome reel,' or pass coarse jokes with the lads. Yet she must be uneducated, and perhaps vulgar."

"She is never vulgar, sir. She has a soul, and she is conscious of it. She had parents, grave and thoughtful, who governed by a look, without waste of words. Though she lives on the wild Fife coast, she has grown up beneath the shade of Judea's palms; for the Bible has blended itself with all her life. Sarah, Moses, Joshua, Ruth, and David, are far more real people to her than Peel or Wellington, or Jenny Lind, or even Victoria. She has been fed upon faith, subjected to duty, and made familiar with sorrow and suffering and death. The very week I met her, she had lost her father and three eldest brothers in a sudden storm. If you could see her eyes, you could look into her pure soul. A woman like that is never vulgar, father."

"A lover is allowed to exaggerate, Allan."

"But I do not exaggerate. Uneducated she certainly is. She can write a little; and in the long stormy days and evenings, I read aloud to her and to her brother. But Scott and Burns and Leigh Hunt are not an education. Her Bible has really been her only teacher."

"It is His Word," said John Campbell, reverently. "It is the best of teachers. The generations to whom Scotland owes everything, had no other book. It made her men calm, reflective, courageous unto death. It made her women gentle, faithful, pure, ideal. I remember my mother, Allan; she came from the same school. Her soul lived so much in the Book, that I am sure if an angel had suddenly appeared to her, she would scarcely have been surprised. What domestic women those were! How peaceful and smiling! How fond of the children! How dear to the children!" He had wandered a few moments back into his own past; and though he hastily recalled himself, the influence was upon him.

"Allan?"

"Yes, father."

"Have you said anything to this girl? Have you in any way committed your promise to her?"

"I have never sought her love. I was their guest, I would not wrong her by a thought. There was in my heart a real intention to marry Mary Campbell. I am your son, do you think I would plot shame or sorrow for any girl?"

"Does she love you?"

"I cannot tell—sometimes I fear so."

"Allan, there are few loves that conquer life. Life would be a hurly-burly of unbridled passion, if we had not the power to control our likes and dislikes. We two cannot quarrel. You are my one child. The sole desire of my heart is your welfare and happiness. We will make a paction between us. Go away for two years. Let absence test the love you have conceived for this strange girl. At the end of it you will either love her better, or your heart will have turned back to the friend and hope of your childhood and youth. If so, Mary will forgive you, and I may yet see you Laird of Drumloch. But if the new love outgrows the old; if you are sure, after two years' test, that none but this fisher-girl can be your wife, I will not oppose your happiness. I can trust you to bring no woman to Meriton who will be a shame or a grief to my old age."

He leaned forward and put out his hand; Allan clasped and kissed it. "No man could have a wiser or a kinder father. I will do whatever you advise, sir."

"You will not require to go to Fife again, I hope?"

"I promised to go there again. I must keep my word. It would be cruel to drop out of so dear a life, and if she loves me, give her neither hope nor promise."

"Write."

"I promised to go."

"Then keep your word. I can depend upon you. If you say anything to her, tell the whole truth. Allan, I am not asking more from you than I have already given. Some years ago, I met again bonnie Jessie Russell. She was my first love. I nearly broke my heart about her. The old affection came back to both of us. I could have married her then, but she was a widow with four children. I would not divide your inheritance. I put down my own longing, and thought only of you, and of Drumloch. Love is meant to comfort and brighten life, but not to rule it like a despot. I have had my say. Good night, Allan."

He rose and went slowly out of the room, and he stopped at the easel and looked again at the pictured woman upon it. "Does she know who you are, Allan?" he asked.

"She knows only that my name is Campbell."

"Do not tell her more. When a love affair gets named, it travels far. I draw many sailors from the Fife seamounts. We don't want strangers to discuss our personal affairs;"—and leaning upon Allan's arm, he passed out of the room, in which he had not only bravely buried his own desires, but also, wisely and kindly accepted others materially altering the few years of life left him. But oh, how selfish is youth! Only one thing is indispensable to it, the need of being happy at any cost. How good is God to those whom he permits to ripen into middle, and old age, and become mellow, and generous, and self-forgetting!

It will be seen, then, that John Campbell was not one of those money-makers with stunted senses, and incomplete natures, for whom all the grapes in the garden of God are sour. He had loved and suffered, the

songs of his native land had sweet echoes in his heart, he could appreciate beauty, he delighted in color, he had learned the blessedness of giving and forgiving, he had found out that with renunciation the higher life begins. When Allan told him in the morning that he was going to Fife, he accepted the information pleasantly, as part of an understood arrangement.

"Will you be long away, Allan?"

"A few days, sir."

"And when you return? What then?"

"I have decided to go Westward."

"I am glad of it. Boston! New York! Baltimore! Charleston! New Orleans! Why the very names are epics of enterprise! Old as I am, if I could win away from my desk, I would take a year or two to read them."

They parted pleasantly with a lingering handclasp, and words of "good speed;" and though Allan was going to bid Maggie a long farewell, he was light-hearted, for it was not a hopeless one. If she loved him, and could have patience for two years, he would be free to make her his wife. And he intended to give her this hope to share with him.

When he arrived in Edinburgh, the city was all astir with moving regiments, and the clear, crisp autumn air thrilling with military music—that admirable metallic music so well disciplined, so correct, and yet all the more ardent and passionate for its very restraint. It typified to him the love he had for Maggie Promoter. Its honorable limitations, the patience and obedience by which it was restricted, only made it stronger; and he understood how in order to love a woman well, truth and honor must be loved still better.

The first person he saw upon Leith pier was Willie Johnson. "Willie!" he cried, laughing outright in his pleased surprise; "have you come to take me to Pittenloch? I want to go there."

"Hech! but I'm glad to see you, Master Campbell, I'll put to sea noo. I cain' awa in spite o' twaill signs, and the wind turned wrang, and my feesh all spoiled, and I hae had a handfu' o' bad luck. Sae I was waiting for the luck tide to turn, and there is nane can turn it sae weel as yoursel' We'll be awa' hame noo, and we'll hae wind and water with us

*"Sing wo and well a day but still
May the good omens shame the ill,"*

said Allan gayly, and the old classical couplet sent his thoughts off to the Aegean sea and the Greek fishermen, and the superstitions which are the soul alphabet of humanity.

Johnson had very little news for him. "There's few wonderfu' to see, or hear tell o', in Pittenloch, sir. The Promoters were you asking for? Ay they are well, and doing well, and like to do better still. They say that David is quite upsetten wi his good luck and keeps himsel mair from folk than need be But a fu' cup is hard to carry.

"They are mistaken, Johnson, I am sure David Promoter has not a pennyworth of personal pride in him He is studying hard, and books—"

"Books' sir, he's got a boat fu' o' them. It isn't vera kindly taken, his using a boat for kirk business. Some think it willna be lucky for the rest."

"What foolishness, Willie!"

"Deed, sir, it is just an invite to misfortune to bring the kirk into the boats. There's naething so unlucky around them as a minister, if it be nae a black cat, or a pair o' tongs."

Allan laughed; he could not help laughing, he was so happy. Maggie was growing nearer to him every moment; and it was a real joy to be again upon the sea, to feel the fresh wind blowing through his hair, and the cradling motion of the wide swell of the waves. Early in the morning they arrived at Pittenloch. There was the brown pier, and the blue water, and the spaces of yellow sand, and the sea-weed and tangle all populous with birds whose shrill cries filled the air. There were the white cottages, and the men strolling off to the boats and the women in the open doors watching them away.

There was the Promoters cottage. It was closed and Allan was disappointed. Surely Maggie should have felt him coming. Every moment as he went toward it, he expected the door to open, and a sense of unkindness was chilling his heart, when he heard a swift, light step behind him. He turned, and there stood Maggie. She had the dew of the sea on her face, her cheeks were like a rose, pink and wet before sunrise. Her eyes had a glint as of the morning star in them, she was trembling and panting with her surprise and rapid motion.

He had thought of the sweetest words to greet her with, he had imagined that he might find it possible to take her in his arms and kiss his welcome from her lips. But in spite of her evident gladness, something in her manner restrained him; also, there was Christie Buchan, and half a dozen other women watching them. So what he said and did, was only to hold out his hand, and ask, "Are you well, Maggie? Are you glad to see me?"

"Weel, and right happy, sir."

"And David?"

"He is weel and happy too, sir. He likes the early hours for study, and I aye try to tak' a walk and let him hae the house place quiet, and to himsel'."

"He should have used my room. Students are tyrants, Maggie, if you give in to them, they will stop the clock and make you breathe with your fingers on your lips."

Smiling, she opened the door and said, "Step inside, sir; there's nae foot welcomer."

"I thocht you wad come! I said you wad come!" cried David joyfully. "Noo I'm the proudest man in Fife! Maggie, let us hae some tea, and a kippered herring, and toast the oat cake crisp. I'll no call the king my cousin to-day! Mr. Campbell, you are just the answer to my heart's desire."

"Thank you, David. It is pleasant to be made so much of"—and he opened the door of his room, and cried out, "O how nice it is, Maggie! I will just wash the salt off my face and then come and breakfast with you; and toast me a couple of herring, Maggie, for I am as hungry as a fisherman, and I have not tasted a herring since I left Pittenloch."

Three at a little round table, and only some tea, and fish, and oat cake; and yet, never was there a gayer meal. After it was over, David was eager to show Allan what he had accomplished, and the young men went together into Allan's room to examine lexicons and exercises.

David was full of quick interest, and Allan deserved credit for affecting a sympathy it was impossible for him to feel. In a little while, some one began to sing and the voice was singularly clear, and sweetly penetrating. Allan put down the papers in his hand, and listened like one entranced.

"It's just Maggie, and I'm mair astonished at her. She hasna sung a word since fayther's death. What for is she singing the noo? It's no kind o' her, and me wi' yoursel' and the books;" said David very fretfully; for he did not like to be interrupted in his recitations.

"Hush! hush! I would not lose a syllable for all the Latin language, David."

*"My heart is yearning to thee, O Skye,
Dearest of islands!
There first the sunshine gladdened my eye,
On the sea spark-ling;
There doth the dust of my dear ones lie,
In the old graveyard.*

[Musical notation omitted.]

*Bright are the golden green fields to me
Here in the lowlands;
Sweet sings the mavis in the thorn tree
Snowy with fragrance;
But oh for a breath of the great North sea
Girdling the mountains!*

*Good is the smell of the brine that laves
Black rock and skerry;
Where the great palm-leaved tangle waves
Down in the green depths,
And round the craggy bluff, pierced with caves,
Sea-gulls are screaming.*

*Many a hearth round that friendly shore
Giveth warm welcome;
Charms still are there, as in days of yore,
More than of mountains;
But hearths and faces are seen no more
Once of the brightest.*

*Many a poor black cottage is there
Grimy with peat smoke;
Sending up in the soft evening air
Purest blue incense,
While the low music of psalm and prayer
Rises to heaven.*

*Kind were the voices I used to hear
Round such a fireside,
Speaking the mother tongue old and dear,
Making the heart beat
With endless tales of wonder and fear,
Of plaintive singing.*

*Reared in those dwellings have brave ones been;
Brave ones are still there;
Forth from their darkness on Sunday I've seen
Conning pure linen,
And, like the linen, the souls were clean
Of them that wore it.*

*Blessings be with ye, both now and aye,
Dear human creatures!
Yours is the love no gold can buy.
Nor time wither.
Peace be to thee and thy children, O Skye!
Dearest of Islands!"*

"That is not one of your fisher songs, David?"

"Na, na; it is a sang made about Skye, and our mither was a Skye woman; sae Maggie learned it to please her. I dinna think much o' it."

"It is the most touching thing I ever heard." The melody was Gaelic, slow and plaintive, and though Maggie gave the English words with her own patois, the beauty and simplicity of the song was by no means injured. "Put by the books, David," said Allan. "I have no heart now for dry-as-dust lessons. Let us speak of Maggie. How is she going to live when you go to Glasgow?"

"She will just bide where she is. It is her ain hame, and she is amang her ain folk."

"Surely she will not live alone?"

"Na, na, that wed gie occasion for ill tongues to set themsel's to wark. Aunt Janet Caird is coming to be company for her. She is fayther's sister, and no quite beyond the living wi'. I thocht o' taking the boat the morn, and going for her."

"Where to?"

"About twenty miles to the nor'ward, to a bit hamlet, thae call Dron Point."

"What kind of a woman is she, David? I hope she is kind and pleasant."

"We can hope sae, sir; but I really dinna expect it. Aunt Janet had a bad name wi' us, when we were bairns, but bairns' judgment isn't to lippen to."

"I think it is. If you have any fear about Aunt Janet being good to live with, don't go for her."

"The thing is a' settled between her and oursel's. Maggie and I talked it o'er and o'er. There wasna any other thing to do. All o' oor kin but Aunt Janet hae big families o' their ain to look after. Maggie willna hear tell o' leaving the cottage, and she canna stay in it her lane. Sae, she must tak' the ill and gude thegither."

"For my own sake I am glad she stays in the cottage, because I wish to keep possession of my room. Your face need not cloud, David; I am not coming here at all; but it is inconvenient for me to remove my books, and the many sea-treasures I gathered during my stay with you. If I did remove them, I should have to store them in some other place, so it will be a kindness, if you will continue to rent me the room."

"Your foot is aye welcome in my house, sir; and when you are wanting a week's fishing, there is naething to prevent you taking it, if Aunt Janet is here. She is a vera strict pairson; the deil himsel' wouldna be suspected o' wrang-doing, if she were watching him."

"Poor Maggie! David, it does seem a hard lookout for her; especially when you will be so happy with your books, and I am going on a two years' pleasure trip to America."

David's face brightened involuntarily, and Allan could see that the thought of his certain absence was not at all displeasing. But he did not blame him for a fear so brotherly and natural; he was, however, dissatisfied with the arrangements made for Maggie's comfort, and he asked, "Can she not go to Glasgow with you, David? It would be a fine thing to have a little home for yourself there, and Maggie to look after your comfort. You would study better."

"I wad do naething o' the sort. I wad be keepit back by ony woman. There is many a ceevil word to say to them, that is just time and strength ta'en from study. Maggie kens weel, that when I hae my kirk, she'll be first and foremost wi' me. I'll count nae honor or pleasure worth the having she doesna share. Forbye, sir, when you hae a hame, and the plenishing o' it, folk should think lang ere they scatter it to the four winds. It is easy to get rid o' household things; whiles, it is maist impossible to get them thegither again. I might die, and Maggie be left to fight her ain battle. If it should come to that, Hame is a full cup; Hame is a breastwark; you can conquer maist things on your ain hearthstone."

"Perhaps you are right, David."

"I ken weel I am right. Maggie and I hae thocht o' every thing; her gude name, and her happiness is my first wish. She is vera dear to me. She is a' I have, sir."

"I shall not be in Pittenloch for two years, David, so I will pay you now for the use of my room. The rent I believe is seven shillings weekly, that is #36. I wish you would give this sum entire to Maggie. I should like her to feel in some measure independent; and I should like you to feel that you had no necessity to take thought about her from week to week."

"Thank you, sir, for the kind thocht, as weel as for the siller; and I shall tell Maggie to keep the knowledge o' it from her aunt, who is a woman o' a vera parsimonious disposition."

"Also my boat is to be hers. She can hire it out or she can sell it. It is absolutely her own. It would be folly

for me to keep it rocking at anchor, and rusting away. I can not speak to her on such subjects, but you will be sure and make her understand, David."

"'Deed sir, I'll tak' care that she gets the gude o' all your kindness. It's mair than thochtfu' o' you; and I'll hae nae need noo, to let Maggie step in atween me and my ain proper duties."

Then they went to the boat together, and David removed all his books and belongings from her, and she was made ready to go for Aunt Janet the following morning. The rest of the day went rapidly by, Allan had many visits to make, and some special tokens of regard to leave. Then they had tea together at Maggie's fire-side, and Allan watched her once more stoop to the glowing turf, and light the little iron cruisie, and rise with the light from it on her beautiful face. The simple household act was always one of meaning and interest to him. He renewed in it that moment of strange delight when he had first seen her. This evening he tried to catch her eyes as she rose, and he did so, and what did she see in his steady gaze that brought the happy blood in crimson waves over her throat and face, and made her eyelids shine with the light that was underneath them?

CHAPTER VIII. — THE BROKEN SIXPENCE.

*"I love you, sweet: how can you ever learn
How much I love you?" "You I love even so,
And so I learn it." "Sweet, you cannot know
How fair you are." "If fair enough to earn
Your love, so much is all my love's concern."*

*"Ah! happy they to whom such words as these
In youth have served for speech the whole day long!"*

David left early in the morning for Dron Point, and Allan went to the pier with him, and watched the boat away. It was not a pleasant morning. There had been, all night, surly whiffs of rain, and the sky was full of gleam and gloom and guest.

"I think it is likely Aunt Janet will get a good sea-tossing," Allan said in a voice of satisfaction, and David smiled grimly, and reflected audibly, "that it was all o' twenty miles, and the wind dead against them, for the hame coming."

Then Allan walked rapidly back to the cottage. He was longing to speak to Maggie, and every moment of David's absence was precious. She was far from expecting him, for she knew that David and Allan had left the cottage together, and she supposed Allan had also gone to Dron Point. When he opened the door the house was empty; but glancing up the beach, he saw Maggie, with her head bent to the smiting rain, slowly making her way home. He knew that this early walk had become a usual thing with her, and he understood by his own feelings, how grateful the resolute onward march against wind and rain would be to her heart.

In a few minutes she pushed open the cottage door; and her wet rosy face, in the dark green folds of the plaid over her head, had a vivid distinctness. When she saw Allan she trembled. His unexpected presence, the eager longing gaze in his eyes, his outstretched arms, the soft, penetrating utterance of her name, "*Maggie! dearest Maggie!*" All these things were an instant's revelation to her. She clasped her hands helplessly, and the next moment Allan was taking the wet plaid off her head and shoulders, and whispering, as he did so, all the fond words which he had so long restrained.

She let him tell her again and again how much he loved her. She had no more power to resist the sweet pleading than a man dying of thirst has power to resist water. For a few moments she surrendered herself to a joy so pure and so unexpected. "Oh Maggie, sweetest Maggie, tell me that you love me: that you love none but me, that you will marry none but me," pleaded Allan.

"I have aye loved you, sir. I dreamed about you when I was a lassie. I keep it the thocht o' you close in my heart. When you lookit at me the night you cam' here first, I kent you, and I loved you that vera moment. Whate'er the love I give to you, it is your ain, my soul brought it into the world for you, and for nae other man."

"In two years, Maggie, I will come for you. My wife! My wife!"

"I'll no say that, sir; not just yet. Marrying is o' this world. Loving is from somewhere beyond it. You told me about another leddy; and beside that, I wouldna come atween you and your fayther.

"I have spoken to the other lady, and she has refused me."

"Puir thing! I'm dooting you asked her for the refusal. I hae had many a sair heart anent her since you went awa'; and when I think o' her, I dinna feel as if I deserved my ain joy."

"I could love none but you, Maggie. And I have told my father that I love you. I have told him every thing."

"Weel, sir? What said he?"

"He only asked me to wait for two years, and during that time to stay away from you."

"He asked jist what I wad hae asked, even for mysel'. I'm a poor ignorant fisher-lass, I wouldna daur to marry you, unless you had tried your love for me in some mair than ordinar' way."

"Maggie, you are a part of my own soul. I can have no real wife but you."

"I hope sae, sir. I love you weel."

"Call me, Allan."

She looked up, blushing like a flame. Some instinct beyond her control moved her. She put her hands upon his shoulders and kissed him, and as she did so, she said thrice over, "Allan! Allan! Allan!"

"Maggie! Sweetheart! Life can give me no happier moment than this." And so, forgetting every thing but their love, and their great joy in each other, they sat hand in hand and talked the hours away. Allan had so much to make her understand, and she was anxious in all things to do as he desired. "If you possibly can, my love," he said, "remain here. Do not work hard. Read all the books I have left in my room. Wait patiently for me. Trust in me with all your soul. If I live, I will surely come for you in two years."

"And the time willna be that lang, for I'll aye be thinking o' you."

"Maggie, when the Fife girls give their promise, what do they bind it with?"

"They break a sixpence wi' the lad they love, and they each keep a half o' it."

He took a sixpence from his pocket and broke it silently in two. He had prepared it for the ceremony, but it required a slight effort, and the girl stood with her eyes fixed on his white, handsome, resolute face, as he accomplished the rite. Then he lifted one half, and said:

"This is yours, Maggie Promoter. With this silver token, I bind you mine, until death parts us."

"And this is yours, Allan Campbell. Wi' this siller token, I bind you mine, until death parts us."

Handfast they stood with the broken silver in their palms; their shining eyes reading the sacred promise in each other's face. Allan's heart was too full for words; Maggie, trembling with joy, was yet awed by the solemn significance of the promise. Yet she was the first to speak—

"I'll be true to you, Allan, true as the sun to the dawn, true as the moon to the tide. Whene'er you come, late or early, you'll find me waiting."

He took her by the hand, and they walked up and down the house place together; and the rain plashed against the window, and the sun glinted in after it, and the village awakened to its daily life and labor, but they took no note of the world outside the cottage, until a little child tapped low down on the closed door.

"My mammy wants some milk, Maggie Promoter," and Maggie filled the small pitcher, and then smilingly said, "We hae forgotten our breakfast, Allan. What will you hae?"

"To-day is all mine, Maggie; let us have oat cake and milk, and kisses." And he followed her from cupboard to drawer, and stood by her while she spread the cloth, and ate his portion by her side, and thought it like a meal in Paradise.

And oh, how swiftly went those few hours stolen from two years of waiting and longing; full of the eager joy of the moment, touched with the sweet melancholy of the near parting. They forgot that the wind had changed, and that David would be earlier home for it; forgot all things but their own bliss and sorrow, until a passing neighbor called out—"yonder boat coming wi' all her sails spread, will be the 'Allan Campbell,' Maggie."

Then they knew that their real parting had come. From it, Allan, white with grief, went to the pier, and Maggie forced back her tears, and hung on the kettle, and spread the table, and made all things ready to welcome her aunt. She had not seen her for many years, she had not any pleasant memories of her, but "blood is thicker than water," and kinship, to the Scotch heart, has claims of almost sacred obligation.

Allan, thinking of Maggie's comfort, watched Aunt Janet's arrival with much interest. She was a tall, thin woman, dressed in homespun linsey, with a ruffled linen cap upon her head, and a faded tartan plaid about her shoulders. David's offer had been a great piece of good fortune to her, but she had no intention of letting the obligation rest on her side. Her first words on landing were a complaint.

"I ne'er was on such an upsetting sea, niece Maggie. It's vera seldom I hae the grievous prostration o' the sea sickness, but the boat was ill rigged and waur managed, and if I hadna been a vera Judith in fortitude, I wad hae just turned round about, and gane my ways hame again."

"The 'Allan Campbell' is thought to be a fine boat, aunt."

"Fife fishers dinna ken a' things."

"They'll ken aboot boats, though."

"They may. I'm no sae sure. They lose a gude many every year that comes to them."

"How is Aunt Margery?"

"Her man has got into the excise. She holds her head as high as a hen drinking water aboot it. I never could

abide pride o' any kind. It's no in me to think mair o' mysel' than other folks think o' me."

Allan joined the family party in the evening, and he did his best to win Janet Caird's favor, and conciliate her numerous prejudices. But unfortunately she intercepted a glance intended for Maggie, and her suspicions were at once roused. Young people, in her opinion, were full of original and acquired sins, and she made up her mind in a moment that David had suspected his sister's propriety, and was anxious to shelter her under the spotless integrity of Janet Caird's good name.

"And for the sake o' the family I sall watch her well," she decided; "she sall na lightly either the Cairds or the Promoters if I ken mysel'": and from the moment of that resolve, Allan was ranged in her mind, "among the wolves that raven round the fold."

