

LAURA EVERINGHAM

OR THE
HIGHLANDERS OF GLENORA
BY JAMES GRANT.



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BY

JAMES GRANT,

AUTHOR OF "THE ROMANCE OF WAR," "THE AIDE-DE-CAMP,"
ETC. ETC.

"Ruin's wheel has driven o'er us,
Not a hope dare now attend;
The world wide is all before us,
But a world without a friend!"

Strathallan's Lament.

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THE HIGHLANDERS OF GLEN ORA.

CHAPTER I.

THE FOSTER-BROTHERS.

It was after sunset in the month of April three years ago.

The hills of the Western Highlands were still tipped with a golden gleam, but the deep and savage hollows of Glen Ora were gloomy and full of dark shadows. Still crowned with the snow of last winter, above it towered Ben Ora, beneath whose mighty scalp the giant peaks of the north and west were dwindled down to little hills; for among those stupendous mountains the eye becomes so accustomed to their colossal proportions, that all just ideas of size and distance are lost. At its base spread one of those vast tracts of brown or purple heath so common in the Scottish Highlands, overspread by a wilderness of stones, and torn by ghastly ravines from which the mist of downward torrents rose. The sides of these were tufted by those black whin bushes, the introduction of which tradition ascribes to the hunting Stuarts, as a cover for their game.

On the western shoulder of Ben Ora, a ridge of riven and naked rocks, resembling the skeleton of a

mountain range, stood a herd of deer, with all their proud antlers visible against the clear bright flush of the sunset sky.

Two men were observing them from the rugged bank of one of the watercourses, in which they were half hidden. One carried a fishing-rod, and the other a gun.

He with the rod was a tall, stout, and well-made lad of some twenty years, with dark-blue eyes, curly brown hair, and a sunburnt visage; he wore a grey shooting-jacket and kilt, a sporran of badger-skin, and a heather-coloured bonnet. His companion was a few years older, larger in form, brawny, thickset, and strong as a Highland bull, and his knees, where shown by his tattered kilt and well-worn hose, of no colour known in nature, were almost as hairy as those of the same animal. He wore the usual coarse blue jacket and bonnet of a Highland peasant.

His hair, beard, and whiskers, which grew all matted in a curly mass, were black, almost to that deep tint which seems blue when touched by the light; his eyes were dark, restless, keen, and sparkling; his nose somewhat short and saucy, but his face, which was browned to the hue of mahogany by exposure to the weather, was thoughtful, stern, anxious, and at times even haggard in expression. Save his gun and skene-dhu, he had no weapon, though his aspect and bearing were rough and wild as those of any Celtic bandit we have read of in romance; but then his figure was a model of manly beauty, symmetry, and grace.

The first personage with the rod was Allan Mac Innon, MYSELF, and the dark and handsome man was my foster-brother—my *co-dhalta*—Black Mac Ian—usually named by us Callum Dhu, and on this eventful evening we were observing a party of five English tourists or visitors, who were somewhat rashly (as they were without a guide) urging their shaggy

shelties up the side of Ben Ora, to obtain a view of the scenery by moonlight.

This party consisted of two fair and laughing English girls, wearing broad brown straw hats; and three gentlemen clad in those peculiar coats and tartan caps, without which no Sassenach deems himself eligible to pass the Highland frontier.

‘Callum,’ said I, ‘shall I not warn them to beware?’

‘It would ill become your father’s son to run after *their* tails, like a keeper or gilly,’ said he, grasping my arm angrily, as we spoke in Gaelic, to give the original of which would fidget my friend the printer.

‘Callum, they are not more than half-a-mile off now.’

‘Oh, what a pity it is, that the half-mile was not a thousand, ay, or ten thousand! The fires that may be extinguished this summer on many a hearth in Glen Ora would burn all the brighter perhaps in winter.’

‘Not in the least, Callum; for if we had not one truculent tyrant over us,’ said I, ‘we would be certain to have another.’

‘Aich ay; for the Mac Innons of Glen Ora are doomed men! and—’

‘See, see,’ I exclaimed, ‘they have almost reached the Craig-na-tuirc, and if they attempt to descend after nightfall, something terrible will happen.’

‘Let it happen: if it is their fate, can we avert it?’ said Callum, with a dark scowl in his eyes which sparkled in the last flush of the west; ‘what matter is it to you, Allan Mac Innon? Has not this man—this Horace Everingham, Baronet, and so forth, who bought the fair patrimony your father’s brother wasted in all manner of riotous living—told you coldly, when begging a six months’ mercy for your sick mother, and for the two-and-thirty poor families in the glen, that he intrusted all such *petty* affairs to

his factor, (that mangy Lowland cur, Ephraim Snaggs, with his Bible phrases and pious quotations,) and what said *he*? That the new proprietor had resolved to turn the glen into a deer forest—a hunting field—and that whether the rents were forthcoming or not, the people must go! That Canada was a fine place for such as they, and that hampers of foreign game would soon replace them. The curse of heaven be on his foreign game, say I! When the Queen wants men to recruit the ranks of the Black Watch, of the Gordon Highlanders, and the Ross-shire Buffs, will she borrow the contents of the Lowlander's hamper? Let these moonlight visitors go over the rocks if they will—let Loch Ora receive their bodies and the devil their souls, for what matters it to you, Mac Innon, or to me?’

‘True, true,’ said I, bitterly, ‘but there are two ladies with them—Laura, the daughter of Sir Horace, and her friend.’

‘They, at least, are kind to the poor people, and gave many a pound to the women of Glentworth, when they were expatriated last year; yet evil comes over every stranger who crosses Ben Ora.’

‘A spirit is said to haunt it,’ said I.

‘Would to heaven a spirit haunted the glen, and kept out all but those whose right comes not from paper or from parchment—but from the hand of God!’

‘But the women, Callum?’