There was nothing in the parting to strengthen her suspicions. Maggie was indeed white and silent, but Allan went almost hurriedly away: as if he were weary of the circumstances surrounding him. David thought him cool and cross, and was pained by the mood; but Maggie knew the meaning of the worried, slightly haughty manner; for in one quick glance, he had made her understand how bitter it was to leave her in her worse than loneliness; and how painful in his present temper was the vulgar effusiveness of Janet Caird's thanks and noisy farewells.

An hour upon the sea cured him. "David," he said, "I was very cross. I did not like that woman in your home. She spoils my memory of it."

"She is my fayther's sister, sir."

"Forgive me, David. Let us speak of other things. You have found comfortable lodgings, I hope?"

"Ay, sir. Willie Buchan's third cousin married a Glasgow baker, who has a gude place in the Candleriggs Street. That is close by the High Street and vera convenient as to locality. The charges also are sma'. I hae a comfortable room and my bite and sup for ten shillings weekly."

This introduced a subject which opened up endlessly to David, and Allan was glad to let him talk; for thought is sweet to the lover, thought of the beloved under any circumstances. No other shadow darkened a friendship that had been so evenly cloudless, and David and Allan parted full of mutual good will and regard, although the hopes and aims of each were so widely different.

Allan went directly to his father's office, but John Campbell had gone to a board meeting, and so he took the next boat for Meriton. Evidently Archibald had not been warned that day by any peculiar "feeling" of his arrival. There was no conveyance of any kind waiting for him; but as the distance was only two very pleasant miles, Allan did not much regret the prospect of having to walk them.

The woods adjoining the road were the Campbells' property, he leaped the wall, and took the footpath through them. How silent it was under the pines! the more so because of that vague stir in the air among them. What nameless perfumes! emanations from the resinous earth, from the old trunks, from the foliage. What delightful mysteries in their nooks! Bird twitterings intimate and charming; chirpings of the mothers to their newly fledged young; little cries of joy, and counsel, and innocent surprises! A large, cool, calm hand was laid upon his heart, the hand of nature; he sauntered slowly in the aromatic air, he dreamed impossible dreams of bliss, and with the faith of youth believed in them. Good! When we have weaned youth from dreams, from poetry, from enthusiasms, and made it thoroughly sensible, and material, what kind of race will remain to the world?

And alas! All happy dreams are short enough. Allan's was dissipated by a sound of suppressed weeping. He looked cautiously around, and on the clean, brown ground beneath the pines, a little in advance of him, he saw a woman sitting. Her back was against the trunk of a large tree, her face was turned quite away from him, but he knew it was Mary Campbell. And softly and hurriedly he retraced his own steps for some distance, and then he found the wall, and leaped into the highway, and walked home by it; thoroughly awake and disenchanting.

He did not meet Mary until the dinner hour. She was then elegantly dressed, her face clear and bright, her manner, as it always was, gentle and yet cheerful.

"The sphinx," thought Allan, "is some inscrutable woman on our own hearth-stone." He remembered the low sobbing he had heard in the wood, the bowed head, the unmistakable attitude of grief, and then he looked at Mary's face dimpling with smiles, and at her pretty figure, brave in glistening silk and gold ornaments. And somehow, that night, she made him feel that she was the head of the House of Campbell, and the heiress of Drumloch.

The next day was the Sabbath. She was very particular about her religious duties; she went to kirk twice, she had the servants in the evening for catechism and parallel passages.

She gave Allan no opportunity of seeing her alone. On Monday morning, although it rained, she insisted on going to Glasgow; and she stayed in Glasgow until the following Wednesday evening. It was perhaps the first sensation of "snub" that Allan had ever received; and it annoyed him very much.

But on Wednesday night she seemed to relent, and she did all in her power to make their last dinner together one pleasant to remember. When she left her uncle and cousin to finish their wine, she left them well disposed to kindly confidence. For since Allan's return from Fife he had not felt confidence possible. His father had asked no questions, and shown no disposition to discuss his plans. But at this hour he voluntarily renewed the subject.

"You went to Fife, I suppose, Allan?"

"Yes, sir. I was there two days."

"And are you still in the same mind?"

"Nothing can change my mind on that subject, sir."

"Time has worked greater wonders, Allan. However, I will venture no opinion for two years. When do you go Westward?"

"I shall leave for Liverpool by to-morrow night's train. I shall sail on Saturday."

"Call at the office early, or go to town with me. All is ready for you. Write as often as you can, Allan, I shall weary for your letters." His eyes were full of tears, he lifted his wine glass to conceal them.

"Father, is there any special reason why I should go so far away from you? Can I not wait two years at home?"

"In justice to my own side of the bargain, Allan, you must travel and compare other women with this Fife girl. You must not only be where you can not see her, but also, where you can see many others. I think American women will be a fair test of your affection. Between Boston and New Orleans their variety is infinite. Gillbride says, they are the blood, and beauty, and intellect of all races potently mingled. Mary has a right to be considered; she is evidently embarrassed by your presence; the least you can do for her now, is to relieve her from it. Next spring there will be an opportunity to re-consider matters, if you desire. Money has accumulated belonging to Drumloch, and Mary has decided to expend it on the house. A new wing is to be built, and she will go to reside there. The work will get on better, and the tenants look with justice to the advantages of an open house again. But there is no more to be said at this time. Come, Allan, let us go to the drawing-room, I hear Mary playing a song I never can resist, no nor any other person, I think—" and he began to hum "*O Love will venture in.*"

"Isn't it a wonderful combination of thirds and sevenths? There is nothing like it in the whole portfolio of music. Nothing so winning, nothing that can so charm and haunt your ear-chambers." And they stepped softly and slowly, and stood at the door together, to listen to the enchaining plaintive little song:

[Musical notation omitted.]

*O love will venture in where it daurna weel be seen,
O love will venture in where wisdom once has been;
But I will down the river rove amang the woods so green,
And a' to pu' a posie to my ain dear May.*

*The primrose I will pu', the firstling o' the year,
And I will pu' the pink, the emblem o' my dear:
For she's the pink o' womankind and blooms without a peer:
And a' to be a posie to my ain dear May.*

*I'll pu' the budding rose when Phoebus peeps in view,
For it's like a baumy kiss o' her sweet bonnie mou'
The hyacinth's for constancy, wi' its unchanging blue
And a' to be a posie for my ain dear May*

*The lily it is pure and the lily it is fair,
And in her lovely bosom I'll place the lily there,
The daisy's for simplicity of unaffected air;
And a' to be a posie to my ain dear May.*

*The woodbine I will pu' when the e'ening star is near
And the diamond draps o' dew shall be her e'en sae clear;
The violet's for modesty, which weel she fa's to wear
And a' to be a posie to my ain dear May.*

*I'll tie the posie round wi' the silken band of love,
And I'll place it on her breast, and I'll swear by a' above.
That to the latest breath o' life the band shall ne'er remove.
And this will be a posie to my ain dear May.*

The last long drawn notes of melancholy sweetness were scarcely still, when a servant entered. "The minister is here, sir."

"I had forgotten," said Campbell hastily. "There is an extra kirk session to-night. It is about the organ, Mary. Will you go?"

"I would rather not. Every one will have his testimony to raise against it, and I should get cross."

"Then good night, bairnies. I must not keep the minister waiting. Maybe I'll be beyond your time. Don't lose your beauty sleep for me."

He left the room in a hurry, and in a few minutes the "bairnies" heard the crunch of the retreating wheels upon the gravel. Mary continued at the piano, lightly running over with one hand the music she happened to turn. Allan stood on the hearth watching her. Both were intensely and uncomfortably conscious of their position. At length Allan said, "Mary, suppose you cease playing, and talk with me!"

"Very well." She rose slowly and turned with affected reluctance. Affected, because she really wished for some satisfactory conversation with him. The recollection of their last confidence was painful and humiliating. She could hardly bear the idea of carrying its memory throughout two years. Few as the steps were between herself and Allan, she determined, as she took them, to speak with all the candor which her position gave her the right to use; and at any rate, not to end their interview again in debt to self-esteem. The strength of the Scotch mind is in its interrogative quality, and instinctively Mary fell behind the cover of a question.

"Why should we talk, Allan? Is there any thing you can say that will unsay the words you have spoken?"

"You were not fair with me, Mary. You took me up before I had finished my explanation."

"Oh, I think there was enough said."

"You made words hard to me, Mary. You forgot that we had been brought up together on terms of perfect confidence. I always held you as my sister. I told you all my boyish secrets, all the troubles and triumphs of my college life, all my youthful entanglements. I had few, very few, secrets from you. I think we both understood by implication—rather than by explanation—that it was our father's intention to unite the two branches of the Drumloch family, and so also unite their wealth by our marriage."

"I never understood there was any such intention. No one ever spoke to me of it. But if the plan had been possible, it was a wise plan; any sensible parents would have conceived it, and hoped and worked for its accomplishment."

"When I left home last spring—if I had thought you cared for me—one word would have detained me."

"Was it my place to say that word? And, Allan, you would not have been moved by any word at that time. You thought only of asserting yourself, your rights, your inclinations. The crown of England would not have fitted you, unless it had been your gracious will to select it."

"A man must have some individuality—"

"At twenty-four years old how much has he? He is a mass of undigested learning and crude opinions. What he will be at thirty-four depends upon a thousand circumstances which he cannot even apprehend. Wishes and advices from a father are not commands. You showed a petulant, foolish temper, quite unworthy of you, in turning your back on Uncle John, and saying in effect, 'I don't intend to take your advice, I intend to take my own way, even though it lead me to a Fife fishing village—and a degrading love affair.'"

She said the words calmly, looking steadily, not at Allan, but into the depths of the Argand lamp. There was no nervous movement of her hands; her interlaced fingers lay motionless on the table before her.

Allan answered promptly, "I have no degrading love affair in any Fife village. If I had, do you think I should have entered your presence at all? The woman I love is as sacred in my eyes as you are. I intend to make her my wife. I should have told you all about her the morning that you took for granted my offer in order to peremptorily refuse me—if you had allowed me"—

"Oh, Allan! don't say that! We are getting deeper and deeper into mistakes. I certainly thought you wanted me to refuse you. I tried to make the necessity as easy as possible for you. But imagine how I felt when I came to consider things! I was asked to do this humiliating piece of deception, in order that I might clear your way to some fisher-girl. It was too bad, Allan!"

"I do seem to have treated you badly, Mary, because you gave me no opportunity to tell you every thing, and to ask as a great sisterly kindness what you gave under a sense of indignation and wrong. I feel that it is now useless to explain; but how did you know that I was in love with a fisher-girl?"

"I have seen the pictures you painted while you were away. They revealed the story to me—as much of it as I care to know."

"There is now no secrecy in the matter. I have told my father all, and he has asked me to go to America for two years. At the end of that time he will accept my marriage."

"Poor Uncle John! I wonder how people can toil and deny themselves for ungrown children! When they come to years of have-my-own-way, they generally trample upon all their love and labor. For instance, you see a tall, large, handsome woman in what you think picturesque poverty, you want her, just as you used to want the fastest boat on the river, or the fastest horse in the field. The fact that you ought not to have her, that you cannot have her, except by trampling on all your father's dearest hopes, does not, in the least, control you. You can conceive of nothing better than the gratification of your own wishes. If all the men were like you, and all the women were in my mind, there would be no more marrying in the world, Allan Campbell!"

"Mary, if you should ever be really in love, you will then excuse me; at present I can make no apology which you will understand or accept. Forgive me upon credit. I am going away for a long time; and I cannot go happily if we are at variance." He sat down by her side, and she let him take her hand, and plead the memory of all their past affection for, and reliance on each other. "Be my friend, my sister still, Mary; though you will not answer me, I will trust to you. Let us part kindly now, we can gain nothing by further discussion, at this time." He lifted her face and kissed it; and the next moment she heard the door close behind his footsteps, and realized that the opportunity of which she had made such an unhappy use was gone.

There is little need to say that she was miserable. All of us have been guilty of like perversities. We have

said unkind things when our hearts were aching with suppressed affection; we have been so eager to defend ourselves, to stand fairly in some dear one's sight, that we have hasted in the wrong direction, and never blundered into the right one until it was too late. Poor Mary! She had stung herself all over. She could think of nothing that she had said that she did not wish unsaid; and of many things of sisterly care, and even friendly courtesy, that she had entirely forgotten. Mortification dismissed all other feelings, and she set her reflections to its key. "How glad he must be to have escaped a wife so sharp-tongued and domineering! No doubt that Fife girl would have been all submission and adoration! When a man falls in love with a girl so much beneath him, it is a piece of shameless vanity. It is the savage in the man. He wants her to say 'my lord' to him, and to show him reverence! I could not do that kind of thing, no, not even if he filled the highest pulpit in the land, and preached to the queen herself every Sunday."

When John Campbell returned, he found Mary still in the parlor. She was playing some noisy, mechanical "variation," whose rapid execution was a physical vent for her chagrin and disappointment. She rose with alacrity, rang for hot water, brewed his toddy, and affected the greatest interest in the kirk meeting. Indeed she was interested in it; for the gathering had been to consider whether John Campbell's offer of an organ, and her own offer of her services as organist, could be accepted by the church.

"It was hopeless from the first," said Campbell with a queer smile; "every shepherd in Bute was there to protest. You would have thought I had proposed a Popish Mass Book, or at least an Episcopal Litany. There will be no 'music boxes' in Bute kirks this generation, Mary. And, would you believe it, the minister was dead against it?"

"I thought he favored an organ in the choir?"

"I was always uncertain about him. I never could interest him in the subject. He would listen, and shake his head, or say, 'just so, sir,' or refer to a session in which all could say the word in their heart; and so on. Tonight, after an opening prayer, in which he took the liberty to remind the Lord of all the spiritual dangers connected with praising Him with instruments of our own handiwork, he stood up and said, 'I'm not in favor of any music with the Psalms of David, they are far better without it. And if I were willing for the organ box, we are a poor kirk, and could not afford to rob our stipendary and mission funds to pay a man player on instruments; and as for women interfering with the ordinances in any way, you all know what St. Paul says on that subject.' And, of course, when the minister talks with the people's prejudices, he is omnipotent."

"Was it put to the vote?"

"Yes. Two of the congregation, Burns of Blantree, and myself, stood up when the organ was proposed; the rest sat grim and dour. Nothing less than an earthquake could have made them stir. When those opposed to an organ were requested to rise, they stood up solid as a phalanx, and firm as a stone wall. I wish Allan had gone with me. Where is the lad?"

"He bade me 'good-by' some time since. I dare say he has several things to do in his rooms. A man cannot go away for two years and leave his treasures to moths, and dust, and unchecked decay. Uncle, how soon can we begin to build at Drumloch? This organ business has made me lose sympathy with the Meriton people:—and I want something to do, Uncle John, something to think about, and look after."

"Then I will have the plans drawn, and estimates made, and you shall go to your own home, Mary, as soon as possible. The people are looking forward to your return. You will be happier among them. We can return to Glasgow at once; I shall be very glad to do so; and you can go to Drumloch in the spring."

The proposal pleased Mary. She wanted to get away from Meriton. She did not like being in the same house with those numerous similitudes of the Fife girl. The garden in which Allan had made her that pretence of an offer, the parlor in which she had given way to such a petulant, disagreeable temper, were full of mortifying remembrances. She wanted to turn over a new leaf of life, to cross the past one, and to cancel forever the hopes there credited.

CHAPTER IX. — SEVERED SELVES AND SHADOWS.

*"Now I would speak the last Farewell, but cannot;
It would be still Farewell a thousand times;
So let us part in the dumb pomp of grief."*

*"Rumor is a pipe
Blown by surmises, jealousies, conjectures,
And if so easy and so plain a stop
The still discordant, wavering multitude
Can play upon't."*

At that time, Mary saw no more of her Cousin Allan. He had gone when she rose next morning, gone away in a slow, even downpour of rain, that was devoid of every hope of blue sky or sunshine. On the river they were in a cloud of fog impenetrable to sight, and inexpressibly dreary. Everything also in the little boat was clammy and uncomfortable. There was a long day before Allan; for his business scarcely occupied him an hour, and then he went out into the black, chill street, and felt thoroughly miserable. His father's face had been so white, his hands had trembled so, he had made such a brave effort to say a cheerful 'good-by.' Allan's conscience troubled him; he felt supremely selfish, he could not satisfy himself that he had any right to put so good a parent to so much sorrow.

If he could have written to Maggie, it would have been some consolation. But he had not been able to make any arrangements for that solace. A post office did not exist in Pittenloch; if a letter were addressed there, it lay in Dysart until the Dysart postmistress happened to see some one from Pittenloch. Under such circumstances, there was no telling into whose hands his letters might fall. And a letter to Maggie Promoter from Glasgow parts, would be a circumstance to rouse unbounded curiosity. Either curiosity would be illegitimately satisfied, or Maggie would be the object of endless suspicions.

He thought of David, but there would be little comfort in seeing David, for he could not talk to him of Maggie. Allan would have liked well to confide in David, and explain, as he thought he ought to, his honorable intentions toward his sister; but Maggie had earnestly entreated that nothing should be said to her brother. "He'll be aye questioning me. He'll be aye watching me. He'll maybe tell folks, and I'll feel everybody's eye is on me. Forbye, he willna be as happy in what you hae done for him. He thinks now, it was just for your admiration o' his abilities, and your liking for his sel', that you sent him to Glasga' College. If he kent you thocht o' me, he wad be sure it was for my sake, and that wad jist tak' the good out o' everything for Davie." Thus, Maggie had reasoned, and Allan thought her reasoning both generous and prudent.

So there would be little comfort in threading the dirty ways of Argyle Street to the Candleriggs; and he went to his hotel and ordered dinner, then back to his father, and begged him to come and spend the last hours of his delay with him. And John Campbell was delighted. "Things will go tapsalteerie, Allan, but let them; we will have a bite and a cup of kindness together." It was a very pleasant bite and cup, seasoned with much love, and many cheerful confidences; and when Allan, at length, left the dreary precincts of the old Caledonian Station, the last thing he saw was his father's bare, white head, and that courtly upward movement of the right hand which was his usual greeting or adieu; a movement which is as much the natural salutation of a gentleman, as a nod is the natural one of a vulgar mind.

John Campbell remained in Glasgow for the next three days, and Mary was lonely enough at Meriton. It was a little earlier than they usually removed to their city home, but she began to make preparations for that event. In the course of these preparations, it was necessary to inspect the condition of Allan's apartments. How desolate and forsaken they looked! No other rooms in the house had the same sense of loss, even though they had been in the same measure dismantled. The empty polished grates, the covered furniture, the closed blinds, the absence of all the little attributes of masculine life—pipes, slippers, newspapers, etc.—were painfully apparent.

But no one had touched any of the numerous pictures of Maggie. They were on the wall, the mantel, the table, the easel. She glanced at them, and left the room; but after a moment's hesitation, she returned, drew up the blinds, and stood resolutely before the large one upon the easel. "What is there in her face that is so charming?" she asked. "Why did it draw me back here? Does my sense of justice forbid me to dislike without a reason, and am I looking for one?" She went from picture to picture. She stood long before some, she took one or two in her hand. She did not like the girl, but she would not be unfair in her criticisms. "Whatever she is doing, she is like a poem. I could not bake oat cakes, and look as if I had stepped out of Gessner's Idyls. But she does. What limpid eyes! And yet they have a look of sorrow in them—as if they had been washed clear in tears—she is not laughing anywhere. I like that! If she were gay and jocund in that picture how vulgar it would be.—If her splendid hair were unbound, and her fine throat and neck without kerchief, and if she were simpering with a finger on a dimple in her cheek, I know that I should detest her. It is her serenity, her air of seriousness, which is so enthralling—I wonder what her name is—it should be something grand, and sweet, and solemn—I should think Theodora would suit her—What nonsense! In a Fife fishing village every girl is either Jennie or Maggie or Christie." So she mused, going from picture to picture, until they acquired a kind of personality in her mind.

Her uncle came home a little sad. "Allan has gone again," he said. "I seem to have seen very little of the lad. He is such a fine lad, too. We had a few happy hours together at the last. I am very glad of that! When he comes home next time, he will settle, and never leave me again. I shall be a happy man when that day gets around, Mary."

"He will settle, that is, he will marry that fisher-girl! He has told you all about her, he says?"

"He was very honest and candid with me, very."

"What is her name, uncle?"

"I do not know. He did not tell me, and I never thought of asking."

"Where does she live?"

"Really, Mary, I never asked that either. I don't think it makes the least difference."

"Oh, but it does. I am very much disappointed. I was thinking we could take a trip to the village, and see the girl ourselves. Would not that be a good thing?"

"It would be a very bad thing, a very dishonorable thing. If I thought it necessary to play the spy on my son Allan, I should prefer to know he was dead. The girl may become my daughter. I should be ashamed to meet

her, if I had gone to peep at her behind her back. She would not despise me more than I should despise myself."

"I do not look at it in that light, uncle. There might be several good reasons."

"We won't discuss them, Mary. Let us talk of Drumloch. Wilkie is drawing the plan of the new wing. When will you go back to Glasgow? I was at Blytheswood Square to-day; the house is in beautiful order."

"I will go back to-morrow. I am weary of Meriton this year. I have found myself everywhere at a discount. Allan refuses my estate and myself. The minister and the kirk refuse my services as organist. And when I had a very kind idea in my head about Theodora, you make me feel as if I had been plotting treason against her, and against honor and everything else of good report. Let me hide my head in the smoke of Glasgow to-morrow."

"Theodora! Is that the girl's name?"

"That is the fisher-girl's name, the one I have given her. I suppose she will have to descend to Jennie or Christie."

"Are you not a little ill-tempered, Mary?"

"I am shamefully ill-tempered, uncle. I am afraid I am growing bad, and I cannot make up my mind to get any more good from Dr. MacDonald. When ministers want to snub women, they always quote St. Paul. Now, I do not believe any wrong of St. Paul. I have an idea that he was a perfect gentleman, and rather polite to our sex."

"They quote his own words, my dear."

"They quote, as they have transposed and transformed them. I think if a woman had translated that particular passage, it might have been less pleasant for Dr. MacDonald to quote."

"Nevermind Dr. MacDonald to-night, dearie. Sing us a few words of Robert Burns. It would be an ill heart that could not get cheery in his company. I bought the bonniest likeness of him yesterday. What a handsome lad he was!"

"I always fancy he must have looked like Joseph. The Talmud says all the women in Egypt loved Joseph. I am sure everybody, young and old, make their hearts over to Robert Burns."

[Musical notation omitted.]

*There was a lad was born in Kyle,
But whatnaday, o' whatna style,
I doubt its hardly worth our while
To be sae nice wi' Robin.*

*For Robin was a
rovin boy, A rantin', rovin', rantin', rovin',
Robin was a rovin' boy, O ran-tin', rov-in', Robin!*

*Our monarch's hindmost year but ane
Was five and twenty days began;
'Twas then a blast o' Januar' win'
Blew hansel in on Robin.
For Robin was, etc.*

*The gossip keekit in his loof,
Quo' she, wha lives will see the proof,
This waly boy will be nae coof;
I think we'll ca' him Robin.
For Robin was, etc.*

*He'll hae misfortunes great and sma',
But aye a heart aboon them a',
He'll be a credit till us a'
We'll a' be proud o' Robin.
For Robin was, etc."*

Half an hour's song put both in cheerful temper, and when Mary said, "Now, uncle, we must stop, because I want to take the first boat to-morrow," the dear old man went gayly off, singing:—

[Musical score omitted]

*"Then up in the morning's no' for me,
Up in the morning early;
I'd rather gang supper-less to my bed,
Than rise in the morning early.*

*"Up in the morning's no' for me,
Up in the morning early,*

*I'd rather gang supperless to my bed,
Than rise in the morning early,"*

and he was as proud and pleased with the apropos quotation, as if he had written it himself.

John Campbell's city house was one of the handsomest of the many handsome mansions in Blytheswood Square; and there the principal treasures of his home life were gathered: silver, paintings, furniture, books, as well as the mementoes which had come to him from past generations. He had expected Allan to spend the winter at home, and made many extensive changes in view of the company which the young people would probably desire. When Mary entered the house, she turned a face of astonishment and delight upon her uncle. Everywhere the utmost richness and luxury of appointment were manifest, and over her piano hung the painting of the beaming Robert Burns, for which Campbell had just paid #500. He had intended to surprise his niece, and he had his full measure of thanks in her unaffected pleasure. It was a happy home-coming, and as they sat together that night, Mary tried to inspire the father's heart with her own hopes in regard to Allan's future.

"He will come back in a year, uncle," she said, "and he will bring with him one of those bright-looking New York women, brains to the finger tips, nerves all over, with the most miraculously small feet, and costumes just as wonderful. Or it will be some large-eyed, slow-moving, long, lithe Southern girl who will look like a great white lily turned into a woman. I do not think seriously that Theodora has the slenderest chance of becoming Allan's wife, and, would you believe it, uncle, I am honestly sorry for her?"

"I believe it, dear, if you say so; but I would not have expected it."

"I cannot help thinking about her. I wish I could. I have wondered a dozen times to-day if she knows that she is shut up alone in that nearly empty house. How the storm will beat upon Allan's windows all the winter! How the wind will howl around the big, desolate place! And think of the real Theodora waiting among all kinds of rude surroundings on that bleak Fife coast. There must have been a mistake with that girl, uncle. She was meant for lofty rooms and splendid clothing, and to be waited upon hand and foot. Don't you think souls must often wonder at the habitations they find themselves in?"

"There is One above who orders all things. He makes no mistakes of that kind, dearie. I dare say the girl is very happy. She will be a kind of heroine among her own class of women, and they will envy her her rich handsome lover."

"And you think she will be happy under those circumstances? Not unless Fife girls are a higher creation of women. If they envy her they will hate her also; and I doubt if she will have many more friends among the fisher-lads. They will look upon her as a renegade to her order. The old women will suspect her, and the old men look askance at her with disapproving eyes. The girl will be a white blackbird; the properly colored birds will drive her out of the colony or pick her to death. It is only natural they should."

"But they are a very religious people; and grace is beyond nature."

"I do not deny that, uncle; but did you ever find grace with a mantle large enough to cover a defenceless woman who was under the ban of the majority? Now did you?"

"I know what you are after, Mary. You want to go and see her. This talk is a roundabout way to enlist my sympathy."

"Suppose I do want to go and see her, what then?"

"You could not go. The thing is simply impossible for some months at least. We know neither her name nor her place of residence. I should have to write to Allan on that matter; he might decline to tell me; if he did tell me, his answer will come with the snow and the winter storms. How then are you going to reach the Fife coast? And what kind of excuse could a lady make for visiting it about Christmas?"

"Excuses are plenty as blackberries in season. I wonder you did not 'speer her name and hame;' that would have been my first question."

"If I am buying a ship, Mary, I look at her build; I want to know if she is sea-trusty; her name is of small account. Now, if I were you, I would not trouble myself about Allan's sweetheart. I dare say she is happy enough."

"I am quite sure she is wretched. I feel it. And I have an idea that Allan would expect me, feeling so, to look after her."

Mary Campbell's divination was a correct one. Maggie was even thus early very wretched. In fact her misery began before Allan and David were quite out of sight. For a few minutes Janet Caird let her stand and watch the departing boat; then she said with an air of business, "Weel, weel, Maggie, they are gane, but the wark o' the house bides. If you are ready I'll just gae through it, and tak' a look at the things put under my hand and charge."

Maggie turned round sharply. "There is nae charge in your hand, Aunt Janet. I hae keepit the house since I was seventeen years auld, and I'm no needing help frae onybody."

"Then whatna for was I brought here, frae my ain bit o' heather roof? It will ill set you to put your fayther's auldest sister under your thumb. Folks will talk ill o' you."

"They will talk as they like to talk, and it's mair often ill than gude. But the house is mine, and I'll guide it yet. You are vera welcome, Aunt Janet, and I'll be thankfu' for your company, and your word o' advisement,

and if you'll bide under my roof, I'll bide under the shelter o' your gude heart, and gude word; for you ken, a lone lassie ought to hae some person weel respectit to stand by her, and to be a witness that she lives as a decent lassie ought to live."

"I didna think I was to be made a convenience o'. I lookit to do my day's wark, and sae earn my day's wage."

"Did Davie promise you siller at a'?"

"I'll no say he did; there wasna any promise fully made; but I thocht o' it."

"How much was you thinking o'? What sum will pay you to stand by my gude name, and say for me the right word when you hear the wrang one? For you ken, aunt, I'll ne'er deserve the wrang one."

"Wad five shillings weekly be o'er much?"

"Ay, it's a deal. But I'll gie it to you. And you can knit your ain stocking, and go and come as it likes you; and I'll mind my ain hame, and I'll pay you the siller every Saturday night."

"I dinna like the talk o' siller sae near the Sawbath day. We'll hae the settlement on Saturday at noon."

"Vera weel. We willna differ about an hour or twa."

"I didna sleep gude last night. A box bed isna quite the thing for an auld woman like me."

Maggie hesitated. Her own little room was very dear to her. It gave her a measure of privacy, and all her small treasures had their place in it. The concealed, or box bed, in the house place wall, had been David's sleeping place. It was warm and thoroughly comfortable; it was the usual, and favorite bed of all people of Janet Caird's class. Maggie wondered at her objection; especially as her own room was exposed to the north wind, and much colder than the house place. She based her opposition on this ground—

"You can hae my room if it please you better, Aunt Janet; but it is a gey cold one in the winter; and there isna ony way to make it warmer."

"Tuts, lassie! What for wad I want your bit room, when there is my brither's room empty noo?"

She rose as she spoke, and opened the door of the apartment which Allan had so long occupied. "It's a nice room, this is; a gude fire-place and an open bed, and you can pack awa a' those books and pictur's—they dinna look like vera improving ones—and I'll put my kist i' that corner, and just mak' mysel' quite comfortable."

"But you canna hae this room, Aunt Janet. Neither I, nor you, hae the right to put oor foot inside it. It is rented, and the rent paid doon; and the books and pictures canna be meddled wi'; there mustna be a finger laid on them."

"My certie! The man is gane far awa'; o'er the Atlantic Ocean itsel'—I'll bear the blame o' it. He took quite a liking to me, that was easy seen, and I'm vera sure, he willna mind me using what he canna use himsel'."

"He put the room, and a' in it, under my care, aunt. The books are worth mair siller than you ever counted; and I wouldna let ony-body—unless it was the minister an orra time—stay in it."

"What's the matter wi' the lassie? Maggie, you are no to be bided! I'll hae this room for mysel', and that's the end o' the controversy."

She had sat down in the big rush chair, by the still burning turfs, and she was looking round her with the critical eye of a person who is calculating the capabilities of a place. Maggie left her sitting there, and began to tidy up the house. In half an hour Janet re-appeared, and went to her kist—a great wooden box painted light blue—and began to undo its many cords and lock. Then Maggie closed the door of the disputed room, turned the key, and put it in her pocket.

The noise instantly arrested the old woman. She stood up, and cried out in a passion, "What's that you're doing, Maggie Promoter?"

"I'm locking Mr. Campbell's room. I'll no see you break into ony one's right, be they here, or far awa'."

"You hizzy! You! You'll daur to call me a thief, will you?"

"Dinna fight me at the outset, Aunt Janet. If I am wrang, when Davie comes hame at the New Year, I'll gie you the key. But I'll no do it, till he says sae, no, not if I die for it! Now then?"

"Setting yoursel' up in a bleezing passion wi' a person auld enough to be your mither! Think shame o' yoursel', Maggie Promoter!"

Maggie was certainly in a passion. Her eyes were full of tears, her face burning, her form erect and trembling with anger. Yet she was bitterly annoyed at her own weakness; she felt degraded by her outburst of temper, and was just going to say some words of apology, when a number of women entered the cottage. There was Jenny and Maggie Johnston, and Kirsty Buchan, and Janet Thompson and Mysie Raith; five buxom wives in linsey and tartan, all talking together of their "men" and their families.

Maggie's instincts revolted against any public discussion of her own affairs, and Aunt Janet was not disposed to tell her grievance while Maggie was present. So both women put it aside to welcome their visitors. There was much hand-shaking, and loud talking, and then Janet Caird said with a bustling authoritative air, "Put on the kettle, Maggie, a cup o' tea when kimmers meet, mak's talk better;" and Maggie, dumbly resentful at the order, obeyed it.

She was not in a generous mood, and she was calculating, as she silently set the table, how much of her seven shillings a week would be left, when she had paid Janet Caird five out of it, and entertained all her kimmers. When the tea was brewed, the old woman went to her blue kist, and brought out a bottle of Glenlivet, "just to tak' off the wersh taste o' the tea;" and Maggie, perceiving they had set down for a morning's gossip and reminiscence, said, "I'll awa' up the beach a wee, friends. I hae a headache, and I'll see if the wind will blow it awa'."

No one opposed the proposition. She folded her plaid around her head and shoulders and went out. Then Janet Caird put down her tea cup, looked mournfully after her, sighed, and shook her head. Upon which, there was a general sigh, and a general setting down of tea cups, and a short, but eloquent silence.

"You'll hae your ain adoo wi' that self-willed lass, I'm feared, Mistress Caird."

"Deed, Mistress Raith, she's had o'er much o' her ain way, and she is neither to rule, nor to reason wi'."

"Davie Promoter is a wise-like lad; he did right to bring you here."

"And nane too soon."

"She's sae setten up wi' the fuss Maister Campbell made wi' baith o' them. Naething gude enough for Dave and Maggie Promoter. The best o' teachers and nae less than Glasca College itsel', for the lad—"

"My nephew Davie isna quite a common lad, Mistress Buchan. Dr. Balmuto gied him the books he needed. Think o' that noo."

"And the lass is a handsome lass. Maister Campbell thocht that. Angus just hated the sight o' him, for he said he came between himsel' and Maggie."

"She wouldna hae the impudence to even hersel' wi' Maister Campbell, a man connectit wi' the nobility, and just rollin' in gowd and siller," said Aunt Janet; drawing on her imagination for Mr. Campbell's distinctions.

This was the key-note to a conversation about Maggie in which every one of the five women present gave their own opinion, and the opinion of all their absent cronies about the girl's behavior. And though Janet Caird knew nothing of Maggie, and could say nothing definitely about her, she yet contrived in some manner to give the impression, that David Promoter had been afraid to leave his sister alone, on account of her attachment to Mr. Campbell; and that she had been specially brought from Dron Point to keep watch over the honor of the Promoter family.

If Maggie had been a popular girl, the loyalty of the Pittenloch wives to "their ain folk" would have been a sufficient protection against any stranger's innuendoes; but there was no girl in Pittenloch less popular. Maggie was unlike other girls; that was a sufficient reason for disfavor. Society loves types, and resents the individual whom it cannot classify; and this feeling is so common and natural that it runs through all our lives and influences our opinion of things inanimate and irresponsible: —the book of such inconvenient size or shape that it will not fit the shelf in our book-case, how many an impatient toss it gets! The incongruous garment which suits no other garment we have, and seems out of place on every occasion, how we hate it! Although it may be of the finest material and excellently well made.

So, though no one knew anything wrong of Maggie, and no one dared to say anything wrong, how provoking was the girl! She did nothing like any one else, and fitted into no social groove. She did not like the lads to joke with her, she never joined the young lassies, who in pleasant weather sat upon the beach, mending the nets. In the days when Maggie had nets to mend, she mended them at home. It was true that her mother was a confirmed invalid, confined entirely to her bed, for more than four years before her death; and Maggie had been everything to the slowly dying woman. But this reason for Maggie's seclusion was forgotten now, only the facts remembered.

The very women who wondered, "what kind of a girl she must be never to go to dances and merry makings;" knew that she had watched night and day by her sick mother; knew that the whole household had trusted to Maggie from her seventeenth year onward. Knew that it was Maggie that made all the meals, and kept the house place clean, and took care of the men's clothing, and helped to mend the nets, and who frequently after a day of unceasing labor, sat through the stormy nights with the nervous, anxious wife and mother, and watched for her the rising and setting of the constellations, and the changes of the wind.

Before her mother had been a twelvemonth under "the cold blanket o' the kirk yard grass," her father and brothers found rest among the clear cold populous graves of the sea. Then came Allan Campbell into her life, and his influence in the Promoter household had been to intensify the quiet and order, which David and Maggie both distinctly approved. The habit of being quiet became a second nature to the girl, every circumstance of the last years of her life had separated her more and more from the girls of her class and age. She was not to blame, but what then? People suffer from circumstances, as well as from actual faults.

There were two other points in Maggie's character undoubtedly influencing the social feelings which finally determined the girl's future—her great beauty, and her quick temper. There were women in the village who considered her rare and unmistakable beauty a kind of effrontery, at least they resented it with the same angry disapproval. A girl with no "man" to stand by her, ought not to look so provokingly radiant; nor, by the same rule, ought she to have such positive likes and dislikes, or a tongue always so ready to express them.

That very morning soon after leaving her aunt and the gossips around her, she met upon the beach Mysie Raith and Kitty Cupar. Kitty looked queerly at her and laughed, and instead of ignoring the petty insult, Maggie stopped the girls. "What are you laughing at, Kitty Cupar?" she asked indignantly.

"At naething," promptly replied the girl.

"What a born fool you must be to giggle at naething. Tak' tent, or you'll be crying for naething, afore night."

Then she went onward, leaving the girls full of small spite and annoyance. She was not far from her father's ill-fated boat. It always stood to Maggie in the stead of his grave. David had told her not to go near it, but she was in a perverse temper "and ill-luck, or waur ill-luck, I'm going;" she said to herself. It showed many signs of its summer's exposure; the seams were open, the paint peeling off, the name nearly effaced. She sat down on the shingle and leaned against it.

"Oh Lizzie! Lizzie!" she whispered to the poor forlorn battered thing. "You brought sair loss and sair change! Four hearts that loved me weel, you flung to the bottom o' the sea; and there's nane to care for me as they did. Davie is bound up in his diction'ries, and thinks little of Maggie noo; and *he* is gane far awa'. He'll ne'er come back to me, I'm feared; he'll ne'er come back! It is just anither wreck, Lizzie, for a' you left is ta'en awa' this day."

It is a great grief to miss the beloved in all the home ways, but oh, how that grief is intensified when people not beloved step into their places! It made Maggie bitterly sorrowful to see Janet Caird in her father's chair. What a mistake she had made! She had no idea she would feel so resentfully to the one who was in her house because "they were not."

"It will be waur yet to see her reading his Bible," she thought, but she lifted the big book and laid it before her aunt at the usual hour for the evening prayer. "Na, na," said Janet, with an expression of self-approbation, "I dinna approve o' women reading the Word aloud. It is nae house without a man at the head o' it, and we canna hae exercises without a man to gie us the sense o' them. We are twa lane women, we maun be contented with the whisper o' a verse or twa to our ain hearts."

And Maggie was almost glad. She thought of her father reading the Book with his four sons around him; and she thought of David's pale solemn face bending over it, as they two sat together to listen to its comfort and its counsel; and she said, "I'll put the Book out o' sight, and I'll hae it opened nae mair, till I sit wi' Davie in his ain manse; and then we'll read again that bonnie verse *He* gied us—*Then are they glad, because they be quiet; so He bringeth them unto their desired haven.*"

CHAPTER X. — MAGGIE'S FLIGHT.

*"She has profaned the sacred name of Friend
And worn it to vileness"*

*"Ah, wretched and too solitary he
Who loves not his own company!"*

"Fortune came smiling to the maid, and woo'd her"

Life would be but a mean abode for men and women if they could not open the windows of their souls and look beyond it. During the weeks which immediately followed Janet Caird's association with Maggie she felt this truth, though she did not define the feeling to herself. She only realized the comfort of withdrawing from the fretful presence of her aunt to the contemplative, passionless serenity of the Word of God. But even this was an offence. "What are you doing at a', Maggie?" was the certain inquiry if she went to the quiet of her own room for an hour.

"I'm reading the Book a wee, Aunt Janet."

The comments upon this reply varied, according to Janet's temper. Sometimes it was, "Well, the gude ken, you need to read it." Again it would be, "*Havers!* Hoo can the like o' you understand it, and no man body to gie you the sense?" And if the volume happened to be one from Allan's small library, her railing at "no-vels and the sin o' them" was unstinted.

But the real cause of difference between the women was far beyond Maggie's knowledge or power to alter. It had sprung up the very hour that David asked her to come to Pittenloch and be a companion to his sister. No sooner had he left her than she began to consider in what light the proposition could bring her personally the most respect and sympathy, and a neighbor coming in at the moment, she found in her own small boast the key-note of her future treatment of her niece.

"I hae been called for, Mistress Futtrit, a' the road to Pittenloch," she said, with a sigh; "my nephew is settled for the ministry—an' nae less—and I maun just gae and tak' the guiding o' his sister and his hoose."

"You're auld to be fashed wi' a bairn noo, Mistress Caird."

"Na, na, it isna a bairn; Maggie Promoter is a braw, handsome lass, wi' mair lovers than she has fingers and toes."

"But that's waur than a bairn. You'll be worn oot wi' the care o' it. I ken by the heartaches my ain Baubie gied me. Early and late she keepit me in het water."

"I hear tell that oor Maggie is just extraordinar' handsome and extraordinar' self-willed. I ken I'm going to sorrow, but her fayther was my brither, and I'll hae to do my duty, or be a meeserable woman."

"It's a credit to you, Mistress Caird, to hae feelings like them, and you'll be supported dootless."

Jean Futtrit's pretty Baubie had not always behaved well; and Jean was suspicious of all other young girls. She had thought the worst of Maggie at once, and she made Janet Caird feel herself to be a very meritorious domestic martyr in accepting the charge of her. This idea satisfied Janet's craving for praise and sympathy; she fully endorsed it; she began to take credit for her prudence and propriety before she even entered upon her new life.

And circumstances in Pittenloch favored Janet; in a few days she had received so much condolence, and had committed herself so completely regarding her niece, that nothing could have induced her to reconsider her conduct. Every trifle also in Maggie's attitude testified against herself. She resented the constant conclave of tea-drinking, gossiping women in her house, and she was too honest-hearted to hide her disapproval from them. The result was, that backed by Janet Caird, they came still more frequently, and were more and more offensive. If she determined to make the best of the matter, and remained with them, she was subjected to advices, and innuendoes, and rude jokes, almost intolerable; and if she went away she was accused of bad temper, of a greedy, grudging disposition, and of contempt for her own people and class.

If Maggie had been wise enough to attend faithfully the weekly meeting in Elder Mackelvine's cottage, she would have silenced many of her enemies. But this one evening Maggie looked forward to, on different grounds; Janet Caird never missed the meeting, and her absence gave Maggie two sweet hours alone in her home. She locked her door, visited Allan's room, changed her book, and afterward sat still, and let the time slip away in thoughts sacred to her own heart.

As the end of the year approached Dr. Balmuto was expected. He made a visit to Pittenloch every three months. Then he consoled the sick, baptized weakly infants, reprov'd those who had been negligent in attending kirk, and catechised and examined the young people previous to their admission to The Tables. Maggie had not been very faithful about the ordinances. The weather had been bad, the landward road was dangerous when snow had fallen, and she did not like going in the boats among so many who gave her only looks of grave disapproval. So she had made many excuses, and in this matter Janet Caird had let her take her own way without opposition. Absence from kirk was a proof of a falling away from grace, which in the eyes of these people was beyond explanation; provided the delinquent was not unmistakably sick.

The minister had noticed Maggie's frequent lapses from duty. He spoke to Elder Mackelvine about it; and as the elder was in a manner responsible for the flock to his superior shepherd, he felt obliged to repeat much of the gossip he had heard. He had no ill will to the girl, far from it; yet unknowingly he did her many wrongs, even though he distinctly said, "he *knew* no ill of Maggie Promoter, and was but repeating what a lot of idle women said."

But Dr. Balmuto was troubled and alarmed. He thought not only of Maggie, but also of David. He had sanctioned his ambition for the ministry, and had helped him toward the office; and he could not bear to think of a whisper against a name likely to stand in the list of God's servants. He was angry at Maggie's imprudences, even if they were no worse than imprudences. He paid a special visit to the Promoter cottage, and putting aside Mistress Caird with a polite wave of the hand which greatly impressed her, he demanded to see Maggie alone.

He told her frankly all that he had heard, and the girl was astounded. There was just truth enough with every lie to carry the lie through. Many of them she found it almost hopeless to try to explain; and when the doctor asked her, "if there had been any words of love between Mr. Campbell and herself?" she could not deny it. She remained speechless, and the minister thought very badly of the woman dumb and blushing before him.

"Mind what I tell you, Maggie Promoter," he said sternly, "I know the young man Campbell. He is none of your kind. He cannot make you his wife. If he could, you would be wretched, for he would soon scorn you. Can the eagle mate with the kittywake? Sin and sorrow come of such love making. It will ruin both David and yourself. Mind, I have warned you. If you were my own daughter I would say no less to you."

"There has been nae wrang word between us, sir. Nae word my ain fayther and mither mightna hae listened to. That is the truth, sir."

"Then do not hold yourself apart from your own people. Don't fret about the young man's absence, and neglect the ordinances to do it; remember they are for your comfort and salvation."

"Folks hae thocht ill o' me, sir; and they treat me according to their ill thochts:—and I wish Davie was hame, for I'm broken-hearted wi' the wrang that is done me; morning, noon and night," she said warmly.

"Keep your temper and hold your tongue, Maggie. I suffer no woman to rail in my presence. Do well, and you will be well spoken of, and doubtless also, well treated."

She covered her face with her hands and sobbed bitterly; and his heart relented a little. "I am glad to see the tears, Maggie; no one can do more than be sorry for their sins and then mend them. Come, come, lassie; turn over a new leaf, and the future shall mend the past."

"There is naething to mend, sir. I hae done no wrang to man, woman, or child. You should hae stood up for the orphan lass, that has nae one near to befriend her; but when a' men are against me—then I'll lippen to the Lord!"

Her short passionate rain of tears was over. She stood erect, calm, perhaps with an air of indifference. The doctor was much annoyed; he felt that he had failed in reaching the girl's heart, and he went away with that sense of irritation which our inabilities always leave with us.

Maggie did not go out of the cottage for a week. She was expecting David home for the holidays, and she confidently looked for him to right her. Unfortunately, David came by Kinkell, and called first at Dr. Balmuto's. He had done very well in his Greek and Hebrew, and he wished to show the minister that his kindness had been appreciated and improved. Dr. Balmuto received David a little coldly. He had not really been moved to help him by any personal liking, but rather from a conscientious conviction that the young man had a decided vocation for theology. In fact, there had always been a tinge of self-satisfaction about David which he seriously disliked, and for which very reason he had once sent him back to the boats to learn humility. Though honestly pleased at his progress, he did not think it well to praise him too much; especially as he observed that David boasted in a quiet way of the favor shown him by his teachers, and named, when there was no occasion for naming it, the circumstance of having been twice asked to dinner by Prof. Laird.

"This and that is all very well, and I am glad of it, David," he said; "but your name must be kept stainless; and the more learned you are, the more people will look up to you, and the more readily the fly in the ointment will be seen and heard tell of. I am sorry to say your sister has been very imprudent. Pittenloch does nothing but talk of her queer ways, and doubtless there have been love promises between her and Mr. Campbell. Now if there is ill said about him and your sister, you must see that it puts you in a bad light to take any favor whatever from him."

David rose angrily. "I canna let even you, sir, speak ill in that way about Maggie. I was by her side until Mr. Campbell left Pittenloch. And I will defend his name as well as Maggie's. There was not the wrong thocht in either of their hearts. I am sure o' that."