‘Co-dhalta, be not a soft-hearted fool,’ was the pettish response; ‘who cared for *our* women, when the sheriff, Mac Fee, with his police and soldiers, came here and tore down the huts, and fired through the thatch to force the people out? Who cared for old bedridden Aileen Mac Donuil, whose four sons died with eight hundred of our Cameronians in India, and who was shot through the body, and died miserably on the wet hill side three days after? And so,

forth were they all driven to the shore by the baton and bayonet—the old and the young, the strong man and the infant, the aged, the frail, and the women almost in labour—to be crammed on board the great ship, the *Duchess*, and taken to America, like slaves from Africa, and why? Because the land that gave corn and potatoes to the people was wanted to fatten the grouse and red deer, and thus were they driven forth from their fathers' holdings, their fathers' homes and graves; so Allan, believe me, your sympathy for the strangers who are now on the hill, is all moonshine in the water. Ha! ha! something always happens to those who go up Ben Ora after nightfall. You remember the story of Alaster Grant, the Captain Dhu, or Black Alexander from Urquhart? He was a frightfully immoral character, savage and fierce, and was said to have done dreadful things in the Indian wars, fighting, plundering, and sparing neither man, woman, nor child. Well, this dissolute soldier was shooting with some of his wild companions from Fort William, about a year after Waterloo. They spent a night on Ben Ora, and all that night the lightning played about its scalp. Next morning a shepherd—old Alisdair Mac Gouran—found their hut torn to pieces; the whole party, to all appearance, strangled, their gun-barrels twisted like corkscrews, and the Black Captain's body torn limb from limb, and strewn all around; but whether by a thunderbolt or the devil, no man knew, though many averred it must have been the latter. Six months ago, I watched an Englishman or a Lowlander, (which, I neither know nor care,) go up the Craig-na-tuirc, and he never more came down; but three months after, his bones, or little more, were found at the mouth of the Uisc Dhu, with his travelling knapsack and sketch-book close by; for six long miles the Lammas floods had swept them from the spot where he must have perished. Two others went up in October, and in ascending the

mountain were singing merrily; but the snow came down that night, and hid the path; the cold was bitter, and the deer were driven down to the clachan in the glen. Next day we found the strangers stiff enough, and piled a cairn to mark the spot. I warned another traveller, a Scotsman too, from the Braes of Angus, against ascending the Ben alone! He, too, went up laughing, and came down no more. A week or two after I was standing on the brow of the Craig-na-tuirc, and saw a gathering of the ravens in the corrie below. I heard their exulting croak, and the flap of their dusky wings; and there, in the moss of the wet ravine, we found the traveller's body wedged up to the neck, and his bare skull divested of eyes, nose, and hair, picked white and clean by these birds of evil omen. Then we all know the story of the keeper that was gored by the white stag, on the night your father died.'

'All this I know well enough,' said I, 'and hence my anxiety for the two ladies, who are now in the dusk, ascending that dangerous precipice.'

'Who pities our women—yet they are starving?'

'God pities them.'

'He alone!' responded Callum, lifting his tattered bonnet at the name; 'yet my poor mother died in my arms of sheer hunger, and Snaggs, the factor, mocked me at her funeral, because I had a piper who played the march of Gil Chrìosd before her coffin; but I heard him with scorn, for I knew that my mother—she who nursed *you*, Allan Mac Innon, had now that inheritance of which not even her Grace of Sutherland, or the great Lord of Breadalbane, can deprive the poor Highlander—a grave on the mountain side, and a home among the angels in heaven.'

The words of my foster-brother raised a momentary glow of indignation in my breast; and turning away from the mountain, we began to descend into the glen in the twilight, and I strove to think no more about

the strangers or their fate, but in vain, for Laura Everingham, with all her pretty winning ways, was still before me, and her voice was in my ear.

We had met repeatedly in our mutual rides, rambles, and wanderings, and the impression she made upon me, when acting as her guide to the old ruined chapels, towers, and burial-places, the high cascades, and deep corries of the Ora, and other solemn scenes of nature, with which our district abounded, was lasting, pure, and deep. I was learning to love her, more dearly than I dared to tell, for poverty—crushing, grinding poverty—like a mountain weighed upon my heart and tongue; yet Laura knew my secret—at least I hoped so; pure devotion and true tenderness cannot remain long concealed; a woman soon discovers them by a mysterious intuition, and as Laura (knowing this) neither repulsed nor shunned me, was I not justified in believing myself not altogether indifferent to her?

Time will tell. ‘Happy age,’ says some Italian writer, ‘when a look, the rustle of a garment—a flower—a mere nothing, suffice to make the youthful heart overflow with torrents of joy!’

The severity of Sir Horace, and the pride, petulance, and hostility of my mother, of whom more in good time, had partly estranged us of late; but Laura had repeatedly said,

‘If I knew your mother, Allan, I am sure she would learn to love me.’

‘I know not, Miss Everingham, how any one could help loving you!’ was my reply, and I trembled at my own temerity.

One word more for Callum Dhu, and he and my reader must be acquainted for life.

His grandfather was that noble and heroic Mac Ian, who, after the defeat of Prince Charles, watched over him with matchless fidelity for weeks, concealing him in the mountains at the risk of his life, and robbing

for his support while his own children were starving, and though he knew that 30,000*l.* were set upon the head of the royal fugitive. This poor man was afterwards, when in extreme old age, hanged at Inverness, for 'lifting' a sheep; but, though impelled by hunger to borrow subsistence from the folds of the wealthy, he had scrupulously avoided the possessions of the poor; and before death, took off his bonnet, to 'thank the blessed God that he had never betrayed his trust, never injured the poor, nor refused to share his crust with the stranger, the needy, or the fatherless.'

This poor sheepstealer died like a Christian and a hero, and had in youth been one of those Highland warriors whose more than Spartan faith and truth a late pitiful historian has dared to stigmatize as mere ignorance of the value of gold. Under the same circumstances, we presume, this Scottish writer would have known to a penny the value set upon the head of his fugitive guest.

With his blood and spirit, Callum Dhu had inherited many of the wild ideas and primitive Celtic virtues of his ancestor, as the reader will see when they become better acquainted.