"I am glad to hear you speak so bravely and confidently. Go home, and put your house in better order than it is. There seems to be ill-will and unhappiness in it. Make your women walk circumspectly, and give no occasion for people to take your name up. Your name is not to be lightly used now, David Promoter."

David had looked forward to this visit, anticipated the minister's praises and satisfaction, had even brought him a little present of some fine tobacco. He left the manse with a sense of anger and humiliation, and with the tobacco in his pocket. He had found no opportunity to offer it. And the home-coming from which Maggie had expected so much was an unhappy one. David blamed her for Dr. Balmuto's coldness and apparent lack of interest in his affairs; and whether Maggie had done wrong, or had only been wronged, he felt that she had injured him and his prospects. Nervous and sensitive to a foolish degree on the subject of social respect from those in authority, he gave to the affair far more importance than it deserved. He made Maggie almost feel as if she had brought absolute and irretrievable ruin upon him.

Still he would not be unjust to her, nor listen to any accusation not made before her face. Even Aunt Janet, though she attacked David on his weakest side, by giving him all the respect due to a placed minister, did not succeed in gaining his private ear. "I'll give nae occasion for backbiting," he said, "tell me when Maggie is present, what you have to say against her."

"She read novels, instead of working at her trade—she held herself aloof from people, and stayed by herself. She did not go regularly to kirk and meeting. She had spent good money having the 'Allan Campbell' put in order, yet she would neither lend nor hire the boat when it was asked of her. She kept Mr. Campbell's room locked up, and would not even let a friend of the family drink a cup of tea inside it. She was queer and cold to all the lads, and had been specially rude to Angus Raith, whose mother was Mistress Caird's chief friend. Folks, too, wondered where she got money, and Maggie had not respected their curiosity, and satisfied them that she was living honest."

These were Aunt Janet's principal accusations against her niece. Maggie answered them very plainly. She declared that she could not get work, because her aunt's complaints had deprived her of all her friends. The books she read were the same books Mr. Campbell had read aloud to them both. As for the boat, she did not want it to go to waste, and if she loaned it to one person, she might as well have given it to the village. If she had taken hire, it would have been a great offence, and worse said of her, than for keeping it at anchor. As it was, she asserted Aunt Janet had lent it to the Raiths frequently, without her knowledge or consent at the time.

"Not mair than three times, Maggie," interrupted Mrs. Caird, "and you were that ill-tempered I couldna ask you anent it. You wad hae snappit my head aff."

"That was three times o'er many, aunt," answered David; "the boat was Maggie's; folks should speer it of hersel'; I would hae nae right to lend it, and I wouldna do it, nae matter wha asked it o' me."

"The Raiths are gude frien's"—

"For a' the Raiths in Fife and Moray, no!"

"Then Davie, as for letting Mr. Campbell's room be for the use of a' and sundry that liked it, how could I? You ken, he told me tak' care o' the pictures and books inside it."

"You wad hae as much right to his purse as his room, if he had left his purse in your keeping. The room wasna yours to lend, Maggie."

"And, Davie, I dinna like Angus Raith, and his mither is here the day lang, and till the late night; and Angus is aye to convoy her hame; and he sits in your chair, and glowers at me, or he says words I canna listen till, and I want nae love from him or any other man. If you will be a brither to me, and no let folks tread my gude name in the mire, I'll aye be a true sister to you, Davie, and I'll care for nane but you."

"I'll let nane say ill o' you, if you dinna deserve it, Maggie. Folks should think shame o' themselves to set on a lass without man or woman to stand by her."

"I'm sure I aye said what I could wi' truth for the lassie."

"I dinna think it. And as for Maggie's money, that is Maggie's business and my business. Maggie's money is clean money, every penny o' it. There is my word for that. I am sure it was weel kent that fayther left money lying in Largo Bank; but I'll gie accounts to nane; and I'll not hae Maggie asked for them either. As for Angus Raith, he might hae taken his no' before this. I'll not blame Maggie for not liking him; and I wad be as weel pleased for Maggie to bide single, till I hae my ain manse to marry her from. Now I willna hae my life and prospects wrecked for women's battlement and quarrels;" and then David very foolishly spoke of Dr. Balmuto's coldness to him; and on this subject David got warm and eloquent, and Aunt Janet perceived that the minister was disposed to blame Maggie.

Before leaving for his classes again, he did what he thought was the prudent thing to do for all parties. He really satisfied no one. Maggie felt that he had been less kind to her in many ways than he ought to have been. The villagers resented the change in his manners and speech. Their affairs, never interesting to him, were now distasteful; he went little among them, but sat most of his time reading in his own cottage. If he walked down to the pier or the boat-house, he brought unavoidably a different element with him. The elder men disputed all he said, the younger ones took little notice of him. He might have understood from his own experience what Maggie was suffering; but David had his mind full of grand themes, and he brushed the opinions of a few fishermen off, as he brushed a fly from his open book. After he had returned to Glasgow, Aunt Janet said, with an air of wrong and offence—"Brither and sister sail in one boat;" and she had more sympathy for her opinion.

The dreariest part of the winter was to come. David was not to return home again until the end of July; perhaps not even then. He had been spoken to about spending the long vacation with Prof. Laird's son in the Hebrides, as a kind of travelling tutor; and he hoped for the appointment. If he got it a whole year might pass before his next visit to Pittenloch. And Maggie's position had not been in any respect bettered, either by the minister's or David's interference. Aunt Janet had received no special reproofs or threats for her encroachments on Maggie's rights, and she made a point of extending them in many ways. Before March was over the girl was growing desperate.

Character is cumulative, and Maggie had been through these days of mean and bitter trials unconsciously gathering strength. She was not the same woman that had stood reproachful at destiny by the beached boat eleven months before. Yet even then she had nursed a rebellious thought against the hopelessness of Fate. She had refused to believe that the boat had been built and destined for death and destruction; if something had been done, which had not been done, it would have come safe to harbor. So also she would not believe that her own misery was beyond help, and that all that remained to her was a weary hoping and watching for Allan's return.

She was just at the point when endurance is waiting for the last unendurable straw, when one morning Angus Raith called early, and asked permission to use the "Allan Campbell" for a day's fishing. "Tak' her and welcome," answered Janet Caird, promptly.

"Aunt Janet, you hae nae right to lend what isna yours, nor ever like to be yours. David told you that plain as words could mak' it."

"You and your brither wear the life oot o' me, wi' your pride and ill-temper. Tak' the boat, Angus."

"You let it alone, Angus. It is my boat, and I'll send the water-bailiff after you for theft, if you lift her anchor."

"You will, will you? You mean meeserable hizzy! Then you'll hae to tak me up wi' Angus; for I'm wi' him, and will stand by him, afore a' the lords o' Edinburgh. Tak' the boat, Angus. I'll tak' the blame o' it! David Promoter willna publish a thief in his ain house; he's o'er much set up wi' himsel' and his gude name."

"Thank you, Mistress Caird; I'll tak' it. If a man tak's your sweetheart, you may weel tak' his boat. I'll bring you part o' my luck, when the boat comes hame at night."

"Dinna count your feesh, until you've caught them, Angus Raith," said Maggie, passionately; "and as for luck, it is bad luck you deserve, and bad luck you'll get, wi' your stolen boat."

"Hear to the lass! bespeaking sorrow for gude men, on a gude day's wark!"

Maggie answered not a word; she turned dourly round, went into her room and locked it. "I'll run awa' from it a'!" and in the first moment of her solitary passion of grief, the words struck her like an order. In great emergencies, the soul does give orders; clear, prompt, decisive words, that leave no shadow of doubt behind them. "Go" said her soul to her, and she began immediately to consider her plans. She did not want for money. She had upwards of #23 left, beside an order for the #50 lying in Largo Bank, which David had insisted on her keeping in case any sudden need came for it.

"I'll put on my kirk clothes, and I'll go to Kinkell; Watty Young will carry me in his wagon to Stirling, and there, I'll tak' a train for Glasgow. David will find some way to get me a shelter, and I can sew, and earn my ain bite and sup."

This was her simple, straightforward plan, and as soon as she had determined to go away, it seemed wonderful to her that she had not done it sooner. "But one canna cross the stile till they get to it," she reflected; now however the idea took complete possession of her. She heard Mrs. Raith and various other women talking with her aunt: she heard herself repeatedly called to come and look after the broth, or other domestic concerns, but she took no notice of any demand upon her. She occupied the morning in locking away her simple treasures, and in making into a small bundle a linsey dress and a change of linen. She did not notice, until her room grew suddenly dark, that the wind had risen, and the sky become black and stormy. Some uneasy presentiment drove her then to the cottage door, where she stood with the rain blowing into her face, watching the boats tossing back to harbor.

"You see what your ill wishes hae brought. I hope there mayna be lives lost by your temper."

"Parfect nonsense! There is nae ill wish that is mair than idle breath, if it be na His will."

Just at dusk there was an outcry and a clamor of women's voices followed by passionate wailing, and a few minutes afterward Mistress Raith ran shrieking into the cottage. "The 'Allan Campbell' has gone to the bottom, and my boy Laurie wi' her. Oh, the ill heart, and the ill tongue o' you, Maggie Promoter! I'd like fine to send you after him! Gie us a help, wives, and let's gie her a ducking at the vera least!" The wretched mother was half crazy, and Maggie fled from her presence. The circumstance was the seal to her purpose. She knew well how her few angry words would be held against her, and she said mournfully, "There's nae hope o' kindness nor justice here for me. I should hae gane this morning when the thocht came to me. I wad hae been on the road to Stirling ere this."

There was a constant succession of visitors at the cottage until late, but as soon as all was quiet, Maggie went to her wretched hearthstone, and silently made herself a cup of tea. Janet Caird sat rocking herself to and fro, bewailing the dead, and the living; but yet carefully watching the unusual proceedings and dress of her niece. At length, finding Maggie was not to be provoked into words, she pretended suddenly to observe her kirk clothes—"Whatna for hae you that fine merino on this night? Surely, Maggie Promoter, you arena thinking o' going to the house o' mourning—you, that ought to be on your bended knees for the ill wishes you sent the puir lad to the bottom wi'. And after a' it wasna Angus but little Laurie that got the weight o' your ill thochts!"

"Do stop, aunt. Say them words to the minister, and hear the reproof you'll get! As if the breath o' an angry woman could make Him turn the keys that nane turn but Him. And if you want to ken whar I am going, I may as weel tell you now, as the morn. I am going to my brither Davie, for I cannot thole the bad tongue and the bad heart o' you, anither day."

"Hear to the wicked lass! My bad tongue! My bad heart! I sall scream oot at sich words—"

"Dinna flyte mair at me for ony sake, Aunt Janet. You'll get the hoose to yoursel' in the early morning."

"And then what sail I do? A puir auld woman wiled awa' frae her ain hame."

"Aunt Janet, you can go back to your ain hame. There is nane to hinder you. When you are ready, lock the door, and gie the key to Elder Mackelvine. But if you like this bien comfortable cottage better than the one bit empty room David took you from, you can stay in it your lane. I wadna bide wi' you anither day for gude words, nor gude gold; no, nor for onything else."

"My bite and sup were aye sure at Dron Point; but what will I do here at a'? Hae you made a provision for the five shillings weekly?"

"Na, na; I hae paid that o'er lang. At Dron Point you spun your pickle o' tow, and you nursed the sick folk. There is mair spinning here, and mair sick folk. You are nae waur off, but better. And it is little o' the siller I hae given you that has been spent. A' expenses hae come oot o' my pocket."

"I'll no hear tell o' you going awa'! Sich daftness. And surely if you will gae, you'll no leave an auld body like me wi'out some sma' income. You that's got siller."

"I hae nae mair than I want. But I'll ask Davie to do what he thinks he can do for you; seeing that you are my fayther's sister. Puir fayther! I hope he doesna ken how hard you hae been on me."

"You sall not go! I'll no be left my lane—"

"I tell you, aunt, I am going in the morning. There is naebody in Pittenloch can stop me; no, nor Doctor Balmuto himsel'."

Still Janet Caird scarcely believed Maggie. The girl had never been further from home than Kinkell. She thought she would go first to the minister, and she felt sure the minister would send her back home. So when Maggie passed out of the door soon after daybreak, and said "good-bye, Aunt Janet," the old woman answered with an affected laugh—"gude-bye till the sun is doon. The night will bring you hame, Maggie."

Maggie took the hills and was far up them before the village was astir. She had no intention of calling upon the minister; she still resented his last conversation with her, and after what he had said to Davie she had little hopes of obtaining a kind hearing from him just yet. She found Sandy Young's wagon nearly ready to start for Stirling, and she easily got a seat in it. It was a slow, lumbering conveyance, but she was in no hurry; and she enjoyed very much the leisurely drive through lanes, and inland hamlets, and queer old towns. It was a strange and wonderful experience to a girl who had seen little of nature but the sea and the rocks, and little of men, save the men and women of her own distinctive class.

On the evening of the third day she reached Glasgow. It was a clear, blowing March day, very near the anniversary of her father's and brothers' death. Glasgow was in one of its brightest moods; the streets clean

and crowded, and the lamplighters just beginning to light them. She easily found her way to the Candleriggs, and to the house in which David lodged. Here, for the first time, her heart failed her. She loitered about the window of the bakery until she had a sense of shame and hunger and weariness that overcame all her fears. "I'm wanting Mr. Promoter, ma'am," she said at length to the woman behind the counter, and the woman looking sharply at her answered, "He's in his room. Go through the close and up the stair; it's at the right hand side."

It seemed strange to knock at her brother's door, and yet Maggie felt as if David would expect it of her. He answered the timid summons by a loud peremptory "Come in;" but when Maggie entered he leaped to his feet in amazement, and let the big book in his hand fall to the floor. There were the remains of tea on the table, and a young man who was sitting with David had pushed the cups aside, and filled their places with his papers and books.

"Maggie!"

"Ay, it's me, Davie."

"What has brought you to Glasgow?"

"You ken I wouldna come without a good reason. I hope I am na unwelcome." Her eyes filled, she could scarcely endure the strain of uncertainty as she stood before him.

Then he took her hands and kissed her brow, and said, "Cameron, this is my sister, my only near relative, so I'm sure you'll excuse me the night." And the young man, who had been gazing with delight on Maggie's beauty, rose with an apology and went away.

"Now, Maggie, I want to know what has brought you here?"

"Gie me some bread and tea first, for I am fair famished, and then I'll tell you."

"I must also speak to the good wife about a sleeping place for you under her own eye. You'll be going back to-morrow."

"I'll not go back to Pittenloch again." Then she told him all the wrong and shame and sorrow that had dogged her life since he had left her at the New Year. "Let me stay near by you, Davie. I can sew, I can go out to service. I'll be happy if I see you one hour on the Sabbath day."

His face was white and stern and pitiless. "You want to ruin my life, Maggie, and your ain too. Mr. Cameron will speak of having seen you here. And it is nae less than evendown ruin for a theology student to have women-folks coming to his room—young women like yoursel'."

"I'm your ain sister, Davie."

"Who is to know that? Can I go about saying to this one and to that one the woman who came to see me, or the woman I went to see, on Sabbath last is my sister.' It would not do for you to stay here, for I have company to see me and to study with me, and you and I would both be spoken of. It would not be right for you to take a room and live by yourself, and sew out by the day. You are too noticeable, and I could not spare the time to call and look after you in any way. And as to going out to service, I am mair than astonished to hear you naming a thing like that. *We are fisher folk*. Nane of the Promoters ever served mortal man as hand-maid or flunkey. We have always served God and cast the nets for a living. We werena indebted to any human being. We aye took our daily bread from His hand. And if you, Maggie Promoter, would dare to go out as a servant I would give you the back of my hand for ever."

"Then what will I do, Davie? What will I do? I am sae miserable. Do hae some pity on me."

"You speak as if happiness was 'the because' of life. Do? Do your duty, and you will be happy, whatever wind blows. And as to my having pity on you, I would love you little if I gave way now to your impatience and your wounded pride. Who loves you if I don't? I am aye thinking of the days when we will have a braw house of our ain. Can you not wait?"

"It is lang waiting; and many a hope goes wi' the weeks and the months. Davie, I canna go back."

"You must go back. I will write a letter to Dr. Balmuto and ask him to put you with some decent family in Kinkell: and keep his own eye on you. What can you want more than that? And let me tell you, Maggie, I think it very unisterly of you, bothering and hampering me with women's quarrels, when I am making myself a name among them that will be looked to for the carrying on o' the kirk in the future. But I'll say no more, and I'll forgive this romantic folly o' yours, and to-morrow I'll put you in the Stirling train, and you'll go, as I tell you, to Dr. Balmuto."

Maggie made no further objections. David wrote the promised letter, and he spent a part of the next day in showing her the "wonderfuls" of the cathedral and the college. He was even gentle with her at the last, and not a little proud of the evident sensation her fresh, brilliant beauty caused; and he asked her about her money matters, and when he put her in the train, kissed her fondly; and bade her "be brave, and patient, and cheerful."

And still Maggie said nothing. Her eyes were full of tears, and she looked once or twice at her brother in a way that made his heart dirl and ache; but she seemed to have resigned herself to his direction. Only, at the first station beyond Glasgow, she got out of the train, and she allowed it to go on to Stirling without her.

CHAPTER XI. — DRUMLOCH.

*"Brown shell first for the butterfly
And a bright wing by and by.
Butterfly good-bye to your shell,
And, bright wings, speed you well"*

In leaving the train Maggie had not yielded to a passing impulse. It was a deliberate act. David's indifference to her happiness, his subordination of all her likes and dislikes, her time, and work, and hopes, to his own ambition shocked and pained her. She had spent the night in thought and had reached a decided conclusion. As they walked about the cathedral and college, and up and down the High Street, while she looked with shuddering horror on the squalid, hopeless poverty of the inhabitants of those localities, she asked her brother where the rich people lived.

"At the West End," answered David. "On Sauchiehall Road, and the crescents further on, away maistly up to Kelvin Grove." And later on, as they were passing down Buchanan Street, he pointed out the stages which ran constantly to these aristocratic quarters of the city, and asked, "if she wished to see them?"

"Ay, I wad like too, but there's little time noo, it will do again."

Yet she took good note of everything, and David Promoter, as he sat that night at his own fireside with his tea and books, little dreamed that his sister Maggie had found herself a home within an hour's ride from the Candleriggs. It was not much of a home, but it satisfied the weary, heart-sore girl. A little back room on a fourth story, with a window looking into a small court; but it was clean and quiet, and the bit of fire burned cheerily, and the widow woman from whom she had rented it made her a refreshing cup of tea, and brought with it the good wheat loaf and the "powdered" butter for which Glasgow is famous; as well as a slice or two of broiled Ayrshire bacon. The food was cheap, and the ordinary food of the people, but it seemed a great treat to the fisher-girl, who had been used to consider wheat flour, fine butter, and bacon, very like luxuries.

And the peace! Oh how good, how good that was! No captious old woman flyting and complaining at every mouthful. No laughing noisy gossips. No irritating interferences. No constant demand on her attention or sympathy. She sat and drank and thanked God with every mouthful; and with grateful tears promised Him to live a good life, and do her honest, kindly duty every hour.

At last too, she could think of Allan without fear of any evil suspicious eye upon her. She had been in such excitement and anxiety for some days, that she had let him slip from her mind; for it was one of this loving woman's superstitions, never to mix his memory with angry or sorrowful thoughts. But in the peace and stillness that followed her meal, she called him back to her. With closed eyes and folded hands she remembered the words he had said to her, remembered the strength and sincerity of his promise, the glow and tenderness of his handsome face, the truth in the firm clasp of his hands, the glance of commingled love and grief which had been his farewell. "I'll never wrong him by a doubt. Never, never, never," she whispered. "If God has willed him to me, there's nane can keep him frae me. Oceans canna part us, nor gold, nor friends, nor time, nor death itself. *Allan! Allan! Allan!*"

At that moment Allan was in a pretty pleasure yacht idly drifting on the gulf of Mexico. Mardi Gras had taken him to New Orleans, and there he had hired the boat, and was leisurely sailing from one gulf town to another. The skipper was his only companion, but he was fore, and Allan lay under an awning, full of the afternoon's lazy content. The scent of orange blossoms was blown from the shore, the blue waters dimpled in the sunshine, and the flop of their ripple in the clincher-landings was an old and pleasant music to him. Suddenly he sat erect and listened: "Maggie called me. Three times over she called me." The impression upon his spiritual ear was so strong that ere he was aware he had answered the call.

He could dream no longer. His nobler part was on the alert. He was not, however, unhappy. The impression made upon him had been one of love and longing, rather than of distress. His eyes brightened, his face flushed, he walked rapidly about, like a man under a keener sense of life. Lovers see miracles, and believe in them. Allan thought it nothing extraordinary that Maggie's soul should speak to his soul. And why should we doubt the greeting? Do we any of us know what subtle lines are between spirit and spirit? A few years since, who dreamed of sending a message through the air? Is it not more incredible that flesh and blood in New York should speak with flesh and blood in Washington, than that spirits, rare, rapid and vivid as thought, should communicate with each other, even though the circumference of the world be between them? Allan did not try to analyze the circumstance; he had a conviction, positive and delicious, and he never thought of reasoning it away.

With a sense of infinite comfort and content, Maggie read her evening portion, and went to rest. She had determined to enjoy that evening's calm, without letting any thought of the future trouble her; and she awoke in the morning strong and cheerful, and quite ready to face the question of her support. She spoke first to her landlady. "Mistress Malcolm," she said, "I'm a dressmaker, and I want wark. Will you gie me your advice, for I'm not used to city ways?"

"You hae come to the city in a good time though. In the spring there is aye work in plenty. Tak' the 'Herald' and read the advertisements. I hae a paper ben the kitchen, I'll get it for you. See here now! Nae less than nine dressmakers wanting help! The first call comes frae Bute Crescent; that isna ten minutes walk awa'. Go

and see the lady."

Half an hour afterward, Maggie was ringing at the door of Mrs. Lauder's house. It was a very handsome one, handsomely furnished, and the show-rooms were gay with the newest fashions. Maggie's beauty and fine figure was an instant commendation. "Can you sew well, and cut, and fit?" asked Mrs. Lauder.

"Deed, ma'am, I think I can. I was wi' Miss Jean Anderson o' Largo for twa years. She'll say the gude word for me, every way."

"I shall want you to be part of the day in the salesroom; but I will provide you a suitable dress for that purpose; and I will give you ten shillings a week, at first. Will that do?"

"It will do weel, ma'am."

"What is your name?"

"Maggie Promoter."

"Come to-morrow, Miss Promoter."

"Folks aye call me Maggie."

"Very well. Come to-morrow, Maggie."

The dress provided by Mrs. Lauder was a long, plain, black merino, tightly fitting, with small turned back linen cuffs and collar; and Maggie looked exceedingly handsome and stately in it. Her work was not hard, but the hours were long, and there was no outlook. She could not lift her head and catch from the sea the feeling of limitless space and freedom. Still she was happy. It was better to live among strangers who always gave her the civil word, than to be with kin who used the freedom of their relationship only to wound and annoy her. And her little room was always a sanctuary in which she found strength and peace. Also, the Sabbath was all her own; and her place in the kirk to which she regularly went was generally filled an hour before service bells. That kirk was a good place to Maggie. She was one of those delightful women, who in this faithless age, have a fervent and beautiful faith in God. Into His temple she took no earthly thought, but kept her heart, there,

*"one silent space,
A little sacred spot of loneliness.
Where to set up the memory of His cross,
A little quiet garden, sacred still
To visions of His sorrow, and His love"*

So the weeks went calmly, and not unpleasantly away. Now and then she had a restless heartache about David; and three times she walked all the way to the Barony kirk, where she knew he worshiped, to get a sight of her brother. She did not fear to do so. David Promoter, on Sabbath days, looked neither to the right hand nor to the left. In the kirk his pale grave face was bent toward his Bible, or lifted to the preacher. Maggie could have sat within the touch of his hand and he would not have seen her. But she got no comfort from these visits to David's kirk, and she missed all the comfort of her own kirk. So she finally said to herself—"I'll tak' my ain road, and I'll ne'er look his road, and when it will be the right time, the twa roads will meet again."

As the summer advanced there was less work to do, and she frequently was at home in sufficient time to stroll along Kelvin side, or visit the Botanic Gardens. Inland scenery, trees, and, above all things, flowers, greatly delighted her. It gave her a thrill of exquisite pleasure to tread among long, green grass, and feel the wavering sunshine and shadows of the woods about her; and in the midsummer month, when she was to have a short holiday, she promised herself many days of such pure and natural enjoyment.

But often fortune has better plans for us than we make for ourselves. One day, near the end of June, Maggie was standing at an upper window, gazing wistfully at the little park, full of pretty shrubs, which belonged specially to Bute Crescent. A handsome carriage rapidly took the turn, came dashing up the broad gravelled sweep, and stopped at Mrs. Lauder's house. In a few minutes there was a call for Maggie, and she went down stairs. The customer was before a long mirror with a mantle of black silk and lace in her hands. She was a young lady, slight and small, and as Maggie entered she turned toward her.

It was Mary Campbell, and Mary knew in a moment who the tall beautiful woman in the black dress was. She was very much astonished, but she did not in any way betray her surprise. On the contrary, she gathered her faculties quickly together and looked at Maggie critically, and at first without kindness.

Mary was at this time living at Drumloch, but a variety of business had brought her to Glasgow for a week or two. Her first impulse was to go to her uncle and tell him of her discovery. Her second was to keep it, at least for a little while, to herself. It was almost certain that there had been some great change in the girl's circumstances, or else she had come to Glasgow in search of her lover. Mary could not tell how much or how little Maggie knew of Allan's movements and intentions; she thought it likely the girl had grown impatient and left her home. If so, perhaps it was her duty to interfere in a life brought so directly to her notice. She almost wished she had not seen her; gratified curiosity is very well, but if it bring with it a sense of obligation, it may not be worth the price to be paid.

Such were the drift of Mary's thoughts; and yet for Allan's sake she felt that Maggie ought to be cared for. If she did not choose to assume the charge, she ought to tell her uncle. Mary's conscience had taken up the question, and Mary's conscience was a tyrannical one. It gave her no rest about Maggie. "Maggie!" She

repeated the name with a smile. "I knew she would have to come down to 'Maggie' or 'Jennie'. I said so. Oh, Theodora, what a fall! But she is handsome, there is no doubt of that. And she walks as a mortal ought to walk, 'made a little lower than the angels'. And she really has a ravishing smile, and perfect teeth also. I own I was afraid about the teeth, nature generally forgets that detail. And her hands, if large, are shapely; and her hair is a glory, as it ought to be in a woman—and I wonder who taught her to dress it, and if she herself chose the long, plain, black garment. Maggie is more of a puzzle than ever. I think I will find her out without Uncle John's help."

The next day, and every day afterward for a week, she went to Mrs. Lauder's on some pretext or other. She always saw Maggie. She made little plans to see her, and she went away from every interview feeling a greater bondage to her. "I suppose I shall have to take her back to Drumloch with me!" As her visit to Glasgow drew to its close she came to this conclusion. She felt that for Allan's sake Maggie had a claim on their care; either John Campbell or herself ought to find out if she needed help or friends, and after consideration Mary thought she had better assume the charge. John Campbell would go straight to her, tell her who he was, and invite her to Blytheswood Square, and, in fact, take the girl wholly on trust. Mary also meant to be kind to her, but how hard it is for a woman to do a kindness as God does it, without saying, "Whose son art thou?"

Just before her return to Drumloch, she said to Mrs. Lauder, "I want some one to sew in my house. Do you think Maggie would give me a couple of months. You cannot need her until September."

"I think she will be very willing. I will send her to you."

"Mistress Lauder says you wad like me to go wi' you, Miss Campbell. I'll be glad to do it. I am just wearying for the country, and I'll do my best to pleasure you."

"Oh, thank you. It is to sew table damask. I will give you. #5 a month."

"That is gude pay. I'll be gratefu' for it."

"Be ready by nine o'clock to-morrow morning. I will call here for you."

Drumloch was a very ancient place. The older portion was battlemented, and had been frequently held against powerful enemies; but this part of the building was merely the nucleus of many more modern additions. It stood in one of the loveliest locations in Ayrshire, and was in every respect a home of great splendor and beauty. Maggie had never dreamt of such a place. The lofty halls and rooms, the wide stairways, the picturesque air of antiquity, the fine park and gardens, the wealth of fruits and flowers quite bewildered her. Mary took her first real liking to the girl as she wandered with her through the pleasant places of Drumloch. Maggie said so frankly what she liked and what she did not like; and yet she had much graceful ingenuousness, and extremely delicate perceptions. Often she showed the blank amazement of a bird that has just left the nest, again she would utter some keen, deep saying, that made Mary turn to her with curious wonder. Individualities developed by the Bible have these strange contradictions, because to great guilelessness they unite an intimate knowledge of their own hearts.

Mary had been much troubled as to where, and how, she was to place this girl. As David had boasted, she belonged to a race "who serve not." "She may come to be mistress of Drumloch. It is not improbable. I will not make a menial of her. That would be a shame and a wrong to Allan." She had formed this decision as they rode together in the train, and acting upon it, she said, "Maggie, what is your name—all your name?"

"My name is Margaret Promoter. I hae been aye called Maggie."

"I will call you Maggie, then; but my servants will call you Miss Promoter. You understand?"

"If it is your will, Miss Campbell."

"It is my wish, Maggie. You are to be with me entirely; and they must respect my companion. Can you read aloud, Maggie?"

"I wad do my best."

"Because I want you to read a great deal to me. There is so much fine sewing to do, I thought as we worked together one of us could have a needle, the other a book."

Following out this idea, she gave Maggie a pretty room near her own. Into one adjoining immense quantities of the finest linen and damask were brought. "I am just going to housekeeping, Maggie," said Mary, "and Drumloch is to have the handsomest napery in Ayrshire. Did you ever see lovelier damask? It is worthy of the most dainty stitches, and it shall have them." Still Maggie's domestic status hung in the balance. For a week her meals were served in her own room, on the plea of fatigue. Mary did not feel as if she could put her with the housekeeper and upper servants; she could not quite make up her mind to bring her to her own table. A conversation with Maggie one morning decided the matter. She found her standing at the open window looking over the lovely strath, and the "bonnie Doon," with eyes full of happy tears.

"It is a sweet spot, Maggie."

"It is the sweetest spot on earth, I think."

"If we only had a view of the sea. We might have, by felling timber."

Maggie shook her head. "I dinna like the sea. 'There is sorrow on the sea, it canna be quiet.' [Footnote: Jeremiah 49, v. 23.] I ken't a fisher's wife wha aye said, the sweetest promise in a' the Book, was that in the Revelations, 'there shall be nae sea there.'"

"Did you ever live near the sea?"

"Ay; I was born on the coast of Fife."

"Have you any kin living?"

"I hae a brother—he minds me little."

"Promoter, I never heard the name before."

"It is a Fife name. The Promoters dinna wander far. If my fayther hadna been drowned, I should hae stayed wi' my ain folk."

"But you are glad to have seen more of the world. You would not like to go back to Fife, now?"

"If my eye hadna seen, my heart wouldna hae wanted. I was happy."

"Promoter is an uncommon name. I never knew a Promoter before; but the Campbells are a big clan. I dare say you have known a great many Campbells?"

"The man whom fayther sold his fish to was a Campbell. And the woman I lodged wi' in Glasgow had a daughter married to a Campbell. And Mistress Lauder often sent me to Campbell's big store for silk and trimmings. And whiles, there was a minister preached in oor kirk, called Campbell—and there is yoursel', miss, the best o' them all to Maggie Promoter."

"Thank you, Maggie." Not in the faintest way had Maggie betrayed her knowledge of Allan, and Mary respected her for the reticence very much. "Now for our work. I will sew, and you shall read aloud. I want you to learn how to talk as I do, and reading aloud is an excellent exercise."

"I'll ne'er speak such high English as you, and I like my braid Scotch weel."

"But your voice is so delightful when you say the words as you ought to. You can read 'high English,' why not talk it?"

"My ain tongue is mair homelike and kindly. But I'll try yours, an' you want me to."

After Mary had listened an hour, she suddenly interrupted Maggie. "You read that love scene with wonderful feeling. Had you ever a lover, Maggie?"

"Maist girls have lovers. I couldna expect to escape. You will dootless hae lovers yoursel', ma'am?"

"I had one lover, Maggie, not much of a lover, he wanted to marry Drumloch, not me."

"That was a' wrang. Folks shouldna marry for gold. Sorrow comes that way."

"You would not, I am sure"

"No, not for a' the gold in Scotland."

"Is your lover poor then, Maggie?"

"I ne'er asked him if he had this or that. He is a gude kind lad."

"Did he ever give you any beautiful things—precious rings or locket—as the lovers in books do? The Sir Everard of whom you have just been reading gave Lady Hilda a ring of diamonds and opals, you remember?"

"The Fife lads break a sixpence in twa wi' their troth lass; and I hae my half sixpence. There can be no ring but a wedding ring for a lassie like me."

Then Mary laid down her work, and as she passed Maggie she touched her gently, and smiled in her face. She was rapidly coming to a decision; a few minutes in her own room enabled her to reach it. "The girl is a born lady; I gave her every opportunity, but neither to the text of 'Campbell,' nor 'lover,' did she betray herself or Allan. And really, when I think of it, I had almost a special direction about her. I did not intend to go to Mrs. Lauder's that morning. I should not have gone, if Madame Bartholemew had been at home. I should not have gone if Miss Fleming had been able to do my work. Maggie has evidently been put in my charge. Not to go any higher than Uncle John and Allan, I think when they demand her of me, they will say—'Where is thy sister?' not 'Where is thy servant maid, or thy sewing maid.' But I must be sure of myself. If I accept this obligation, I must accept it fully with all its contingencies and results. Can I be generous enough? Patient enough? Just enough? Loving enough?" And no wonder men honor good women! Who could have helped honoring Mary Campbell who saw her stand with honest purpose examining her own heart, and then lowly kneeling, asking God's blessing and help for the resolve so consecrated.

It was no light favor to be quickly given and quickly removed. Most good things are gradual; and Mary's kindness fell as the dew, a little in the morning, and a little in the evening. Here, a formality was dropped; there a tangible token of equality given. First, the evening dresses of white mull and pale merinos; then the meal at her table, and the seat in her carriage. And when this point had been reached, it had been so naturally and unobtrusively reached, that even the servants only remembered the first days of Maggie's residence at Drumloch, as a time when "Miss Promoter dootless had a sorrow o' her ain, and keepit much to hersel'."

With a more conventional girl, Mary might have had much difficulty in reaching this state of affairs; but Maggie took her kindness with the simple pleasure and gratitude of a child; and she certainly had not the faintest conception of Mary Campbell's relation to Allan.

Allan had distinctly spoken of his home as being in Bute; and of his cousin, as living in the same house with

him from her childhood. Mary, in her own castle in Ayrshire, was certainly far enough away from all Allan's statements to destroy every suspicion of her identity. And the name of "Campbell" told her nothing at all. As Mary said, "The Campbells were a big clan." They abounded throughout the west of Scotland. Around Drumloch, every third man was a Campbell. In Glasgow the name was prominent on the sign boards of every street. In a Fife fishing village there are rarely more than four or five surnames. A surname had not much importance in Maggie's eyes. She had certainly noticed that "Campbell" frequently met "Promoter;" but certain names seem to have affinities for certain lives; at least certain letters do; and Maggie, quoting a superstition of her class, settled the matter to her own satisfaction, by reflecting "what comes to me wi' a 'C,' aye comes wi' good to me."

CHAPTER XI. — TO THE HEBRIDES.

*"And yet when all is thought and said.
The heart still overrules the head."*

*"From the lone shieling of the misty islands.
Mountains divide us, and the waste of seas:
But we in dreams behold the Hebrides."*

One morning toward the end of July, Mary was reading the "Glasgow Herald." "Maggie," she said, "one of the Promoters has evidently left Fife, for I see the name among the list of students—David Promoter—he has done wondrously. The man is a miracle, he has taken every prize in his classes, I think."

"I'm right glad to hear tell o' it. I must aye wish weel—"

"Well, Maggie, not weel."

"Well, to the name."

It was true. David had overstepped even his own ambition. He had finished the term with an ovation from his fellows, and he had been urged to go with Prof. Laird's son to the outer Hebrides. And now that the strain of his study was over, and the goal, so far, nobly won, he could afford to remember his sister. Indeed David deserves more justice than these words imply. He had often thought of her since that March afternoon when he had put her into the train for Stirling. But he really believed that his first duty was to his studies, and he fully expected that his letter to Dr. Balmuto would be a sufficient movement to insure her welfare. Practically, he had thrown his own duty upon the minister's conscience, but he felt sure that the good man had accepted the obligation, for if not, he would certainly have written to him on the subject.

He sent the doctor the newspapers advertising his success, and a couple of days afterward went to Kinkell. Young Laird did not require his company for a week, and he thought well of himself for taking a journey to Fife merely to pleasure his sister, before he took his own pleasure. He had improved much in personal appearance during his residence in Glasgow. He was well dressed, and he had acquired an easy confidence of manner which rather took Dr. Balmuto by surprise. Perhaps it irritated him a little also; for he was not at all satisfied with David. The first words he said were not words of congratulation, they were a stern inquiry.

"David Promoter, where is your sister Maggie? Has she come back with you?"

"I came to ask you about Maggie, sir."

"Me! What way would you come to me? I have nothing to do with Maggie Promoter."

"Sir, when she left me last March, I gave her a letter to you, and put her in the train that was to bring her here."

"What did you write to me about?"

"I told you how unhappy and dissatisfied my sister was at Pittenloch; and I asked you to advise her to stay at Kinkell under your eye. Then none could speak ill o' her."

"Why under my eye? Are you not your sister's natural protector?"

"My studies—my college duties—"

"Your first duty was Maggie. You will be a miserable divine, let me tell you, if you have not plenty of humanity in you; and the kirk and the household are bound together with bands that cannot be broken. What is the worth of all the Greek you know, if you have forgotten your own flesh and blood? I'll not give you one word of praise, David, until you can tell me that Maggie is well and doing well."

"My God! Maggie not here! Where then is she? I must awa' to Pittenloch; maybe she is gone back there."

"No, she has not gone back. Poor girl! What would she go back there for? To be worried to death by a lad she hates, and a lot of women who hate her? I went to Pittenloch a week after she left, and I had a day of

inquiries and examinations; and I can tell you Maggie has been sair wronged. That old woman in your house has the poison of hell under her tongue:—and the lifted shoulder and the slant eye, what woman can stand them? So she went to her brother, as a good girl past her wits would do, and her brother put her on the train and sent her back to her sorrow!”

“I sent her to you, sir. I thought I could trust in you—”

“Why to me, I ask again? You knew that I had spoken sharply to her at the New Year, how was she likely to come to me then? Where is your sister, David Promoter?”

“You should hae written to me, sir, when you found out that Maggie was gone from her hame.”

“I thought, everyone thought, she was with you. I am shocked to find she is not. Whom else can she be with? Whom have you driven her to?”

“What do you mean, sir?”

“Where is Allan Campbell? That is what you must next find out.”

David looked at the minister like one distraught.

“I can’t understand—I can’t believe—gie me a drink o’ water, sir.”

He was faint and sick and trembling. He drank and sat down a few minutes; but though the doctor spoke more kindly, and set clearly before him what was best to be done, he heard nothing distinctly. As soon as he was able, even while the doctor was speaking, he rose and went out of the house. Sorrow has the privilege to neglect ceremonies, and David offered no parting courtesy, but for this omission the minister was rather pleased than angry with him:

“The lad has some heart, God be thanked!” he muttered, “and the day will come when he will be grateful to me for troubling it.”

David went with rapid steps down the rocks to Pittenloch. How hateful the place looked to him that afternoon! How dreary those few tossing boats! How mean the cottages! How vulgar the women in their open doors! How disagreeable the bare-footed children that recognized him and ran hither and thither with the news of his arrival.

He was full of shame and anger. Where was his praise, where was his honor, with this disgrace in his home? How could he show those newspapers extolling his diligence and attainments, when Maggie had made his very success a disgrace to him? Oh, how bitterly he felt toward her!

Mistress Caird met him at the door with her apron at her eyes: “Come in, sir,” she said, with a courtesy, “though it is a sorrowfu’ house you come to.”

“Aunt Janet, you have been drinking. I smell the whiskey above everything. Ah, there is the bottle!” His sharp eyes had seen it behind the tea caddy on the mantelshelf. He took it and flung it upon the shingle as far as his arm could send it.

“That is my ain whiskey, David; bought wi’ my ain siller, and the gude ken I need a wee drappie to keep my vera heart frae breaking wi’ the sorrow I hae had.”

“Say, wi’ the sorrow you hae made. Pack your trunk, Aunt Janet. I’ll take you to Dron Point in the morning.”

He would talk no more to her. He let her rave and explain and scold, but sat silent on his hearth, and would go and see none of his old friends. But it did console him somewhat that they came crowding in to see him. That reaction which sooner or later takes place in favor of the injured had taken place in Maggie’s favor since the minister’s last visit. Mistress Caird felt that she was leaving Pittenloch something like a social criminal. No one came to bid her farewell. David and a boy he hired took her silently to her old home. She had sacrificed every good feeling and sentiment for popularity, and everyone spoke ill of her.

Getting near to Dron Point, she said to David, “You are a miserable set-up bit o’ a man; but you’ll pay me the #4 10s. you are owing me, or I’ll send the constable and the sherra a’ the way to Glasca’ for it.”

“I owe you nothing, woman.”

“Woman, indeed! Maggie, the hizzy!—agreed to gie me five shillings weekly if I wad say the gude word for her she ne’er deserved, and I havna been paid for eighteen weeks. That mak’s it #4 10s. Just hand o’er the siller and be done wi’ it.”

“It is a theft, an extortion;” but he took a #5 note from his pocket-book and gave her it. “That is a gratuity,” he said, “a gratuity to help you until you find employment. I do not owe you a penny.”

“There’s nae gratuity in honest earned money; and if you wad gie me #50 it wad be too little to pay me for the loss o’ health and time and gude name I hae made through you and yours. Set you up for a minister, indeed! Clean your ain door-stane before you speak o’ other folks. I’m glad to be rid o’ the sight and the hearing o’ you.”

That was the parting shot, and David could have very heartily returned it. But he heeded his Bible rule, and to her railing made no answer. Janet would rather have been sworn at. He left her bargaining with a man to take her blue kist to the village public, but he did not return to Pittenloch. He had given Elder Mackelvine the key of the cottage, and the elder had promised to find a proper woman to care for it. So he sent the boy back with the boat, and found the quickest way from Dron Point to Glasgow.

In his last interview with Allan Campbell, Allan had told him, if any difficulty arose about his money matters, or if he needed more money before he returned, to go to his father; and in view of such an emergency, had given David the address of Campbell & Co. He went there as soon as he arrived in Glasgow. It was in the middle of the afternoon and John Campbell had just gone to his house in Blytheswood Square. The young man who answered his inquiry was pleasant spoken, and trustworthy, and David said to him—"Where is Mr. Allan Campbell?"

"He is in the United States. I believe in New Orleans."

"When will he return?"

"It is very uncertain. Not for a year or more."

Then he concluded that Maggie had gone to him. That was the thing Dr. Balmuto feared. What a fool he had been not to suspect earlier what everyone else, doubtless, perceived. One hope yet remained. He wrote to the Largo Bank about the #50. If Maggie had lifted it, then he would feel certain she was doing honestly for herself, in some quiet village, or perhaps, even in Glasgow. But when he found the money had not been touched, he accepted without further hope the loss and the shame. It is so much easier to believe evil than good, even of those we love. Yet, how could David, knowing Maggie as he did, do her this shame? Alas! David Promoter thought very badly of the majority of men and women. It was his opinion that God had so made them, that they preferred evil to good, and only by some special kind of Divine favor and help—such as had been vouchsafed to himself—chose the right road.

He certainly grieved for Maggie; but oh! how bitterly he felt the wrong she had done him. For her own indulgence, how she would curtail and cramp all his future college course! He had hitherto dressed well, and been able to buy easily all the books he needed. For the future he would have to rely upon his own exertions; for his first decision had been to pay back the money he had taken from Allan's fund, and make the proceeds of his teaching defray his class fees. When he had done this, he had only #8 left, out of the #50 which his father had left accumulated; but he was to receive #25 from Prof. Laird for his two months' services, and with this #33, and the stray teaching he would certainly find to do, he really had no fear of pushing his way through the next year. But yet he felt keenly the bondage to care and necessity which Maggie's selfishness had put him under. He never thought of blaming himself. It did not occur to him that she had rights as sacred as his own. "The cruelty of her! The cruelty of her!" he kept saying, as he moodily paced his little room. He did not remember his own indifference, nor reflect that a trifle of kindness, even the small favor of a-weekly visit, would have kept the girl contentedly under his own eye.

But David had marked out his course, and he was not the man to permit any woman to seriously interfere with his plans. He put down with a mighty will his grief and disappointment, and shame, and went off to the Hebrides with his pupil. But in spite of himself, Maggie went with him. He was compelled to be very economical, and he could not quite get rid of anxiety, and of planning for the future, which the change in his money affairs forced upon him. And it was all Maggie's fault. "Her weakness, her craving 'to be made of,' and to be happy, her inability to bear a little feminine gossip, her longing after the companionship of himself—or another." Maggie, after all, spoiled the trip to which he had looked forward for half a year with longing and delight.

When he returned to the Candleriggs, the first thing he saw was a letter from Maggie. It had been lying upon his table for some weeks. In fact Maggie had written it soon after her removal to Drumloch, but she did not wish to post it from so small a place, and she therefore waited until her first visit to Glasgow, which occurred early in August. She had remembered the time when it was possible that David might go to Pittenloch, and she feared that he would be very miserable when he found out that she had never returned to Kinkell. Without revealing her own location or circumstances, she wished to satisfy him as far as possible of her innocence and welfare; so she had thus written—

"Dear Davie. I am feared you will not get this, ere you find out I did not go back yonder day you sent me. I have met with good friends, and am living honest and happy. Have no fear anent me. I will do right, and do well. Where I am there is no ill can be said of me, and no ill can come to me. I was glad beyond telling to read of your well-doing. You'll win to the top of the tree, Davie, I aye thought that. Some day, you will find it in your heart to love Maggie, and to forgive her, that she was forced to lay an anxious thought on you. Your true, loving sister, Maggie Promoter."

The letter was a comfort to him, and for a moment or two a great surprise. The writing was Maggie's writing, but much improved, the spelling was correct. It was evident that she was trying to teach herself, and it pleased him somewhat; although he was far from considering education as a necessity for women. "To think of Maggie reading the newspapers!" he exclaimed; "but then," he reflected, "she had doubtless been looking for a word about him," and with this thought, he became just, even tender, to her memory. As he folded away the letter, he said, "I was wrong to think wrong of her. She was always a good girl, and very fond of me. It would be long ere she would do aught to hurt my good name. It's no to be thought of." So with a lighter heart he went bravely to work again, and the weeks and months in their busy monotony passed wisely and quickly away.

To Maggie also, they went wisely and quickly, although life at Drumloch was far from being monotonous. Mary had the quick, nervous temperament which is eager for change and movement. She went frequently into Glasgow to give and to attend entertainments, for Drumloch was yet in the hands of painters and upholsterers. But she always went alone. She had fully made up her mind that it would not be well to let John Campbell see Maggie. If he liked her, he would be sure to write to Allan, and curtail his probation, and Mary felt that such a course would be an injustice to her plans for the gradual preparation of the girl for the position she might have to fill.