CHAPTER II.

THE FEUDAL LORDS OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

TURNING our steps homeward, after a day of wandering and fishing, we traversed the Braes of Glen Ora, a wild and desolate scene, such as Horatio Mac Culloch would love to paint, tufted by broom and whin; torn by savage watercourses, all yellow marl and gravel, swept by the foaming torrent, or jagged by

ghastly rocks, silence on every hand, and a deep shadow over all, save where a golden gleam of light that shot between the black and distant peaks of the west, tipped the points of the purple heather with fire, and edged the scattered rocks with the last glow of the sun that had set.

Here and there, throughout this desolate tract, on which the shadows of night were descending, were blacker spots, that marked where, in the preceding year, the houses of nearly fifty crofters had been levelled or burned. No tongue was required to tell *us* the terrible story of legal wrong, and worse than feudal tyranny inflicted on the unresisting poor. The blackened rafters were lying on every hand among the long grass, and thrown far asunder; the humble walls were half levelled and overgrown by weeds, like the hearths around which generations had sat, and told or sung of the past memories of the Gaël and the kindly chiefs of other times, in the long nights of winter, when Ben Ora was mantled by snow, and the frozen cascade hung over the rocks, white as the beard of Ossian. Here a currant-bush, or there an apple-tree, still marked amid the weeds and heather where the garden of the peasant had been. Elsewhere the glen was yet dotted by little patches of corn and potatoes, all growing wild; but where were those who had sown and planted them?

Driven from their native land to make way for sheep, or grouse, or deer, and packed in ships, like slaves for the Cuban market, the old people of the glen, the women and children, were pining on the banks of the Susquehanna; while the young and able were forced by starvation, or lured by false promises, into the ranks of the *Sutherland Highlanders*, and were now away to fight the Russians in the East. Thus it is that the game-laws, centralization, wilful neglect, and maladministration, reduce the people of the glens to misery, starvation, and inability to pay the exor

bitant rents demanded for their little farms; then their dwellings are demolished, and themselves expelled, that one vast game preserve may be made of the land which has given to the British service nearly ninety of its finest battalions of infantry.

“Clanchattan is broken, the Seaforth bends low,

The sun of Clan Ronald is sinking in labour,

Glencoe and Clan Donquhy, what are they now?

And where is bold Keppoch, the Lord of Lochaber?

All gone with the House they supported, laid low!

While the Dogs of the South their bold life-blood were
lapping,

Trod down by a fierce and a merciless foe;

The brave are all gone, with the Stuarts of Appin!”

‘My God!’ exclaimed Callum, with deep emotion, as he looked around him, with a fierce and saddened eye, ‘who now could think this place had given three hundred swordsmen to Glenfinnon?’

‘And sent two hundred with my father to Egypt?’ added I.

‘Better had he and they stayed at home; for the Mac Innons might yet have brooked the land their fathers sprang from.’

Callum Dhu felt, as he spoke, like a true Celt—believing that our ancestors sprang from the soil; *i. e.* were the old and original race, without predecessors.

My father, the youngest of the two sons of Alaster Mac Innon, of Glen Ora, was an officer of the 42nd Highlanders, who served under Abercromby in Egypt and Wellington in Spain. His elder brother belonged, unfortunately, to the Scots Fusilier Guards, and amid the dissipation of a London life, ‘in rivaling the follies of his equals in birth and superiors in fortune,’ soon wasted his small but ancient patrimony, which, though it could once bring 600 swordsmen to the king’s host, in more modern times did not produce more than 600*l.* yearly rent.

Glen Ora was not entailed, thus its broad acres of heather and whinstone-rock, mountain and torrent,

slipped from under the hands of my gay uncle like a moving panorama; he died early, and the estate passed away to strangers. The old tower was demolished, and a hunting-seat built on its site, by a noble duke, whose family had enriched their pockets, if not their blood, by intermarriage with the tribe of Levi. Then began the war of extermination and expatriation in the north; and while the authoress of "Uncle Tom" was feasted and slavery reviled in the coteries of the Duchess in London, fire, sword, and eviction were enforced by Mr. Snaggs, her factor, in Glen Ora. Thus had things continued until the preceding year, when the estate was purchased by Sir Horace Everingham, of Elton Hall, Yorkshire.

My father had died on service with his regiment in Jamaica, when the yellow flag waved on Up-park Camp, and the Highland bonnets lay as thick in the yard of the pest-stricken barracks as ever they have been on the battle-field; and my mother, a Stuart of Appin, brought me home to Glen Ora, where, with the pension of a captain's widow, she endeavoured to *eke* out a subsistence among our own people, and occupied as a farm, at a small rental, the thatched mansion, which in better times was the jointure-house of our family.

But a ukase had gone forth! The whole country was doomed to become a deer-forest, desolate and wild as when the first Fergus and his bare-kneed Scots landed on its shores, which perhaps no foot had trod since the waters of the Flood had left them.

The men of Glentuire, a sept of our race, had already been swept away, and now those of Glen Ora were to follow.

As a necessary preliminary the rents had been doubled and trebled, until we were incapable of satisfying the rapacity of this alien lord, whose feudal charters gave him a more than imperial power over us. A blight had fallen on our little corn-patches;

several of our sheep had been smothered in the snow, and other troubles and difficulties fell thick and fast upon us. In vain Ephraim Snaggs, the factor, was prayed for mercy; but to seek it from that astute writer to the signet and grim elder of the kirk, was 'to take a bone from a tiger.'

The olden times were gone! For ages unnumbered the Highland landlord deemed that wealth consisted in the number of families, and troops of chubby children who lived upon his lands; farms were divided and subdivided in the fertile glens, until 'every rood of land maintained its man;' and on every lot and rood was a tenant—a hardy soldier, a tiller of the soil, and the father of a sturdy and a faithful race. The laird valued his property not by the rent-roll, but by the number of brave and leal-hearted swordsmen whose homes were made thereon. This was the patriarchal system, old as the world before the Flood; for feudality, with its barbarism, its imaginary rights and slavish tenures, its monkish parchments and legal villany, was unknown in the Highlands until a comparatively recent period; and then, noble was the struggle made against it by the Wallace of the Celtic tribes, John of Moidart, who expelled and slew his nephew Ronald Galda, for accepting from James V. a feudal charter of the lands which belonged to the tribe of which he, Ronald, was the chief. In this spirit, the Highland peasant has a hereditary right to his hut—a right derived from God—but kings have given our feudal lords, even in the nineteenth century, a power over the land on which the hut is built; and at their behest whole villages are demolished, and the people swept away with a heartless barbarity sufficient to call down the lasting vengeance of heaven on the ignoble dukes and canting marquises of the northern and western Highlands!

But to resume:—

After traversing this Serbonian waste for a mile or two, we reached a little cot built under the brow of a rock; large blocks of whinstone, with a few courses of turf above them, bedded in clay, formed the walls; the roof, which was composed of divot, fern, and straw, all firmly tied by ropes of heather, was covered by moss of the richest emerald green. It was a humble dwelling, with a little window of one pane, on each side of a rude door composed of three planks nailed on bars; yet Callum Dhu, who had lived here alone since his mother's death, never closed it at meal-time, without coming forth to the road, in the hospitable old Celtic spirit, to see if a stranger or wayfarer were in sight.

Here we parted, as I resisted all his kind invitations to enter, though the poor fellow had but little to offer me; nor would I permit him to escort me home, as he was weary after a long day of wandering. Callum Mac Ian, the descendant of our hereditary henchman, now supported himself by killing foxes, weasels, and wild cats; for which, as these vermin were very destructive, (especially the former among the sheep,) he received a small sum from each cottarmer in Glen Ora. This contribution, with a little patch of potatoes, cultivated by himself, enabled him to live; but as Callum occasionally took a shot at other quadrupeds which were *not* considered vermin, he was continually in scrapes and broils with the keepers of the duke, the marquis, the laird, and other adjoining potentates, whose ancestors, by force or fraud, had partitioned the land of the Mac Innons, as the powers of Europe did Poland.

‘My love to dear Minnie,’ said he, touching his bonnet in the dark, as I left him; ‘I would she were here with me, for the cottage is dreary since my poor mother went to the place of sleep on the hill; but *achial*, Mac Innon! this is not a time in Glen Ora for marrying or giving in marriage.’

Minnie was my mother's maid, and the object of my foster-brother's boyish attachment. They had long loved each other, and had solemnly plighted their troth by joining hands through the hole of the Clach-na-Greiné; but Snaggs was their evil genius; for with the daily dread of eviction and proscription hanging over him, how could Callum pay the illegally-levied marriage-tax of forty shillings, or bring a wife under the caber of his hut, or ask leave to add one foot in breadth to his little patch of potatoes and kail?

In a few minutes after, I stood at my mother's door.

CHAPTER III.

MR. EPHRAIM SNAGGS.

OUR residence, the old jointure-house, now shorn of its fair proportions, and diminished in aspect, since it was built for the widow of Lachlan Mohr Mac Innon, who led his clan to Worcester, was small, low in the roof, and heavily thatched with warm heather. The two principal rooms were wainscoted; the entrance was floored with hard-beaten clay, and above the door was a rudely-carved representation of the arms of Mac Innon, a boar's head erased, holding in its mouth the legbone of a deer, supported by a lion and a leopard. This uncouth piece of heraldry, the pride of my mother's heart, was the *chef d'œuvre* of some local sculptor. The aspect of the house was cheerless and indicative of the decay that had fallen upon us; the carpets were faded and worn; the furniture antique and rickety; there were corner cupboards, where old china, worm-eaten books, bottles of whiskey, powder-flasks, bullet-moulds, deer-horns, fishing-

gear, teapots, and coffee-cups, dogs' collars, an old dirk and skene, mingled pell-mell with innumerable other etcetera.

Far off on the mountain slope, the strong square tower of Lachlan Mohr (who was besieged therein by the Campbells after Inverlochy) was a landmark for two hundred years; but now it was removed to make way for a modern mansion, the windows of which, on this evening, were brilliantly lighted up; and then, I doubted not, Sir Horace Everingham was sitting down to a sumptuous entertainment after his visit to Ben Ora, while I, the heir of all these hills and glens, had scarcely a crust to place before me.

I thought of all these things—the present and the past—with a bitterness renewed by the recent conversation with my foster-brother. I tossed aside my fishing-gear, basket, and bonnet, and with a sigh of weariness and dejection, entered the half-dilapidated mansion. As I had been abroad the whole day, I sought, with some anxiety, the apartment of my sick and aged mother. I heard the sound of voices proceeding from it; she was expostulating, and a stranger was threatening! I made a forward stride, when a hand was timidly laid on my arm; I turned, and met the anxious face of pretty Minnie Mac Omish.

'A chial! a chial!' she whispered, with tears in her soft hazel eyes; 'Snaggs, the factor, is with your mother, Allan, and I fear he brings bad news.'

'Can other come to us now, Minnie?' said I; 'but take my fish-basket—I have brought a good supper from the Uisc Dhu and Loch Ora.'

I then entered the little dining-room where we usually had all our meals served up.

I see it yet in memory.

Like many apartments in old Highland houses, its ceiling was low, pannelled with fir, and painted in a dull white colour; the stone fireplace, heavily moulded, bore the motto of the Mac Innons, *Cuimhuich*

bas Alpin, in raised letters, and the grate, a little brass-knobbed basket, at which, as my nurse affirmed, Prince Charles had once warmed his royal feet, stood upon two blocks of stone. A few old prints of battles in black frames, an oil-portrait or two, an old ebony table, with a huge family-bible, an inverted punch-bowl cracked and riveted, chairs of a fashion that has long since disappeared from the Lowlands, made up the plenishing of this little chamber, which was alike my mother's dining-room and peculiar sanctum sanctorum—and the palladium of which, were the old gilt gorget and regimental claymore of my father, suspended above the chimney-piece. He had worn these during the campaigns with the Black Watch in Egypt and in Spain.