So Maggie was left in charge at Drumloch. Almost imperceptibly she rose to this duty. First one thing, then

another, was fully grasped by her, until the steward and the housekeeper took her directions as readily as they did those of Miss Campbell. Maggie had a natural aptitude for comprehending small pecuniary and household details, "accounts" did not confuse her, and they did seriously confuse Mary. She could make nothing of the "books" which her head servants rendered weekly, and which were clear to Maggie. So, while Mary was entertaining in Blytheswood Square, and going to dinner parties, and dances, Maggie was equally happy looking after the hundred things which from the village, the farm, the gardens and the house demanded her supervision and direction.

During this winter John Campbell did not often visit Drumloch, and when he did Mary had always a long list of shopping for Maggie to attend to in Glasgow. The change was pleasant to Maggie and it was also pleasant to Mary; for it cannot be denied, that she sometimes, at this period, chafed under her self-imposed duty. Every one has peculiarities; they may be admirable ones, and yet be irritating to those whose peculiarities run in a different direction. There were occasional days in which Mary felt that it was the first necessity of life to get rid of Maggie Promoter for a little while. But she never suffered Maggie to suspect this feeling; she was even at such times effusively kind to her, and generally compromised with her conscience by giving her *protigi* some rich or pretty present.

Thus the winter passed, and in May Mary went to London. John Campbell accompanied her; he had not been well for some months and he hoped the change of scene would benefit him. Also, he had a great pride in his niece, and he was no little pleased when she was presented at Court, and for some months reigned a belle in the very best Scottish society in the metropolis. At this time she had not much interest in Drumloch, though Maggie wrote to her daily, and Maggie's letters were wonderfully clever and amusing. And yet she had not received any special lessons; she had simply passed in a silent sort of way out of a region of ignorance, into one penetrated by the thought of educated men and women. There had been in her mentally a happy unconscious growth upward, like that of a well-watered plant. But no system of education could have been so excellently fitted for her development. The charge taught her self-reliance; the undisputed authority she wielded imparted to her manner ease and dignity, and that nameless something which is the result of assured position. There was also the advantage of a conscious, persistent effort on Maggie's own part; she tried to make every letter she wrote more neat, and clear, and interesting. She took pride in the arrangement of her hair, was anxious about the fit of her dresses, and did not regard the right mixture of colors in her costumes as a thing beneath her consideration. Early in July Mary returned to Drumloch. She had come as far as Glasgow with a party who were going to Oban. Oban was then little known. During the summer tourists of the wealthy and cultivated classes, who had read Scott's "Lord of Isles," came on short pilgrimages to the pretty clachan; but it was not, as now, the Charing Cross of the Highlands, where all the world you see.

*"The doctor and the scholar.
The poor man with his penny fee.
The rich man with his dollar.
The priest who steals short holiday,
The prince who goes incog, sir
The schoolboy with his dreams of play,
The sportsman with his dog, sir."*

"We are going over classic ground, Maggie, and we will read the 'Lord of the Isles' together this week, ere we put a foot on it," said Mary, who was in a merry mood with life, and all the love and care of it.

"But if I go also, what shall be done with Drumloch?"

"Mrs. Leslie and Bruce will do the best they can; and for the rest, let things 'gae tapsal-teerie,' as Uncle John says. I have made up my mind, Maggie, to take you with us, and I am not going to be disappointed for a trifle. Oh, Maggie! how we shall enjoy the great bens, and the corries hazy with blue bells, and the wonderful isles of Skye and Iona."

"Skye! My mother was a Skye woman. I should like well to see Skye. How long shall we be away?"

"Only a month. Winter comes soon among the mountains, and the roads are bad, even the sea road, which is the one we shall take."

"I have a tryst," said Maggie, blushing scarlet; "it is at the end of August. I canna break it; if I did, life would be a miserable uncertainty to me, and maybe, to some one else."

Then Mary remembered how nearly the two years of Allan's absence were over; and she understood well what tryst Maggie had to keep. "We shall be back in Glasgow by the 20th of August. How long will it take you to keep this tryst, Maggie?"

"I would ask a week to go and come again."

"But would you come again?"

"I would do that whate'er befell."

"Do you think your lover will be there?"

"He said that."

"And do you believe in him after two years?"

"Yes. I believe in every word he said. He will be there."

"You shall be there also, Maggie, though we should have to send special horses and carriages with you. I

intend to be back at Drumloch about the 22d, that will give you plenty of time. When you return we will go to Blytheswood Square, until Uncle John gets home."

"What would take him at all to a heathen country like Russia?"

"They are not quite heathens, Maggie; indeed, I believe they claim to be the best kind of Christians; and Russian rubles turn into very good English sovereigns. There was some trouble about one of his ships at Odessa, and as a very clever London physician said that Uncle John needed travel and change, he thought he would go himself and see about it. But he is one of those men who do not like to tread in their own footsteps, so instead of coming back by the way he went, he will pass through Russia northward, to a port on the Baltic, called Riga, where also he has some business. I think Riga is on the Baltic; suppose you get the atlas, and we will trace his course together."

"I have heard you speak much of Mr. Campbell, I would like well to see him."

"You should have seen him ere this, Maggie; but I was waiting until —until, you looked and spoke as you do this morning;" and she rose and kissed the blush of Maggie's cheek, and then turned the conversation to the dark tartans which she thought would be the best material for travelling dresses. "And we want them very prettily made," she added, with a rising color, "for it is fine folk we are going to meet, Maggie—Lord John Forfar, and Captain Manners, and Lady Emma Bruce, and Miss Napier; so you see, Miss Promoter and Miss Campbell must dress accordingly."

Maggie was young enough and happy enough to feel all the excitement of the proposed trip. Still she was troubled about her tryst with Allan. Oban and the Highlands were so far away. In Pittenloch, her mother, coming from Skye, had been looked upon almost as a foreigner. She was quite unable to compute the distances; she knew nothing of the time it would take to travel them: she felt ashamed to show anxiety to Mary on the matter. "But I'll trust my way to His ordering. He'll no let me be too late for any good thing He wills me;" and having thus settled the subject in her heart, she went about the necessary preparations in a joy of anticipation, which made Mary feel how pleasant it would be to have so fresh and charming a companion.

Two weeks afterward they were in Oban, watching from the heights the exquisite bay, and the lovely isle of Kerrera, the high mountains of Mull, and Ossian's "Misty Morven." The Petrel, a cutter yacht of forty tons, was lying at anchor. In the morning they were to start for a glimpse of the Atlantic across the purple bogs of the Lews; going by way of Mull and Canna, and swinging round Barra Head, toward the red, rent bastions of Skye. Through that charming circle of the outer isles, with their slumbrous tarns, and meres, and treeless solitudes they went. And oh, how full of strange and dreamy beauty were the long quiet summer days in that land of mystic forgetfulness! that great, secret land of waters, with its irresistible tides, and the constant ocean murmur haunting it like a spirit voice.

Maggie enjoyed them with all her soul, though she did not speak in italics about her feelings; perhaps she did not know very well how to express herself. Forty years ago, even highly educated women did not rave about scenery, they knew nothing of shadows and colors, nothing of "effects" scarped, jagged and rifted. Neither had they any uneasy consciousness that they ought to blend the simple delights of fresh air, fresh scenes, and pleasant company, with some higher kind of recreation.

Coming home through the sound of Barra, Mary said, "We are a day or two late, Maggie, but I have not forgotten your tryst. We shall run down the coast now, and round the Mull of Kintyre on the 24th. The next day we may be at Drumloch, that will be early enough?"

"Mair than enough, Miss Campbell. I needna leave Drumloch until the 27th, though if it came easy I would leave before that."

"How near we are to the cliffs; we are rippling the shadows along shore. Look at those forlorn headlands, Maggie. It was the sombre sadness of this land that charmed the early saints, and girt all these isles with their solitary cells."

"I liked well to read about them; and I can never think of Iona without remembering Columba with his face bright from the communion of angels."

"And the hymn he wrote there, Maggie, we shall never forget that; it breathes the soul of the saint, and pictures the scene of his saintship. Now to the cries of the sea-birds overhead, let us have a few lines; the swell of the waves will keep the time and the tune."

*"That I might often see
The face of the ocean.
That I might see its heaving waves
Over the wide ocean,
When they chaunt music to their Father
Upon the world's course,
That I might see its level sparkling strand,
It would be no cause of sorrow,
That I might hear the songs of the wonderful birds,
Source of happiness;
That I might hear the thunder of the crowding waves
Upon the rocks;
That I might hear the roar by the side of the church
Of the surrounding sea,
That I might see its ebb and flood
In their career;*

*That I might bless the Lord
Who conserves all,
Heaven with its countless bright orders.
Land, strand and flood.
At times kneeling to beloved Heaven;
At times psalm-singing;
At times contemplating the King of Heaven,
Holy, the Chief;
At times work without compulsion;
This would be delightful;
At times plucking duilisc from the rocks;
At times fishing;
At times giving food to the poor;
At times in a solitary cell.
The best advice in the presence of God
To me has been vouchsafed.
The King, whose servant I am, will not let
Anything deceive me."*

Skene, Celtic Scotland, v. 2, p. 93.

"Thank you, Maggie, historical places are not much to see, often, but they are a great deal to feel. That hymn set me back into the sixth century, and I have been wondering what sort of women you and I would have been then. Perhaps nuns, Maggie."

"We will not think ill o' ourselves, Miss Campbell. Nane o' the Promoters were ever Catholics."

"The Campbells prayed as the king prayed always—we have been a prudent clan for both worlds, Maggie. 'To get on' has been the one thing needful with us; but there are many families of that kind. Has not the wind changed?"

"Yes; it looks like bad weather;" and the mist as she spoke came rolling down the sound with the swoop of a falcon. Hitherto they had been singularly fortunate. "Fine weather and fair winds," had been the usual morning greeting; or if a passing squall appeared it had found them near to some sheltered loch, or inlet. Lord Forfar was for putting into Boisdale, for the glass was going down rapidly; but Lady Bruce was sure, "a little breeze would be a most delightful change."

It was not very likely to be so with the wind rising out of the northeast; and ere long the Petrel's topmast was sent down, and a double reef put in her mainsail. Until midnight it blew hard with a fast rising sea, and a mist as thick as a hedge. After this, it was ugly weather all the way home, and as they passed Ailsa Craig the wind changed to full north, and fetched the sea down with it.

"The waves come high down the Frith," said Maggie to the owner of the yacht, a hardy young fellow who leaned against the taffrail, and watched his boat hammering through the heavy seas.

"They come any size you like down here, Miss Promoter. But our skipper is a good sailor; he has only one fault; he drives a boat without mercy. Still I think even Captain Toddy will run for shelter to-night."

Captain Toddy thought not. He had a name for carrying on, and the Petrel was not his boat if she did get a bit crushed. So the ladies, sitting under the weather railing, watched the storm from among the folds of yellow oilskin in which they had been tucked. Ere long, in the thick of a gusty squall, the Petrel took her first header very heavily. Her bow disappeared to the butts, and with a tremendous noise the sea came over the deck in a deluge. Every plunge she made it was the same thing, and all of the ladies were thoroughly drenched. The cabin was wet and miserable, and there was no promise of any favorable change. Evidently the best thing to do was to make for the port of Ayr; for on the following day Mary Campbell was suffering very much from the effects of her exposure, and when Captain Toddy let the anchor fly underfoot pretty near the 'auld Brig' she was in a high fever, and breathing with pain and difficulty.

CHAPTER XII. — THE BROKEN TRYST.

*"I sit on my creepie, and spin at my wheel,
And I think on the laddie that lo'ed me sae weel;
He had but ae sixpence, he brake it in twa,
And gied me the hauf o' t when he gaed awa'.
He said, think na lang lassie tho' I gang awa'.
I'll come and see you in spite o' them a'"*

—Logie O Buchan.

"I am going to be ill," said Mary, with trembling lips, "I feel as if I were walking into a great darkness, Maggie."

They were driving toward Drumloch in the early morning, and there was that haunted, terrified look in her eyes, with which a soul apprehensive of suffering and danger bespeaks the help and sympathy of those near to it. Maggie had seen the look before; the little children dying upon her knees had pierced her heart with it. She remembered it, even in the eyes of strong men driven by a sense of duty or humanity into the jaws of death. Mary took her hand and clung to it; and let her head fall helplessly upon Maggie's breast. When they reached home, she had almost to be carried to her room, and servants were sent off on fleet horses for medical aid.

"A bad case of inflammation of the lungs," was the doctor's verdict. "It is likely to be a serious business, Miss Promoter, and Miss Campbell's friends should be informed at once of her condition."

Mary would not be spoken to on the subject. "Her uncle," she said, "was her only friend. In his last letter he had told her to send communications to the Hotel Neva at Riga. It was uncertain when he would get there. And what was the use of alarming him, when he was too far away to help her?" Maggie perceived from the first moment of Mary's conviction of danger and suffering, that the girl had flung herself upon her love and care. With all her soul she accepted the charge. She would have held herself as unworthy to live if she had had one moment's reluctance in the matter. In strong physical anguish it is almost impossible to be generous and self-forgetting, and Mary, in the first hours of acute, lacerating agony, forgot all things but her ever-present need of relief. Early in the second day the fever reached the brain, and her talk became incoherent. It required all Maggie's firm strength and tender love to control the suffering girl.

And it was nearly time for her tryst with Allan. On the twenty-ninth of August he had bidden her farewell; two years from that day he had promised to be in Pittenloch. She believed he would keep his promise; but how was she to keep hers? Only by being recreant to every sentiment of honor, gratitude and humanity. "And if I could be that false to Mary Campbell, I wad weel deserve that Allan should be false to me," she said. She had never read Carlyle, never heard of him, but she arrived at his famous dictum, as millions of good men and women have done, by the simplest process of conscientious thought: "I'll do the duty that lies close by my hand and heart, and leave the rest to One wiser than I am."

She remembered also that she could write to Allan. There was a bare chance that he might get the letter, especially if he should linger a few days in Fife. But although she was ignorant of the action which David had taken with regard to Janet Caird, she never thought of addressing the letter to her care. For a moment she hesitated between Willie Johnson and Elder Mackelvine, but finally chose the former, for Willie and Allan had been great friends, and she was certain if Allan went to Pittenloch he would not leave the village without seeing his old boat mate. It was a loving, modest little letter, explaining the case in which she found herself, and begging him to come to Drumloch and say a word of kindness to her. When she folded and sealed it, she thought with pleasure of Allan's astonishment and delight at her improvement; and many an hour she passed, calculating, as well as she could, the distance, the time, and the chances of Allan receiving her message.

As it happened, he just missed it; but it was Maggie's own fault. If she had trusted it to the Drumloch mail-bag and servant it would have reached Dalry on the twenty-ninth; and on that day Willie Johnson was in the post-village, and received several letters lying there for himself and others in Pittenloch. But when, in our anxiety, we trust to our own judgment, instead of to that something which, for lack of a better name, we call good fortune, we are usually, and perhaps justly, deserted by good fortune. Maggie feared the footman would shirk her solitary letter, and perhaps keep it until his regular visit to the post the following day; so she gave it to the doctor, earnestly asking him to post it as he passed through the town. And the doctor fully intended to do so, but he was met by an urgent call for help; he forgot it then; he did not pass near the post-office for two days, and the two days might as well have been two months, for it was fully that time before Willie Johnson received his next letters.

Mary was exceedingly ill on the twenty-ninth. Her soul had reached the very border-land of being. In the dim, still room she lay, painfully breathing, faintly murmuring words unintelligible and very far away. But as Maggie sat motionless beside her, sometimes hopelessly watching, sometimes softly praying, she could not help thinking of the beach at Pittenloch, of the fresh salt air, and the sea coming in with the wind, and the motion and sparkle and sunshine, and the tall, handsome man she loved looking with sorrowful longing for her. And though she never grudged Mary one moment of the joy she was sacrificing, yet her tears dropped upon the clay-like hands she clasped in her own; for human love and human hopes are very sweet, never perhaps more sweet than in the very hour in which we yield them up to some noble duty, or some cruel fatality.

And Maggie mourned most of all, because Allan would think her faithless; would judge her from the wicked, envious tongues that had driven her from her home; and it is always the drop of injustice in sorrow that makes sorrow intolerable. Only, Maggie trusted! In spite of many a moment's fear and doubt she trusted! Trusted God, and trusted Allan, and trusted that somehow out of sorrow would come joy; and as she stepped softly about her loving cares, or watched, almost breathlessly, Mary passing Death's haggard hills, she often whispered to herself part of a little poem they had learned together:

*"I will try to hope and to trust in God!
In the excellent Glory His abode
Hath been from of old; thence looketh He,
And surely He cannot help seeing me.
And I think perhaps He thinks of me;
For my heart is with Him continually."*

In the meantime, Allan, like all true lovers, had outrun the clock to keep his tryst. On the evening of the 28th of August a small steamer cast anchor at Pittenloch pier. She had one passenger, Allan Campbell. He had been waiting two days in Leith, but no boat from Pittenloch having arrived during that time, he had hired a small steamer to run up the coast with him. He landed in the evening, just about the time the lamps in the cottages were being lit; and he looked eagerly toward the Promoter cottage for some such cheering sign. As he looked, the window became red, and he leaped off the boat in a fever of joyful expectation. Surely Maggie would be watching! The arrival of a strange steamer must have told her who was coming. Every moment he expected to see her at the open door. As he neared it, the turfs sent up a ruddy glow, and touched the whole interior with warm color. The entrance was light, but the house place was empty. Smiling to himself, he went in, and stood upon the snow-white hearth, and glanced round the dear, familiar room. Nothing was changed. In a moment or two he heard a step; he looked eagerly toward it, and a very pleasant-looking old woman entered.

"I thocht it wad be you, Maister Campbell. Welcome hame, sir! I'll mak you a cup o' tea anon, for the kettle's boiling, and a' things ready."

"Thank you. I don't remember—I suppose Mistress Caird has left?"

"Sent awa', sir—not before she deserved it."

"And you are in her place? I think I have seen you before?"

"Nae doot, sir. I'm Mysie Jardine—the Widow Jardine, sir."

"And Maggie? Is she near by? At home? Where is she?"

"There is nane ken that, sir."

"What do you mean, Mysie?"

"Maggie's gane awa', sir."

"Maggie gone away! Where to?"

"Deed, sir, I'd be fain to ken where to—but I hae the house for the care o' things; and David Promoter left word that if I took up Maggie's name in my lips, I wad be to leave instanter; sae I'll say naething at a'. Elder Mackelvine kens a' that anybody kens, and when you hae had a drap o' tea, you can ask him a' the questions you like to."

"Never mind tea, I am going at once to Mackelvine's."

"I'll be to get your room ready, sir; and put a bit o' fire in it, and the like o' that?"

"Yes, I shall come back here." He felt stunned, and glad to get into the fresh air. Maggie gone! He could hardly believe the words he had heard. Sorrow, anxiety, keen disappointment, amazement, possessed him; but even in those moments of miserable uncertainty he had not one hard or wrong thought of Maggie. Elder Mackelvine's cottage was quite at the other end of the village, and he was walking rapidly down the shingle toward it, when he met Willie Johnson.

"I heard tell you were here, Maister Campbell, and I cam' instanter to meet you, sir. You'll hae to bide wi' us to-night, for a' is changed at the Promoters."

"So I see, Willie." Then mindful of Maggie's good name, and of the fact that their betrothal was unknown, he said, with as much of his old manner as he could assume, "What has come to the Promoters? I hope some good fortune?"

"I hope that, too; but there's nane can say, if it be good or ill. Davie, you will dootless hae heard tell o'?"

"I have heard nothing from him for two years."

"Then your ears will be like to tingle wi' the news; for he has set himsel' in a' the high seats in Glasca' College; and folks talk o' naething less than a Glasca' pu'pit for him; and you ken, it tak's doctors in divinity to stand up afore a Glasca' congregation. Elder Mackelvine never wearies o' talking anent him. For mysel', I canna say I ever likit him o'er weel; and since puir Maggie gaed awa', I hae ta'en little pleasure in the honor he has done oor village."

"Maggie gone away! Where to?"

"Nane can tell. She had a sair trial wi' yonder auld harridan her brother brought to bide wi' her."

"I did not like the woman, Willie."

"Like her? Wha wad like her but the blackhearted and the black-tongued? She gied the girl's gude name awa' to win hersel' a bit honor wi' auld wives, and even the minister at first was against Maggie; sae when she couldna thole her trouble langer, she went to her brither, and folks say, he gied her the cold shoulder likewise. But when four months had gane he cam' here oot o' his wits nearly, and sent Janet Caird hame wi' a word, and the care o' the house was put on Mysie Jardine. Davie hasna set e'en on his cottage, nor foot in it, since; nor sent any word to his auld frien's—though as to frien's it is naething less than a professor he changes hats or the time o' day with noo, they tell me; and I can weel believe it, for he aye had the pride o' a Nebuchadnezzar in him."

Elder Mackelvine in a measure corroborated Willie Johnson's statements. Maggie had been "hardly spoken of," he admitted; but "I dinna approve o' the way oot o' trouble that she took," he added sternly. "Lasses

ought to sit still and thole wrang, until He undertakes their case. If Maggie had bided in her hame a few weeks langer, He wad hae brought oot her righteousness as the noon-day. There was a setting o' public feeling in the right direction followed close on her leaving, and then cam' Dr. Balmuto wi' searchings, and examinations, and strong reproofs, for a', and sundry; and I didna escape mysel';" said the elder in a tone of injury.

"What could they say wrong of Maggie Promoter?" asked Allan, with flashing eyes.

"Ou, ay, a better girl ne'er broke her cake; but folks said this, and that, and to tell the even-down truth, they put your ain name, sir, wi' hers—and what but shame could come o' your name and her name in the same breath?"

"'Shame!' Who dared to use my name to shame hers with? Let me tell you, elder, and you may tell every man and woman in Pittenloch, that if I could call Maggie Promoter my wife, I would count it the greatest honor and happiness God could give me. And if I find her to-morrow, and she will marry me, I will make her Mrs. Allan Campbell the same hour."

"You are an honorable young man, there's my hand, and I respect you wi' a' my heart. Gudewife, mak' us a cup o' tea, and put some herring to toast. Maister Campbell will eat wi' me this night, and we' hae a bed to spare likewise, if he will tak' it."

Allan gratefully ate supper with the elder, but he preferred to occupy his old room in the Promoter cottage. "I have a kind of right there," he said, with a sorrowful smile, "I hired it for two years, and my term is not quite out yet."

"And David told me also, that whenever you came, this year, or any year, to gie you the key o' it. You will find a' your books and pictures untouched; for when Dr. Balmuto heard tell what trouble Maggie had had to keep Janet Caird oot o' it, he daured her to put her foot inside; and Davie cam' himsel' not long after, and took her back to Dron Point in a whiff and a hurry, wi' nae words about it."

"I am afraid David is much to blame about his sister. He should have let Maggie stay with him."

"I'll no hear David Promoter blamed. He explained the hale circumstances o' the case to me, and I dinna think the charge o' a grown, handsome girl like Maggie was comformable, or to be thocht o'. A man that is climbing the pu'pit stairs, canna hae any woman hanging on to him. It's no decent, it's no to be expectit. You ken yoursel' what women are, they canna be trusted wi' out bit and bridle, and David Promoter, when he had heard a' that Maggie had to complain o', thocht still that she needed over-sight, and that it was best for her to be among her ain people. He sent her back wi' a letter to Dr. Balmuto, and he told her to bide under the doctor's speech and ken, and the girl ought to hae done what she was bid to do; and so far I dinna excuse her; and I dinna think her brother is to hae a word o' blame. A divinity student has limitations, sir; and womenfolk are clean outside o' them."