With gold spectacles on nose, my mother, a thin, pale woman of a dignified aspect, in an old-fashioned costume, with black silk *mittens* on her hands, was seated in her cushioned chair, affecting to work at some ornament or article of attire, which lay on a little tripod table. She seemed nervous and agitated; how could she be otherwise, when opposite sat he, who was the horror of the glens from Lochness to Loch Ora—Ephraim Snaggs, with his malevolent visage, perched on the top of a bamboo-cane, over the silver knob of which his hands were crossed.

Bald-headed, hollow in the temples, with a prominent chin, and more of the serpent than the dove in his sinister grey eye, there sat Mr. Snaggs with his truculent smile, and an affectation of sympathy on his tongue.

'Beware, sir, of what you say,' my mother was exclaiming, 'for ours is an honoured line—an ancient house.'

'So I perceive,' said Snaggs, impertinently, as he fixed his eyes on a very palpable hole in the ceiling; 'ah, the old story—the old story, Mrs. Mac Innon! Bad times and no price for sheep, eh? I would beg

to remind you, my dear madam, that a certain pious writer says, "However unfortunate we may deem ourselves, yet let us remember there is an eye watching over us; it is a heavenly will, not a blind fate, that guides the world;" ah me—ah me!"

Fire and pride were flashing in my mother's dark grey eyes as I entered; then she burst into tears, and throwing down her work, exclaimed to me in Gaelic, and with all the spirit of the olden time—

'My son, God has sent you here in a lucky hour! I have come of a race that have smiled often in the face of death—why then, do I weep before this wretched worm?'

'What have you dared to say, Mr. Snaggs?' I asked, turning sharply to that personage; 'why do I find my mother in tears?'

'Because she is out of cash,' was the cool reply; 'a simple reason, my dear sir, and a plain one; but it is very little that *you* do to furnish her with any. I have called for the last time anent the arrears of rent due to Sir Horace Everingham—the new proprietor of this estate—arrears due before he acquired the lands, and I receive still the same unvaried excuses, about sheep with the rot, cattle with the murrain, or scraps of traditions and antediluvian nonsense, about the time when Loch Ora belonged to the Mac Innons—and about your great-grandfather who fought at Culloden, and was nearly hanged at Carlisle, as, I think, he deserved to be, for opposing the House of Hanover, and the Kirk as established by law. Now the law, of which I am an unworthy representative—the law says, young man, that when a tenant—but I need not quote the cases before the Lords of Council and Session in 1792 or 1756 on this point, to *you*. If an instalment at least, of the aforesaid arrears—say about fifty pounds—is not paid to me—to *me*, sir,' he continued, laying a fat finger impressively into the palm of his left hand, 'then a notice of eviction shall

be duly served upon you, with the rest of the lazy wretches in Glen Ora, who must all sail for Canada this summer, sure as my name is Ephraim Snaggs. Moreover, sir, I may inform you, that Sir Horace, by my recommendation—mine, sir—has some intentions of pulling down this absurd-looking old house, and erecting here a box for his friend, Captain Clavering, or for Mr. Snobleigh, of Snobleigh Park, I know not which; and if so, the law must be put in force against you, sir—the law of expulsion—you hear me!’

The reader may imagine the pride, wrath, and bitterness that swelled up within me, at this insolent speech, which had gradually approached the bullying point. I made a stride towards Snaggs, and my fingers twitched with an irresistible desire to grasp his throat.

My mother (poor old woman!) had long been in ill health. Mhari Mac Innon the ‘wise woman’ of our locality, and other aged people of the glen, alleged her illness was caused by her declining to drink of St. Colme’s well, a famous medicinal spring in Glen Ora, where, for ages, the Mac Innons and adjacent tribes had been wont to quaff the water at midnight, as a sovereign remedy for all diseases; and thereafter drop in a coin, or tie a rag to the alders which overshadowed it, as an offering to the guardian spirit of the fountain. Pale, sad, and sickly, my mother sat in her high-backed chair, motionless and silent as if overwhelmed by the approaching tide of ruin, in the form of debt which we had not a shilling to meet—and of avarice which we could not satisfy.

‘Mr. Snaggs,’ said I, ‘you should have reserved your detestable communications for my ears alone, and thus spared my poor mother the humiliation of a moment so bitter as this. She is old, and her thoughts and ideas have come down to her from other times. She cannot see, nor believe, that any man has authority to turn her off the land of the Mac Innons—’

‘Pooh, my dear sir,’ said Snaggs, waving his hand, and rising; ‘if you are about to begin your old-world nonsense and twaddle about Celtic right in the soil, I must leave you. The sheriff’s warrants will tell another story next week, if fifty pounds at least—’

‘Listen to me, Ephraim Snaggs,’ said I, forcing him into a seat, and grasping his shoulder like a vice. ‘I am here on the land that belonged to my forefathers—to Angus Mac Innon, who fought for King James at Culloden—’

‘Ha-ha—stuff—there you go again!’

‘There was a time,’ I continued, fiercely. ‘when had you, or such as you, spoken above your breath in Glen Ora, you had been flung into the loch with a hundred weight of stone at your neck. There was a time when the Mac Innons owned all the land we may see from Ben Ora; when we had Griban in Mull, the Isles of Tiree, of Pabay, and Scalpa, with Strathardle in Skye. Poor as we are now, we owned all that, but only *in common*—mark me, sir, *in common*, with the people of our name. Listen to me, Mr. Snaggs,’ I continued, as the fierce sob of pride, so difficult to repress, rose to my throat; ‘I am the last of a long line, whose misfortune it has been to fight for the losing side. Our people marched to Worcester under Lachlan Mhor, and perished there in heaps; we were at Sheriffmuir, under the banner of the Marquis of Seaforth, for a marquis he was, by order of the king; we were “out” in the ’45, under Angus Mac Innon, and of all the swordsmen he marched from yonder glen, which you are about to depopulate, not a man came back from Culloden—as God hears me—not one. Since then our people have gone forth in the Highland regiments to every part of the world. Some have left their bones on the heights of Abraham and in the isles of the Western Indies; some sleep under the shadow of the Pyramids and on the plains of the Peninsula. In India, Egypt, Africa, and

Spain, wherever Britain wanted men to fight her battles, there have they been faithful and true, loyal and brave, standing foremost in the ranks of war, and giving place to none! All my own family have perished in the service of their country since this century began—I am the last of them, and as their reward, our roof is to be torn from us, and we are to be expelled from the home and the graves of our kindred—we, the descendants of the old aboriginal race, who first trod the land after God separated it from the waters, and why? because a miserable fifty pounds may not be forthcoming by a certain day! There was a time, Mr. Ephraim Snaggs, when the cry of *Bas Alpin* from yonder rock would easily have brought six hundred swordsmen to guard the roof you threaten; and he whom you beard—he, who from the first Mac Innon, has come through twenty generations in the right line.’

‘Had you come through twenty generations in the *wrong* line I would have respected you quite as much, sir,’ said Mr. Snaggs, with his bland professional sneer, as he rose again, and smoothed the nap of his hat, preparatory to retiring, as if wearied by the torrent of Gaelic I had poured upon him. ‘All these fine arguments about broadswords and barbarism won’t pay the rent or satisfy the just claims of Sir Horace, thus the law of landlord and tenant must take its course. You have no means of raising money, I suppose?’

‘None!’

‘No friends—eh?’

‘None.’

‘Nothing you can sell?’

‘Nothing!’

‘Then, take my advice, and quietly quit the glen altogether; there are plenty of counting-rooms, offices, and shops in the Lowlands, where such great sturdy fellows as you may easily make yearly, triple

the rent of this old tumble-down place, with its patch of potatoes and corn. Quit your gun and fishing-rod—betake yourself to some honest and industrious occupation, instead of indulging in the very sophistry of vanity, and in wandering about these hills the livelong day, sighing over an imaginary past and an impossible future. No man has any right in the soil but such as the law gives him. Why, Mr. Allan, before I was half your age, I was one of the smartest writer's clerks in Glasgow, earning my threepence a page of a hundred and twenty-five words; but perhaps you would prefer a shopman's place—'

The shout with which Rob Roy greeted honest Bailie Jarvie's proposal to take his two sons as apprentices, was nothing to the shrill cry of anger with which my mother interrupted the sneer I was too poor to resent with pride—besides in its soundness, the advice of Snaggs humbled, while it exasperated me.

'I would rather see my boy Allan buried in his grave at the Stones of St. Colme than truckling to a Lowland dog like you, Ephraim Snaggs! Begone, lest I smite you on the face, weak though my hand, for recommending a calling so vile to Mac Innon of Glen Ora!'

'Mother, mother!' I exclaimed, 'what *can* I do?'

'Shoulder a musket and march to fight the Russians, if God opens up no brighter or better path to the son of a line that led their hundreds to battle in the times of old!' was the fierce and Spartan response.

'Very well, ma'am—*very* well,' continued the matter-of-fact Snaggs, smoothing the nap of his beaver, and smiling with his ticket-of-leave look. '"The gentle mind," saith the divine Blair, "is like the smooth stream, which reflects every object in its just proportion and in its fairest colours;" but these out-

bursts of anger, in the style of Helen Mac Gregor or Lady Macbeth, won't satisfy Sir Horace Everingham ; and if the sum of fifty pounds, at least, be not forthcoming——'

A tremendous knocking at the outer door, and the sound of voices in great agitation, arrested the factor's angry farewell. Minnie grew pale, and hurried to open, and hastening into the passage, I met two of the Englishmen and the ladies, with disorder apparent in their attire and alarm in their faces. The oldest of their party, Sir Horace, was *absent* ; and now the danger of the mountain, and the warnings withheld by Callum Dhu, rushed reproachfully on my memory.

'My father, Mr. Mac Innon—my father, Mr. Snaggs!' exclaimed Miss Everingham, rushing towards us, with clasped hands. 'I seek succour for my father!' she continued, trembling, agitated, pale, and in tears, and with hair and dress disordered.

'How—your father—Sir Horace?'

'We missed him at the rock, Mr. Snaggs, on Ben Ora—the steep rock, I know not how you name it!'

'The Craig-na-tuirc,' said I.

'Yes—thank you—yes ; and he did not come back to us.'

'Some dreadful event must have occurred,' added her dark-eyed companion, Miss Clavering, whose usual bloom was blanched and gone ; 'so many accidents——'

'Get us some aid, my good man,' said her brother, a tall and soldier-like fellow, with a heavy black moustache and a dragoon air ; 'ropes, poles, and a couple of stable-lanterns, if you have such things. We must make a search after the old gentleman—come Snobleigh, my boy, look sharp!'

'Oh-aw-yaas,' drawled his companion, who had a very used-up air, and wore a short-tailed tartan shooting-jacket, an eye-glass, a cigar in his mouth,

and a faint moustache under his snub nose ; ‘ young fellow, eh-aw-aw, what is your name ?’

‘ Glen Ora,’ said my mother, interrupting me, and half springing from her chair, irrate at his nonchalance.

‘ Aw—odd—very, Mr. Glen Ora ; you’ll look aftaw the ladies, whom we shall leave here in your chawge.’

‘ I am master here, at least,’ said I, haughtily ; ‘ Snaggs, hand chairs—see to the ladies, while I go to the Craig-na-tuire, to search for Sir Horace.’

‘ Oh thank you—bless you !’ exclaimed Miss Everingham, grasping my arm ; ‘ all my trust is in *you*, Allan.’

‘ Lanterns—eh, aw-aw, you’ll require—’

‘ The moon is up, and we require no other light,’ said I, cutting short this mouthing drawler ; ‘ come, Callum Mac Ian,’ I added, as that personage, whose solitary hut the alarm had reached, appeared among us ; ‘ old Sir Horace has fallen over the Craig-na-tuire, or lost his way on the hills—let us seek him.’