The elder was not a man who readily admitted petty faults in his own sex. He thought women had a monopoly of them. He was quite ready to confess that their tongues had been "tongues o' fire;" but then, he said, "Maggie had the 'Ordinances' and the 'Promises,' and she should hae waited wi' mair patience. Davie was doing weel to himsel' and going to be an honor to her, and to the village, and the country, and the hale Kirk o' Scotland, and it was the heighth o' unreason to mak' him accountable for trouble that cam' o' women's tongues."

That night Allan slept again in his old room; but we cannot bring back the old feelings by simply going back to the old places. Besides, nothing was just the same. His room wanted, he knew not what; he could not hear the low murmur of Maggie's voice as she talked to her brother; or the solemn sound of David's, as he read the Exercise. Footfalls, little laughs, slight movements, the rustle of garments, so many inexpressible keys to emotion were silent. He was too tired also to lay any sensible plans for finding Maggie; before he knew it, he had succumbed to his physical and mental weariness, and fallen fast asleep.

He kept the boat waiting two days in Pittenloch, but on the morning of the third sorrowfully turned his back upon the place of his disappointment. He felt that he could see no one, nor yet take any further step until he had spoken with David Promoter; and late the same night he was in the Candleriggs Street of Glasgow. He was so weary and faint that David's sonorous, strong, "come in," startled him. The two men looked steadily at each other a moment, a look on both sides full of suspicion and inquiry. Allan was the first to speak. He had taken in at a glance the tall sombre grandeur of David's appearance, his spiritual look, the clear truthfulness of his piercing eyes, and without reasoning he walked forward and said, somewhat sadly,

"Well, David?"

"I do not know if it is well or ill, Mr. Campbell, and I will not shake hands on uncertain grounds, sir. Ken you where my sister is?"

"How can you wrong me so, David Promoter? But that would be a small wrong in comparison—how can you shame Maggie by such a question of me? Since we parted in Pittenloch I have neither seen nor heard from her. *Oh, Maggie! Maggie!*"

He could control himself no longer. As he paced the small room, the tears stood in his eyes, and he locked and unlocked his hands in a passionate effort to relieve his emotion. David looked at him with a stern curiosity. "You are mair than needfully anxious, sir. Do you think Maggie Promoter has no brother? What is Maggie to you?"

"Everything! Everything! Life is hopeless, worthless, without Maggie. She is my promised wife. I would give every shilling I have in the world rather than lose her. I would throw the whole of my world behind me, and

go into the fishing boats for her. I love her, sir, as you never can love any woman. Do you think I would have given Maggie a heartache, or let Maggie slip beyond my ken, for all the honor and glory in the world, or for a pulpit as high as the Tower of Babel?"

"Dinna confound things, Mr. Campbell. Maggie, and the pulpit, and the Tower o' Babel are a' different. If you love Maggie sae blindly as a' that, whatna for did you leave her then? Why didn't you speak to me anent the matter? Let me tell you, that was your plain duty, and you are noo supping the broo you hae brewed for yoursel'."

David was under powerful emotion, and culture disappeared; "he had got to his Scotch;" for though a man may speak many languages, he has only one mother tongue; and when the heart throbs, and glows, and burns, he goes back to it. "Why didna you speak wi' me?" he asked again, as he let his hand fall upon the table to emphasize the inquiry.

"I will tell you why. Because Maggie loved you, and thought for you, and would not put one dark drop into your cup of happiness. Because she was afraid that if you knew I loved her, you would think I had tried to help you from that motive, and so, refuse the help. Because the dear girl would not wound even your self complacency. Do not think I am ashamed of her, or ashamed of loving her. I told my father, I told the only female relative I have, how dear she was to me. My father asked me to test my love by two years' travel and absence. I did so to convince him, not because I doubted myself. Do you know where Maggie is? If you do, tell me, I have a right to see her."

David went to a big Bible lying on a small table, and took from among its leaves three letters. "I have had these from her at different times. Two you see are posted in Glasgow, the last received was posted three weeks ago, from Portree, in Skye. She says she is with friends, and doing well, and you have but to read the letters to understand she is with those who are more than kind to her. There are few women in Scotland that could write a letter like her last. It shows a mind well opened, and the pen o a ready writer."

"May I have them?"

"Since you make so great a claim on Maggie, you may; but why did she not write to you, if you were trothplighted?"

"Because it was fully understood there was to be no communication of any kind between us for two years. That much I owed to the best of fathers. Also, as you know, Maggie has learned to write since we parted. But I ought to have made surer provision for her happiness. I am only rightly punished for trusting her where I did."

"You trusted her with her ain brother, Mr. Campbell. If Maggie had done as she should hae done—"

"Maggie has done perfectly right. I am sure of that. I could swear to it."

"Sir, we will keep to lawful language. Christian gentlemen don't need oaths. I say Maggie should have gone to Dr. Balmuto when I sent her."

"I do not know the circumstances, but I say she ought not to have gone to Dr. Balmuto. I am sure she only did whatever was wise and womanly."

"There is no use in reasoning with one who talks without knowledge. If I get any information about Maggie, or from her, I will send it to your address. I love Maggie. The lassie aye loved me. She wouldna thank you to speak sae sharply to me. She will tell you some day that I did all that could be expectit of me."

"Forgive me, David. I feel almost broken-hearted. I am irritable also for want of food. I have not eaten since early this morning."

"That is not right, sir. Sit down, in a few minutes you shall have all that is needful."

"No, no; I must go home. Half an hour will take me there. Shake hands, David. Whatever differences we may have, you, at least, understand fully that I never could wrong your sister."

"I am glad to give you my hand, sir. I owe you more than can be told. I had not been where I am to-day but for you."

"And if there is anything more needed?"

"There is nothing more, sir. I have paid back all I borrowed. I have been fortunate above my fellows. I owe you only the gratitude I freely and constantly pay."

Allan scarcely understood him; he grasped the hand David offered him, then walked to Argyle Street and called a cab; in half an hour, he was in his own rooms in the Blytheswood Square house. His advent caused a little sensation; the housekeeper almost felt it to be a wrong. "In the very thick of the cleaning!" she exclaimed; "every bit of furniture under linen, and all the silver put by in flannel. Miss Campbell said she wasna coming until the end o' September; and as for Mr. Allan, every one thought he was at a safe distance. We'll hae to hurry wi' the paint work noo, and if there's one thing mair than anither no to be bided it's hurrying up what should be taken pains wi'."

Generally Allan would have been conscious of the disapproval his visit evoked, and he would have reconciled the servants to any amount of trouble by apologies and regrets; but at this time his mind was full of far more personal and serious affairs. He had been inclined to think the very best of Maggie, to be quite certain that she had been detained by circumstances absolutely uncontrollable by her; but after reading again and again her letters to David, he did think she ought to have had some written explanation of her absence waiting for him. She knew he would certainly see either Willie Johnson or Elder Mackelvine, and he felt that

she might—if she wished—have spared him much anxiety and disappointment.

He longed now to see his father; he determined to tell him the truth, and be guided by his advice. But John Campbell's last letter to his son had been dated from Southern Russia, and it was scarcely likely he would be in Glasgow for three weeks. However, Mary Campbell was at Drumloch, and he thought as he sipped his coffee, that it would probably be the best thing to go there, rest for a day or two with his cousin, and if he found her sympathetic, ask her help in his perplexity.

He called at the office on his way to the railway station, and he was met by the manager with an exclamation of peculiar satisfaction. "No one could be more welcome at this hour, Mr. Allan," he said; "we were all longing for you. There is bad news from Russia."

"My father?"

"Is very ill. He took a severe cold in a night journey over the Novgorod Steppe, and he is prostrate with rheumatic fever at Riga. I had just told Luggan to be ready to leave by to-night's train for Hull. I think that will be the quickest route."

"I can catch the noon train. I will call in an hour for money and advices, and go myself."

"That is what I expected as soon as I saw you. Have you heard that Miss Campbell is very ill?"

"No. Is she at Drumloch? Who is caring for her?"

"She is at Drumloch. Dr. Fleming goes from Glasgow every day to consult with the Ayr doctor. Her housekeeper, Mrs. Leslie, is an old servant, she was with Miss Campbell's mother; forbye, Fleming says, she has with her a young lady friend who never leaves the sick room night or day."

"I was just going out to Drumloch, but that is now neither possible nor desirable. I could be of no use to Miss Campbell, I can be everything to my father."

Allan had only one call to make. It was upon a middle-aged man, who had long been employed by their house in affairs demanding discernment and secrecy. Few words passed between them. Allan laid a small likeness of Maggie on the table with a #100 Bank of England note, and said, "Simon Fraser, I want you to find that young lady for me. If you have good news when I return, I will give you another hundred pounds."

"Have you any suggestions, Mr. Allan? Is she in Glasgow?"

"I think so. You might watch churches and dressmakers."

"Am I to speak to her?"

"Not a word."

"Shall I go to the office with reports?"

"No. Keep all information until I come for it. Remember the lady is worthy of the deepest respect. On no account suffer her to discover that you are doing for me what unavoidable circumstances prevent me from doing myself."

An hour after this interview Allan was on his way to Riga. In every life there are a few sharp transitions. People pass in a moment, as it were, from one condition to another, and it seemed to Allan as if he never could be quite the same again. That intangible, un-namable charm of a happy and thoughtless youth had suddenly slipped away from him, and he was sure that at this hour he looked at things as he could not have looked at them a week before. And yet extremities always find men better than they think they are. His love and his duty set before Allan, he had not put his own happiness for one moment before his father's welfare and relief. Without delay and without grudging he had answered his call for help and sympathy.

But while he was hurrying on his journey of love and succor, Maggie was watching in an indescribable sickness of delayed hope. If Allan got her letter on the 29th she thought he would surely be at Drumloch on the 30th. She gave him until the evening. She invented excuses for his delay for several more wretched days. Then she resigned all hope of seeing him. Her letter had missed him, and perhaps he would never again visit Pittenloch. What a week of misery she spent! One morning Dr. Fleming turned her sharply to the light. "Miss Promoter," he said, "you are very near ill. Go away and cry. Take a good cry. It may save you a deal of suffering. I will stay by Miss Campbell an hour. Run into the garden, my brave woman, and have it out with yourself."

She was thankful to do so. She wrapped her plaid around her and almost fled to the thick laurel shrubbery. As she walked there she cried softly, "Oh, Allan, Allan, Allan, it wasna my fault, dearie! It wasna Maggie's fault! It wasna Maggie's fault!" Her bit of broken sixpence hung by a narrow ribbon round her neck. She laid it in her hand, kissed it, and wept over it. "He'll maybe come back to me! He'll maybe come back to me! And if he never comes back I'll be aye true to him; true till death to him. He'll ken it some time! He'll ken it some time!" She cried passionately; she let her quick nature have full way; and sobbed as she had been used to sob upon the beach of Pittenloch, or in the coverts of its bleak, black rocks.

The cruelty of the separation, the doubt, the injustice that must mingle in Allan's memory with her, this was what "rent her heart." Oh, words of terrible fidelity! And how was she to conceal, to bear this secret wound? And who should restore to her the dear face, the voice, the heart that wrapped her in its love? In that sad hour how prodigal she was of tender words! Words which she would perhaps have withheld if Allan had been by her side. What passionate avowals of her affection she made, so sweet, so thrilling, that it would be a kind of profanation to write them.

When she went back to the house she was weary, but calm. Only hope seemed to have gone forever. There are melancholy days in which the sun has no color, and the clouds hang in dark masses, gray upon darker gray. Life has the same pallors and glooms; we are weary of ourselves and of others, we have the sensation of defeat upon defeat, of hopeless struggles, of mortal languors that no faith can lift. As Maggie watched that day beside her friend she felt such prostration. She smiled scornfully to herself as she remembered that ever in the novels which she had read the lover and the hero always appeared in some such moments of extremity as she had gone through. But Allan had not found her in the laurel walk, and she did not believe he would ever try to find her again. Sorrow had not yet taught her that destiny loves surprises.

About midnight she walked into an adjoining dressing room and looked out. How cold and steely the river wound through the brown woods until it mingled with the ghostly film on the horizon! Through what cloudy crags,

*The moon came rushing like a stag,
With one star like a hound,*

behind it! As she watched the solemn, restless picture, she was called very softly—"Maggie."

The word was scarce audible, but she stepped swiftly back, and kneeling by Mary's side lifted her wasted hand. The eyes that met hers had the light of reason in them at last.

"I am awake, Maggie."

"Yes, dear. Do not talk, you have been ill; you are getting better."

Mary smiled. The happiest of pillows is that which Death has frowned on, and passed over. "I am really getting well?"

"You are really getting well. Sleep again."

There was a silence that could almost be felt; and Maggie sat breathless in it. When it became too trying, she rose softly and went to the next room. There was a small table there, and on it a shaded lamp and a few books. One of them was turned with its face downward and looked unfamiliar; she lifted it, and saw on the fly-leaf, Cornelius Fleming, A.D. 1800. It was a pocket edition of the *Alcestis* in English, and the good man had drawn a pencil opposite some lines, which he doubtless intended Maggie to read:—

*"Manifold are the changes
Which Providence may bring.
Many unhop'd for things
God's power hath brought about.
What seemeth, often happeneth not;
And for unlikely things
God findeth out a way."*

She smiled and laid the little volume down. "The tide has turned," she thought, "and many an ill wind has driven a ship into a good harbor. I wonder what was the matter with me this morning!" And she sat quiet with a new sense of peace in her heart, until the moon was low in the west, and the far hills stood clear and garish in the cold white light of morning. Then Mary called her again. There was a look of pitiful anxiety on her face; she grasped Maggie's hand, and whispered "The 29th? Is it come?"

"Yes, dear."

"Your tryst, Maggie?"

"I will keep it some other time."

"Now, Maggie. To-day. At once. Oh Maggie! Go, go, go! I shall be ill again if you do not."

It was useless to reason with her. She began to cry, to grow feverish.

"I will go then."

"And you will come back?"

"In three or four days."

"Spare no money. He will be waiting. I know it. Haste, Maggie! Oh dear, you don't know—oh, be quick, for my sake."

Then Maggie told Mrs. Leslie such facts as were necessary to account for Mary's anxiety, and she also urged her to keep the appointment. "Better late than ever," she said, "and you may not be too late; and anyhow the salt air will do you good, and maybe set you beyond the fit o' sickness you look o'er like to have."

So within an hour Maggie was speeding to the coast of Fife, faintly hoping that Allan might still be there; "for he must ken by his own heart," she thought, "that it would be life or death, and naething but life or death, that could make me break a promise I had made to him."

CHAPTER XIV. — THE MEETING PLACE.

*“Love’s a divinity that speaks
‘Awake Sweetheart!’ and straightway breaks
A lordlier light than sunshine’s glow,
A sweeter life than mortals know.
I bow me to his fond command,
Take life’s great glory from his hand;
Crowned in one moment’s sweet surprise,
When Somebody and I—changed eyes.”*

Maggie had very little hope of meeting Allan, and yet he might have lingered. Judging him by her own heart, she thought he would have done so, unless circumstances of which she had no knowledge made waiting impossible. It was this faint hope that made her wear the costume most becoming to her—a gown and mantle of dark blue cashmere and velvet, and a white straw bonnet with bands and strings of blue velvet and one drooping plume of the same tint. Mary looked at her critically, and said, “You do me great credit, Maggie, I expect some one to be very pleased with me. Kiss me, dear, and be sure and bring good news back with you.”

Late that night Maggie reached Kinkell. She rested at its small inn until daylight, then, ere any one was astir, she took the familiar path down the rocks. Perhaps she ought to have had a great many fine thoughts, and grateful emotions, on that walk; but people cannot feel to order, and Maggie’s mind was wholly bent upon Allan and herself. She was also obliged to give much of her attention to her feet. The shelving narrow path, with its wide fissures and slight foothold, had become really dangerous to her. There were points at which she almost feared, and she felt more vividly than ever she had done before how far the old life had slipped behind her. She had become unfit for it; she shrank from its dangers; and when she came in sight of the cottages, and remembered the narrow orbit of life within them, she shrank even from its comforts and pleasures.

From her own cottage the smoke was rising in plentiful volume through the white wide chimney. She did not know of Janet Caird’s removal, and supposed she would have to parry all her old impertinences and complaints. When she opened the door Mysie, who was stooping over the fire toasting a cake, turned her head; then she lifted herself and dropped a courtesy.

“I am only Maggie Promoter, Mysie. Is Janet Caird sick?”

“Why, Maggie! I’d never hae kent you, lassie! Come to the fire, for it is raw and cold—I’m glad I had the fire kindled, and the kettle boiling—you can hae your breakfast as soon as you like it.”

“I’ll hae it the noo, Mysie.” She fell at once into her old speech, and as she removed her bonnet and mantle asked again, “Is Aunt Janet sick?”

“I dinna ken, nor I dinna care much, either. She’s gane awa’ frae Pittenloch, and Pittenloch had a gude riddance o’ her.”

“Gane!”

“Ay; when your brother Davie cam’ here, mair than a year syne, he just bid her pack her kist, and he and Troll Winans took her at daylight next morn to whar’ she cam’ frae. Elder Mackelvine made a grand exhort in the next meeting anent slandering folks; for Janet Caird was a gude text for it; and Kirsty Buchan said, it was a’ the gude Pittenloch e’er got oot o’ her.”

“David was here then?”

“Ay, he was here. Didna ye ken that?”

“Was there ony ither body here?”

“Ay, there was. A week syne here comes that bonnie young Allan Campbell that was aye sae fond o’ your brither Davie.”

“Did he stay here wi’ you?”

“Ay, for sure he did. For three days he stayed; and he just daundered roun’ the boats and the beach, and lookit sae forlorn, wanting Davie and the bonnie boat that had gane to the bottom, that folks were sorry for him. He gied Elder Mackelvine twenty pounds for the widows o’ Pittenloch, and he gied me mysel’ a five pound note; and I could hae kissed the vera footmarks he made, he was that kindly and sorrowfu’.”

“Did he name my name, Mysie?”

“Ay, he did that. He sat in Davie’s chair every night, and talked to me anent you a’ the time maistly; and he said, ‘Mysie, she’ll maybe come back some day; and if ever she does, you’ll tell her I was here, and that I missed her sairly; and he left a bit of paper for you wi’ me. I’ll get it for you, when we hae had our breakfast.’”

“Get it the noo, Mysie. I’m fain to see it; and I dinna want my breakfast much—and shut the door, and run the bolt in, Mysie; I’m no caring to see folk.”

It was one of those letters which we have forgotten how to write—large letter cap, folded within itself, and sealed with scarlet wax. It was, “Dearest Maggie! Sweetest Maggie! Best beloved of women!” It was full of tenderness, and trust, and sorrow, and undying affection. Maggie’s tears washed it like a shower of rain. Maggie’s kisses sealed every promise, and returned to the writer ten-fold every word of its passionate mournful devotion.

She did not now regret her journey. Oh, she would most gladly have walked every mile of the way, to have found that letter at the end of it. “He’ll come back here,” she thought; “love will bring him back, and I know by myself how glad he will be to hae a word from me.” In the drawer of the table in Allan’s room there was some paper and wax. Allan’s letter had been written with his pocket pencil, but she found among David’s old papers the remains of several pencils, and with some little difficulty she made them sufficiently sharp to express what she wished to say.

She told him everything—where she had spent the time since they parted —how good Miss Campbell had been to her—how impossible it would have been to desert her in an hour of such need and peril—how much she had suffered in her broken tryst, and how longingly and lovingly she would wait for him at Drumloch, though she waited there until the end of her life. “And every year,” she added, “I’ll be, if God let me, in Pittenloch on the 29th of August, dear Allan;” for she thought it likely he might come again at that time next year.

Into Mysie’s hand this letter was given with many injunctions of secrecy and care. And then Maggie sat down to eat, and to talk over the minor details of David’s and Allan’s visits; and the changes which had occurred in her native village since she left it. “I dinna want you to say I hae been here, Mysie. I’ll get awa’ at the dinner hour, and nane will be the wiser. I can do nae gude to any one, and I’ll maybe set folks wondering and talking to ill purpose.”

“I can hold my whist, Maggie; if it’s your will, I’ll no speak your name. And I hope I hae keepit a’ things to your liking in the cottage. If sae, you might gie me a screed o’ writing to your brither, sae that when he comes again, he’ll be contented, and willing to let me bide on here.”

“I’ll do that gladly, Mysie. Hoo is a’ wi’ you anent wark and siller?”

“I get on, Maggie; and there’s a few folk do mair than that; forbye, Maister Campbell’s five pounds will get me many a bit o’ comfort this winter.”

“Hoo much weekly does Davie allow you for the caretaking?”

“He didna speak to me himsel’. He left Elder Mackelvine to find some decent body wha wad be glad o’ the comfortable shelter, and the elder gied me the favor.”

“Dinna you hae some bit o’ siller beside frae Davie?”

“Na, na; I dinna expect it. The hame pays for the care o’ it.”

“But I’ll hae to pay you for the care o’ my letter, Mysie, for I can weel afford it. I’ll gie you two pounds for the next three months; and at the beginning o’ every quarter you’ll find the two pounds at the minister’s for you. He’ll gie it, or he’ll send it to you by the elder.”

“I dinna like to be paid for a kindness, Maggie. The young man was gude to me, and I’d do the kind turn to him gladly.”

“Weel, Mysie, David ought to hae minded the bit siller to you, and he wad dootless hae done it, if he hadna been bothered oot o’ his wits wi’ Aunt Janet. Sae, I’m only doing the duty for him. Davie isna mean, he is just thochtless anent a’ things outside o’ his college, or his books.”

At twelve o’ clock, when every one was at their dinner, and the beach was empty, Maggie easily got away without observation. She did not regret her journey. She had Allan’s letter and she had also a few withered flowers which he had gathered on the top of the cliffs during his visit, and left in his room. Poor, little brown bits of gorse and heather, but they had been in his hands, and were a precious and tangible link between them. The carriage which had brought her to Kinkell was waiting for her, and the horses being refreshed and rested, she left immediately for Drumloch.

She had many a thought to keep her company; but in the main, they were thoughts of hopeful love toward Allan, and of grateful affection toward Mary. This visit to Pittenloch had enabled her to measure Mary’s singular beneficence and patience; and she was almost glad that she had been able to prove her gratitude by a cheerful renunciation of hopes so dear and so purely personal. She knew then, if she had never before known, the value of what had been done for her, and she understood why David had so resolutely put aside everything that would interfere with his mental culture. In such a mood, it was even easy to excuse his harshness. “He feared I would be a hindrance to him,” she thought; “and maybe, when a man is climbing out of ignorance into knowledge, he ought to be feared for hindrances, even though he likes them well.”

Mary Campbell, like most people of a nervous temperament, had a quick, sensitive ear. She heard Maggie’s arrival and her step upon the stair long before Mrs. Leslie did. She was still confined to her bed, but she turned her questioning eyes eagerly to the door by which Maggie would enter. She came in so brightly, and with such a happy light on her face, that Mary felt sure the journey had been a successful one.

“In time, Maggie, after all?” she whispered, as Maggie kissed her.

“No, he did not wait for me:—but it is all right.”

“Oh Maggie! what a shame!”

"Don't say that, Miss Campbell. He kept his word. He left me a letter. He is not to blame. No one is to blame. It will be all for the best. I am sure of that."

"Never call me Miss Campbell again, Maggie. I am Mary, your friend, your sister Mary. Do you think I can forget those dreadful days and nights when you walked with me, as I went through the Valley of the Shadow? Though I could not speak to you I knew you were there. Your hand, so cool, so strong, and gentle was what I clung to. On that last awful point of land, beyond which all was a black abyss, I clung to it. I heard your voice when I had passed beyond all other earthly sounds. It was the one link left me between that world and this. Maggie! Maggie! You cannot tell how sorry I am about this broken trust."

"You must not say that, dear. You must not talk any more. I have a letter that makes it all right. We will speak of it again when you are stronger."

"Yes, Maggie—and I know—I know—it is sure and certain to come right—very soon, Maggie."