Though weak and tottering, my mother had propped herself upon her cane, and risen to her full height, which was tall and commanding, to welcome those agitated and unceremonious visitors.

‘ Mr. Snaggs,’ said she, pointing to the door, with the air of a Siddons, ‘ you may retire.’

Snaggs bowed with a malevolent smile, and withdrew.

‘ Ladies, be seated—gentlemen, assist the ladies to seats—thank you ; be composed, Miss Everingham, and be assured that we will leave nothing undone to discover your father, who must have lost his way on the mountains. They were not made for Lowland legs to climb,’ she added, with a cold smile.

Her stature, her lofty air, and calm decisive manner, awed the two English girls, and calmed their excessive agitation, while it dashed the somewhat brusque air of the gentlemen ; and, reseating herself

in her wide, old-fashioned chair, she spread her skirt all over it, in a way peculiar to ladies of 'the old school,' and then fixed her keen grey Highland eyes upon her unexpected and not over-welcome visitors, to learn the cause of all this commotion and alarm for one towards whom it may easily be supposed she felt but little love, as she deemed poor Sir Horace little better than a *usurper*, and was wont to stigmatize him roughly in Gaelic as 'a Hanoverian rat.'

I snatched a hunting-horn, Callum threw off his plaid, and leaving the two perfumed gentlemen to follow us as they best could in their well-glazed boots and tightly-strapped pantaloons, we took our way with all speed towards the rocky summit of Ben Ora.

CHAPTER IV

THE ROCK OF THE BOAR.

THE sudden presence of Laura Everingham under my mother's roof had, for a moment, confused and astonished me, filling me with tremulous anxiety for the issue of their interview.

Laura was a lady-like girl, pretty rather than beautiful, and graceful rather than dignified, with a bright sunny English eye, a pale but interesting face, matchless hands and ankles, and a profusion of chestnut hair. She had trembled excessively when I presented her to my mother, whom she informed, as rapidly and coherently as her excessive agitation would permit, that Sir Horace, 'her dear, good, kind papa, *would* go to the summit of the mountain in the moonlight, in spite of all advice and the warnings of various shepherds.'

'The old gentlemen is, aw—aw, rather nocturnal

in his tastes, madam,' yawned Mr. Snobleigh, who had been surveying the dining-room through his glass, with great apparent curiosity and much unmistakable depreciation; 'town habits, madam, won't suit this parallel—aw, of north latitude.'

'And he *would* visit the Craig-na-tuirc,' continued Laura; 'for dear papa is such an obstinate old thing, and we are always so afraid of the gout flying to his head, that we never dare to cross him. Well, we ascended that horrid mountain, and after great danger and labour reached the shoulder or cliff, Craig-na-tuirc, I think, you name it, just in time to see the moon rise above the hills, and a lovely moon it was—'

'Aw—for Scotland—very!' said Mr. Snobleigh.

'We were at the very verge of the precipice, with our little ponies, from which we had all dismounted, but dear old obstinate papa, who would keep his saddle, when suddenly an eagle soared up, with its huge flapping wings, from amid our feet—our wild ponies took to flight—scampered down the mountain, and vanished; that which bore papa accompanied them; we heard him crying piteously for help—oh, heaven, how piteously! And then, a white stag shot past—'

'God and Mary!—*a white stag?*' exclaimed my mother.

'Then all became still, so frightfully still, that I heard only my own heart beating. Oh, dear madam,' added Laura Everingham, clasping my mother's hand, emotion lending new charms to her winning face and manner, 'do you think there is danger?'

'Heaven alone knows; if indeed the sheltie galloped towards the Uisc Dhu—' my mother paused, for even her strong antagonism to this fair daughter of a man she hated, and against whom all her fierce and antiquated Celtic prejudices were enlisted, could not withstand the charm of Laura's winning eye; thus

she left nothing unsaid to comfort her and to soothe her terror. In this she was joined by Miss Clavering, a fine, handsome, and showy English girl, whose beautiful and sparkling eyes, dark hair, and nose *retroussé*, piquant manner, and graceful *tournure*, made her, as her brother Tom Clavering, of the Grenadier Guards, constantly affirmed, 'one of the finest girls about town,' meaning London, of course.

'And you saw a white stag?'

'Yes—white as snow,' answered the girls, together.

'Dhia!' exclaimed my mother; 'if it should be the white stag of Loch Ora!'

'Why—what then?'

'It is said to be enchanted—it never dies, and never appears but as a harbinger of evil!'

'Heavens, dear madam, don't say so, pray!' urged Laura, weeping bitterly, and here Callum Dhu and I left them.

Followed by Captain Tom Clavering and his friend, Mr. Adolphus Frederick Snobleigh, who, with their glazed boots, scarlet shirts, and blue neckties, tight pantaloons, pomaded locks, and bandolined moustaches, were scarcely accoutred for ascending the sides of Ben Ora at midnight, over heather ankle-deep, and drenched in dew, or over—

'Crag, knolls and mounds, confusedly hurled,
The fragments of an earlier world.'

Callum Dhu and I hastened round the base of the mountain, and sought the Craig-na-tuire for traces of the missing stranger. The moon was clear and bright, though obscured at times by fleecy cloudlets, and we soon reached the summit of the steep craig, or *Rock of the Boar*, and saw the wild glens and savage peaks of the western Highlands bounding the view on every side, while at our feet lay Loch nan Spior-dan, or the Lake of Spirits, which was haunted by the water-horse and bull, and from which the Uise Dhu,

or *black stream*, brawled through a hundred rough ravines and stony chasms, into the deep dark basin of Loch Ora. Here we paused for a few minutes.

The voice and image of Laura Everingham were still before me; for one more fair or polished had never been beneath the roof-tree of our mountain dwelling, and on regaining my breath, I said, with some emotion, to Callum,

‘If he has fallen into the Black Water!’—

‘Well—he may turn up about Christmas-time—a bag of bones, stranded on the margin of the loch,’ was the grim response.