Indeed Mary had arrived at a very clear decision. As soon as she was able, she intended to write to Allan and bring him to Drumloch to meet Maggie. She would make a meeting for the lovers that should amply repay the one broken for her sake. She knew now, that as Allan had been in Pittenloch, he had returned from America, and that he was still faithful to his love. She felt certain that there would be a letter from him among her Accumulated mail matter. Perhaps he had even called at Drumloch. The next time she was alone with Mrs. Leslie she asked if her cousin had been to Drumloch yet. "He was expected home about this time," she said, "and I should not like him to be turned from the door, even if I am ill."

"I heard that he had gone to Riga, Miss Campbell. Your uncle has been no just well, and it was thought to be the right thing for Mr. Allan to go and be company hame for him. There are letters nae doubt from baith o' them, but you willna be let meddle wi' the like o' thae things, yet awhile."

The winter set in early, and cold, and Mary's recovery was retarded by it. At the beginning of November she had not left her own rooms. But at that time her seclusion was mostly a precautionary measure. She had regained much of her old sprightliness, and was full of plans for the entertainments she intended to give as soon as she was perfectly well. "I am going to introduce you to Glasgow society at the New Year, Maggie," she said, "and I can imagine the sensation you will cause—the wonder—the inquiries—the inventions—and the lovers you will be sure to have! I think we shall enjoy it all, very much."

Maggie thought so, also. She was delighted with the fine new costumes being made for Mary and herself. The discussions about them, their fitting on, their folding away in the great trunks destined for Blytheswood Square, helped to pass the dreary days of the chill damp autumn very happily. One morning early in November Mary got a letter which gave her a great pleasure. "Uncle John is coming tonight, Maggie!" she cried. "Oh how glad I shall be to see him! We have both been to the door of death, and come back to life. How much we shall have to say to each other! Now I want you to dress yourself with the greatest care to-night, Maggie; you must be ready when I have exhausted words on your beauty, to step into his presence, and make words seem the poorest kind of things."

"What shall I wear?"

"Wear? Well, I think that dark brown satin is the most becoming of your dinner gowns—and dress your hair behind very high and loosely, with the carved shell comb—and those long brown curls, Maggie, push them behind your pretty ears; your face does not need them, and behind the ears they are bewitching."

Maggie laughed. She liked handsome dress, and it pleased her to be called handsome. She had indeed a good many womanly foibles, and was perhaps the more loveable for them. Dr. Johnson thought that a man who did not care for his dinner would not care for more important things; and it is certain that a woman who does not care for her dress is very likely to be a mental, perhaps also a moral, sloven.

Mary had hoped to signalize her delight in her uncle's visit by going down stairs to dine with him; but the day was unusually damp and cold, and her proposal met with such strong opposition that she resigned the idea. She dressed herself early in a pretty chamber gown of pink silk trimmed with minever; but in spite of the rosy color, the pallor of her sickness and long confinement was very perceptible. The train that was to bring John Campbell reached Ayr at four o'clock, and Maggie saw the carriage hurrying off to meet it, as she went to her room to dress for dinner. In less than an hour there was the stir of an arrival, and John Campbell's slow, heavy tread upon the stairs, and Mary's cry of joy as she met him in the upper corridor.

Maggie went on dressing with an increase of happiness; she felt Mary's pleasure as if it were her own. With a natural and exquisite taste, she raised high the loose soft coils of her nut-brown hair; and let fall in long and flowing grace the rich folds of nut-brown satin that robed her. She wore no ornaments of any kind, except a cluster of white asters in her belt, which Mary had given her from those brought for her own use.

She was just fastening them there when Mary entered. "You lovely woman!" she cried enthusiastically. "I think you must look like Helen of Troy. I have a mind to call you Helen. Have you reflected that you will have to be Uncle John's host? So before I take you to him, go down stairs, dear, and see if the table is pretty, and all just as I should like to have it for him. And if there are no flowers on the table, Maggie, go to the conservatory and cut the loveliest you can find—only if you stay too long, I shall send Uncle John to find you."

She passed out nodding and smiling and looking unusually beautiful and happy. Maggie found that the dinner table was splendidly laid, but it was, as she expected, destitute of flowers, because it had always been either Mary's or her own pleasure to cut them. The conservatory was an addition to the large double drawing-rooms on the opposite side of the hall, and she was rather astonished to see that the fires had been lighted in them. At the entrance of the conservatory she stood a moment, wondering if she could reach a superb white camellia, shining above her like a star among its dark green leaves. As she hesitated, Allan opened the door, and walked straight to the hearth. He did not see Maggie, and her first impulse was to retreat into the

shadow of some palms beside her. A slight movement made him turn. She stood there smiling, blushing, waiting.

“Maggie!”

The cry was one of utter wonder and delight. “Oh, my love! My love! My love!” He held her in his arms. She was his forever now. “Not death itself shall part us again,” he whispered, with that extravagance of attachment which is permissible to lovers. For what lover ever spoke reasonably? The lover that can do so is not a lover; he is fathoms below that diviner atmosphere whose language is, of necessity, as well as choice, foolishness to the uninitiated.

Allan had been sent by Mary for some book she affected to particularly want. He forgot the book, as Maggie forgot the flowers, and in half-an-hour, John Campbell was sent after his dilatory son. Old men do not like surprises as well as lovers, and Mary had thought it best to prepare him for the meeting that was close at hand. He had felt a little fear of the shock he was sure he would have to bear as graciously as possible. But pleasant shocks do not hurt, and John Campbell’s spirits rose as soon as his eyes fell upon the beautiful woman standing by his son’s side. He came forward with smiles, he welcomed Maggie, and called her “daughter” with a genuine pride and tenderness.

Very soon he reminded the lovers that he was an old man who thought highly of his dinner; he gave Maggie his arm and led her into the dining-room. There were no flowers on the table, and the meats were a little out of time and past savor, but Allan and Maggie were oblivious of such trifles, and John Campbell was too polite, and perhaps also too sympathetic to remind them that they were still in Ayrshire, and that Ayrshire was not Eden. And though Mary had not been able to witness the happiness she had planned, she felt it. It seemed to pervade the house like some quicker atmosphere. She had even a better appetite, and the servants also seemed conscious of a new joy, and indefinable promise of festivity—something far more subtle than a bird in the air had carried the matter to every heart.

After dinner, while John Campbell was talking to Maggie, Allan went to see Mary. She was still on her sofa, a little tired, but very happy and very pretty. He knelt down by her side, and kissed her, as he whispered, “Oh Mary! My sister Mary! How good you have been to me! It is wonderful! I cannot thank you, dear, as I want to. I am so happy, so happy, Mary; and it is your doing.”

“I know how glad and grateful you are, Allan. The work was its own reward. I love Maggie. She has far more than repaid me. My dear Allan, you are going to be a very happy man. Now you may go to Maggie, and tell Uncle John that I expect him to sit with me to-night.”

They smiled gladly at each other as they parted, and yet as soon as the door was shut between them they sighed. In the very height of our happiness why do we often sigh? Is it because the soul pities itself for joys so fleeting that they are like the shadow of a bird “that wings the skies and with whose flight the shadow flies.” For even to-morrow there would be some change, however slight. Allan knew that never again could he taste just this night’s felicity. And blessed are they who take God’s gift of joy every hour as it comes, and who do not postpone the happiness of this life unto the next one.

Early in the morning Allan went to see David. He had removed from the Candleriggs, and he found him in comparatively handsome rooms in Monteith terrace. He rose to meet Allan with a troubled look, and said at once, “I have no more information, Mr. Campbell. I am very sorry for the fact.”

“David, I have found Maggie! I am come to take you to see her.”

“Why has she not come to see me? I think that is her duty, and I’m no inclined to excuse her from it. She has given me many a troubled hour, Mr. Campbell, and she ought to say some word anent it.”

“There are always whys and wherefores, David, that cannot be explained in a minute or two. She has been living with my cousin, Miss Campbell of Drumloch. I think that circumstance will warrant your faith in Maggie without further explanations at present.” Allan was so happy, he could not be angry; not even when David still hesitated, and spoke of lectures to be attended, and translations yet unfinished.

“Come, come,” he said persuasively; “shut your books, David, and let’s away to the ‘Banks and Braes o’ bonnie Doon’. Miss Campbell and Maggie are both anxious to see you. We cannot be quite happy without you, David.”

Then smiling, yet half-reluctant, he went to his room to dress. When he returned—hat and gloves in hand—Allan could not but look at him with a little amazement. His suit of black broadcloth was cut in the strictest ecclesiastical fashion, and admirably set off the dusky pallor and fine stature of the young student. Every minor detail was in keeping. His linen band and cuffs were fine and white, the fit of his shoes and gloves perfect, the glossy excellence of his hat beyond a cavil.

“I am at your service now, Mr. Campbell, though let me tell you, I think I am giving-in to Maggie more than I ought to, sir.”

“David, we are going to be brothers, and I am proud and glad of it. Suppose you drop the Mr. Campbell and the sir—I think it is quite time.”

“There is a measure of respect in the word sir; and I wouldna care to drop it altogether with my nearest and dearest; I like it for myself whiles. But I am fain of the brotherhood, Allan; and I will give you with all my heart a brother’s love and honor.”

Then David surrendered himself to the pleasure of the hour. He had never been in that part of Scotland before, but he knew every historical and literary landmark better than Allan did. And when he drove through the fine part of Drumloch, and came in sight of the picturesque and handsome pile of buildings, he said with a

queer smile, "The Promotors don't flit for a bare shelter, Maggie found a bonnie hiding place."

He was quite as much delighted and astonished at his sister's appearance and improvement, but he did not express it. He kissed her kindly, but his first words had the spirit of the reproof he thought she well deserved: "Maggie Promoter, you did not behave well to me yonder day I sent you home, as it was my duty to do. If the Lord hadna undertaken the guiding o' you, you wad hae made a sair mistake, my lassie! But I'll say nae mair, seeing that He has brought gude out o' evil and right out o' wrang."

"I am sorry, Davie, very sorry, but—"

"That is enough. And you are like to do weel to yourself; and we may baith say, that He has aye carried the purse for us, ever since the day He took our father and bread-winner from us. And though you have been whiles a sair thought to me, yet now you are going to be an honor and a rejoicing and I am a very proud and happy brother this day, Maggie."

John Campbell was still at Drumloch, and David and he "sorted" from the first moment of their meeting. They had ecclesiastical opinions in common, especially in regard to the "Freedom of the Kirk" from all lay supremacy;—a question then simmering in every Scotch heart, and destined a little later to find its solution in the moral majesty of the "Free Kirk Movement." David's glowing speech stirred him, as speech always stirs the heart, when it interprets persuasion and belief ripened into faith: and faith become a passionate intuition. That he was the master spirit of the company was shown by the fact that he kept the conversation in his own groove, and at his own will. Mrs. Leslie made him her deepest courtesy, and the old butler threw into all his services an amount of respect only given by him to his spiritual masters and teachers.

And David took all with that unconscious adaptation of attention which indicates those born to authority and to honor. When asked after dinner if he would pay his respects to the mistress of Drumloch, he rose calmly and with a real unconcern. He had sat with doctors of divinity, and faced learned professors with a thesis or an exegesis that touched the roots of the most solemn propositions; an interview with a lady a little younger than himself was not likely to disturb his equanimity. For he was yet in that callow stage of sentient being, which has not been inspired and irradiated by "the light that lies in woman's eyes."

That night as they sat together Maggie's and Allan's marriage was discussed. "They want to be married very quietly," said Mary laughing. "Did you ever hear such nonsense, Uncle John? There has not been a wedding feast in Drumloch for seventy years. We will grace the old rooms, and handsel all the new ones with the blythest bridal Ayrshire has seen in a century. Don't you agree with me, Mr. Promoter?"

Certainly Mr. Promoter did; and the kirk also, he said, had aye favored a public binding of the sacred tie, not to go further back to the wedding feast at Cana, honored by His presence and provided for by His hand.

"And Maggie shall walk in silk attire; and we will dress the rooms in flags and flowers, and lay a great feast, and call friends and neighbors from afar. For we have the bonniest bride to show them that ever 'stepped stately east or west from Drumloch's bonnie braes'."

CHAPTER XV. — WOO'D AND MARRIED AND A'.

*"My love is fair, I could not he'p but choose him
My love is good, I could not bear to lose him.
My love is wise, oh, what could I refuse him?"*

*"And Love, our light at night and shade at noon,
Lulls us to rest with songs, and turns away
All shafts of shelterless, tumultuous day
Like the moon's growth, his face gleams through his tune,
And as soft waters warble to the moon
Our answering spirits chime one roundelay"*

A "blythesome bridal" is a traditional Scotch law, not to be lightly broken by either rich or poor. Its non-observance usually implied some sorrowful element, and Mary's national, as well as natural desire, as therefore toward an elaborate festal ceremony. As soon as this intention was put into words their very echo seemed to be a prelude to the coming joy.

The old, still house acquired, no one could very well tell how, an air of expectation and pleasant hurry. Guest chambers, that had not been used for many years, were prepared for occupation.

The ceremony was to take place on New Year's Day; so that the lovers were to date a fresh life from a fresh year—a year in which they had shed no tears, nor feared, nor been in any strait or disappointment. They would write upon its first page their marriage joy; and in order to do so would not need to wipe out one sorrowful memory. In the meantime they dwelt in a land of delights. Wonderful things happened to Maggie

every day. John Campbell never wearied of sending her presents. "She is my daughter," he said, "and what for will I not send her the plenishing for her bridal?" Allan gave her jewels. Mary ransacked her antique "awmries" and cabinets for the laces of by-gone Campbell beauties; and spent her sovereigns lavishly on modern fairy-like webs for the wedding garments.

It would have been unlovely and unwomanly in Maggie not to be happy; not to be a little excited, not perhaps, sometimes, to have been a little trying. For a great happiness is often depressing to those who have to witness its exultation, prolonged day after day. Ordinary mortals feel outside of it, and it strikes them with a vague, but certain, fear. Mary often said to herself—"I would not be so silly about any one as Maggie is about Allan. I hope if ever I do fall in love, a measure of common sense will be granted me."

Still people usually show a singular patience and tolerance with lovers. The old have "been in Arcadia," and have tender memories of it. The young have a wistful anticipation, a sympathetic curiosity. At any rate, the courtship was only to last six weeks, and Mary determined, however provoking the engaged pair might be, that she would put all down to the fact that lovers believe themselves to be a sublimated couple, quite out of the community of ordinary mortals; and being so happy and self-satisfied with themselves, they could not understand why every one else was not in the same supreme condition.

And Mary Campbell was right; for if love is to have anything like the place in real life, that it has in poetry—if we have any faith in that mighty ruler of hearts and lives, a genuine love affair, we ought not to dim the glory of marriage by denying it this sojourn in a veritable land of enchantment; for in its atmosphere many fine feelings blossom, that never would have birth at all, if the niceties and delicacies of courtship were superseded by the levelling rapidity of marriage. There is time for writing and reading love letters, and both tongue and pen get familiar with affectionate and noble sentiments. We may admit that love-making is an unreasonable and impracticable piece of business; but in this very circumstance all its charm lies. Love delights in asserting the incredible, and in believing the impossible. But it is precisely in the depths of this delicious foolishness that the heart attains its noblest growth. There may be many grander hopes, many calmer and more reasonable joys in store for us, but,

*"There's nothing half so sweet in life
As Love's young dream."*

At length the wonderful day arrived. It had been well prepared for, and all was in readiness. There was no hurry, no fret, no uncertainty. Early in the morning men began to hang the old battle flags and armor of the Campbells of Drumloch and to adorn the rooms with myrtle and fresh flowers. It was not the fashion then to turn the house into a conservatory, but the effect of the scattered groups of flowers, and bridal wreaths, was far more festal in character.

At four o'clock the party were all assembled, and in response to some understood signal, the clergy grouped themselves at one end of the large parlors. Then Allan entered at the other. With him was a minister in silk cassock and white lawn bands. It was Dr. Balmuto. Maggie followed, leaning upon John Campbell's arm. An involuntary stir, a murmur of admiration, greeted her. She was dressed in a robe of ivory-tinted silk, interwoven with threads of pure silver. Exquisite lace veiled her throat and arms; opals and diamonds glowed and glinted among it. Her fine hair was beautifully arranged, and in her hand she carried the small Testament upon which she would seal her vows.

Even David Promoter responded in some measure to the influence of the hour. Not often did he permit himself to lose sight of the great object of his existence; but this was an "occasion," when he felt that he might lawfully put his sister, and his natural interest in her, before other hopes and aims. And this day, he was really proud of Maggie. She had done well unto herself; she had justified all his own intentions toward her; she had allied him with one of the best families in the west of Scotland. He kissed her with a tender approval, and reminded her, as it was indeed his duty, how good God had been to her, and how, He had brought her also, unto her "desired haven."

He gave her this short homily, as he stood before her in Mary's little parlor, just ere the wedding service began. Maggie listened to him with a touching gratitude and humility. In her eyes David was something more than a brother. He had laid his hand upon the altar and was set apart for its ministering. And he looked, every inch of him, the priest of his people. For David had always considered the proper habit of his order a subject worthy of his careful attention; and on this auspicious occasion he was dressed with the utmost care. Even among the varied and splendid uniforms of the military officers present, David Promoter's rich and sombre vestment was very noticeable. No one could deny that he was a singularly handsome and distinguished-looking man. It was upon his arm Mary Campbell entered, and her delicate beauty, enhanced by a white robe of some diaphanous material, made a telling contrast to the young minister's tall form, and black raiment.

Maggie, on her father-in-law's arm, was but a few steps in advance of them. They saw Allan turn and watch her coming to him, and the light on his face transfigured it. This was the woman he had been born to meet; the woman that was the completion of his own nature. Once more he caught at a venture the beautiful eyes through which had come their first recognition; and he saw that they met his full of glad confidence and happy expectation.

Dr. Balmuto's charge was a very solemn and a very loving one. The tears were on his cheeks as Maggie stood before him. He spoke to her as gently as if she were his own daughter. He bade her look forward to the joyful duties of her lot. He laid her hand in Allan's hand with a blessing. Then from every lip arose the triumphant strains of the one hundred and twenty-eighth psalm—the happy, hopeful wedding psalm—and with the gracious benediction, Allan and Maggie turned with smiling faces toward their future.

The first months of their married life were to be spent in Continental travel. Maggie was to see all the

famous places, which, as yet, were only names to her, and Allan was to see them again through her eyes. They went away in the gay, splendid fashion of the time, in an open landau drawn by four horses, with outriders. The guests crowded the hall and the open door; the servants gathered below them; the tenants lined the road to the small station which they had selected for their starting point. And thus in a very triumph of joy they started upon their long life journey.

The festivities of the bridal were continued for many days, both in the castle and among the servants; and during them the young couple were abundantly discussed. One of these discussions, occurring between the factor of the estate and Miss Campbell's maid, is worth repeating, as it indicated a possible motive in the reticent little lady's life with which her friends were not familiar.

"Wha are these Promoters?" asked the factor.

"They are a Fife family."

"Wasna that handsome young minister her brother?"

"He was that."

"He seems to hae set his heart on the heiress o' Drumloch."

"Captain Manners has the same notion."

"The minister will win."

"The minister will *not* win. *Not he!*"

The words were so emphatically snapped out that they were followed by a distinct silence.

"Jessie," the factor said, "you are vera positive; but if there is one thing mair unreliable than anither, it is a woman's fancy. The minister is a braw lad."

"I ken ane that's worth twenty o' him, ay, I'll say, fifty o' him."

"You're no surely meaning that young Glasca' lawyer that comes here, whiles."

"You're no surely meaning to pass an insult on Miss Mary, factor. I'm thinking o' my Lord Forfar, and nae ither man to match him. He would kiss my lady's little shoon, and think the honor too much for king or kaiser. And for a' their plumes, and gold, and scarlet, the rattle o' their swords, and the jingle o' their spurs, there wasna an officer at the bridal I'd name in the same breath wi' Lord Lionel Forfar."

"But the minister"—

"*Houts!* What does a bonnie lady, young and rich and beautiful, want wi' a minister body, unless it be to marry her to some ither lad?"

"You're for Forfar because he is Fife."

"You're right—partly. I'm Fife mysel'. A' my gude common sense comes frae Fife. But for that matter, the minister comes from the auld 'kingdom' too."

They were talking in a little room adjoining the servants' dining hall. The factor was smoking, Jessie stood on the stone hearth, tapping her foot restlessly upon it.

"What's the man thinking o'?" she exclaimed after a little. "One would say you were at a funeral instead o' a wedding."

"Thoughts canna always be sent here or there, Jessie. I was wondering what would come o' Drumloch if my lady took the Fife road. It would gie me sair een to see its bonnie braes in the market."

"Think shame o' yoursel' for the vera thought—

*The Campbells will sit in Drumloch's halls,
Till the crown be lost and the kingdom falls'*

When the lady goes to her fate, there's a laird waiting, I trow, to take her place; and weel will he fill it."

"You'll be meaning Mr. John Campbell?"

"Wha else? He was born in the house, and please God, he'll die in its shelter. If my lady goes to Forfar Castle what will she want wi' Drumloch? A good sum o' lying siller will be better for her, and she would rather bide Miss Campbell a' the days o' her life, than take the hame o' the Campbells to strange folk."

"I wish her weel always, but I'm no against the thought o' serving John Campbell again. Women are whiles vera trying in the way o' business. There's naething but arithmetic needed in business, but they will bring a' sorts o' im-prac-ti-ca-ble elements into it likewise."

"I hope you mean naething wrang by that big word, factor."

"Nae wrang, nae wrang, Jessie. Miss Campbell is easy to do for, and she has bonnie ladylike ways wi' her; but I'd like fine to see that grand, grey-headed auld gentleman laird o' the place. He'd bring a deal o' respect with him."

"He would that; and folks would hear o' Drumloch in London; for Miss Campbell said to that Glasca' law body, that her uncle would gie up the business to his son Allan, and go into parliament himsel'—goodness

kens they need some douce, sensible men there. Hear to the fiddles! I feel them in the soles o' my feet! I never could sit still when 'Moneymusk' was tingling in my ear chambers. Come awa', factor, and let us hae a reel thegither!"

"Wi' a' my heart, Jessie. And though I am on the wrang side o' fifty, there's none has a better spring than I hae." He had laid down his pipe, and taken her hand as he spoke, and tripping and swaying to the enchanting strains they went into the dancing hall together.

"Nae wonder the fiddles made us come, it's the gypsy band, factor;" and Jessie pointed out five or six dark, handsome fellows with tumbled black hair, and half-shut gleaming eyes, who had ranged themselves with sullen shyness and half-rebellious order at the upper end of the room. But how wondrously their slim, supple fingers touched the bow, or the strings! They played like magicians, and wrought the slow, grave natures before them up to a very riot of ravishing motion. Faster and faster flew the bounding, sliding feet; the dancers being stimulated by the musicians, and the musicians driven to a passion of excitement by those exhilarating cries, and those snappings of the fingers, through which the canny Scot relieves the rapture of his delicious dancing.

But mere physical delight never satisfies even the humblest gathering of this douce nationality. In a few hours the fiddles were stopped, and the table set out, and the great bowl of wedding punch brought in, to brighten wit, and song, and story. It was then very near the close of the day, and with it came Mary Campbell to give the bridal toast. She had been dancing with her own friends, and her cheeks were like a delicate flame, and her eyes like twin stars. Never had she looked so beautiful, as when standing amid the standing crowd, she raised the tiny glass above her head, and said in the sudden stillness—

*"Here's to the bonnie Bride!
Long may she live! and happy may she be!"*

Then hand clasped hand, and glass touched glass, and heart touched heart, and from every lip rang out, again and again, the loving, joyful invocation—

*"Here's to the bonnie Bride!
Long may she live! and happy may she be!"*

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK A DAUGHTER OF FIFE ***

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