‘And we allowed him to ascend—what will people say?’

‘There will be none here to say anything,’ was the sharp response; ‘by that time Glen Ora will be desolate—its people gone to the shores of the Far West, and the warm hearths where they sit now, will be silent, cold, and grassy.’

‘But the Englishman’s daughter, Callum?’

‘Let her weep to the night wind, and it will hear her, as it has often heard *our* women weep, when the roofs were torn down and the fires extinguished; when the cabers were tossed upon the heath, and the cottagers were driven in fetters to the shore, like slaves for market.’

‘But his daughter is beautiful.’

‘Dioul! do *you* begin to think so?’

‘Fair, delicate, and gentle, too, Callum,’ I urged, warming a little.

‘But what of that? she is a stranger, and not one of us! It was not at such dainty breasts as hers that Lachlan Mohr, who could twist a horse-shoe, or Angus your ancestor, or Alisdair Mac Coll Keitach, who could cleave men from beard to breeks, were suckled.’

‘What the deuce does all this matter? I would rather have a silver pound in my pocket than a pedi-

gree an ell long; but wind your horn, and then let us shout.'

Callum blew his horn, but the echoes of the rocks alone replied in prolonged reverberations to the sound. Then we shouted together, and again the echoes were our sole reply. The more I thought of the fair and timid girl now at my mother's house, the more anxious I felt for her father's fate.

Myriads of stars were mirrored in the lone and deep blue Loch of the Spirits, a thousand feet below us, and as we traversed the beetling cliff, the stones we disengaged, rolled over and plashed into the water, with a dull faint sound that was long in ascending to the ear.

'By the Black Stone of Scone,' said Callum, with a Highland grin, 'if the stranger *has* gone over here on the sheltie, he will have a skinful of cold water by this time.'

'For heaven's sake, don't say so, Callum!'

'Why not?' returned my companion, tartly; 'his first threat, on coming among us, was to put me in prison, because a deer-hide was found in my hut; if he has gone over the Craig-na-tuirc it was his own fate, and you know our proverb—*Ni droch dhuine dan na fein!* *Me* in prison, indeed! I swore that I found the deer drowned in the moss, though I shot him at the waterfall, and a brave animal he was—thirty-four stone weight—devil an ounce less, after the gralloch was out of him; so every man in the glen had a savoury supper that night. Must *we* starve, while the Englishman and the Lowlander have sport enough and to spare, and when the poor are driven mad by the depredations of the game on the crops?'

'Hark! I hear voices!'

Turning in the direction from whence they proceeded, we met Captain Clavering and his companion, the exquisite Mr. Snobleigh, who had just succeeded in overtaking us, breathless, and in great anxiety for Sir Horace.

‘It was in *that* direction Sir Horace was carried by his pony,’ said the captain, pointing westward down the rocks.

‘Dioul! that is straight for the linn of Glen-dhu-uisè (the glen of the black water), and if so, God save him!’ added Callum, touching his bonnet, ‘for his bones—before *we* find them—will have been picked white as china by the gled and iolar. However, let us do what we can, Mac Innon,’ he added, hastening onward, his natural kindness of heart penetrating the crust of prejudice and animosity with which he had resolved to protect it from any emotion of sympathy for the new possessor of our lands.

‘The mountain sheltie went like lightning,’ said Captain Clavering; ‘its hoofs struck fire from the rocks at every bound.’

‘Aw—yes,’ added his companion, the great head of the dynasty of Snobleigh; ‘I daresay the poor baronet thought himself astride one of Scott’s demmed water kelpies.’

The roar of the cataract, formed by the Uisc Dhu forcing its way through a chasm, and rolling over a ledge of rocks into Loch Ora, now broke the solemn stillness of the midnight hills. We reached a plateau of rock, which overhung the fall, and we felt it trembling and vibrating in the concussion of the waters, which roared and rushed in one broad, ceaseless, and snow-white torrent, into a deep dark pool below. Its height was startling; its sides bristled with ghastly rocks, and these were fringed by tangled masses of green shrubbery and wild plants. Glittering in the moonlight like dew, or a continual shower of revolving diamonds, the transparent foam arose from the profundity into which the descending waters bellowed, and beyond which they swept away round the mountain in placid silence, forming Loch Ora, where the black ouzel and the wild swan floated in the radiance of the summer moon.

Captain Clavering appeared to be impressed by this majestic scene, but his companion, a restless Londoner, prattled and talked, and ever and anon shouted 'Sir Horace!' in the voice of a peacock proclaiming rain.

'Stay; I hear something,' said I; 'it comes from yonder rock.'

'No, no,' replied Callum, hastily; 'do not say so—that is Sien Sluai (the dwelling of a multitude). Often when my father was benighted, he has seen lights glitter there, and heard the sound of music, dancing feet, and merry little voices.'

A moment after, we heard a lamentable cry, that was quite different from the echoes.

'Good heaven!' exclaimed Captain Clavering, 'there is some one over the fall—or *in it*. Did you not hear a voice? There it is again!'

'Dioul! I have heard it twice already, but thought it was a hart roaring in the forest,' said Callum; 'and here are the hoofmarks of a pony, fresh in the turf, at the very edge of the Fall.'

'Help!' cried a piteous voice, which ascended from the abyss beneath us, and sounded above the hiss and roar of the hurrying waters; 'help, in the name of the blessed God!'

'Merciful heaven, it is Sir Horace!' exclaimed Captain Clavering, peering over.

'Aw—aw, good gwacious—gwacious goodness! aw-aw, what a dreadful situation!' added Snobleigh, agast.

Upon a ledge of rock that jutted over the fall about twenty feet below the plateau on which we stood, lay the unfortunate baronet, crouching in a place where the beetling rocks rose above him, and where they descended sheer below to a depth which the eye and mind shrank from contemplating. His pony had become unmanageable, or disliked the severity with which it was whipped and spurred;

thus on getting the bit between its teeth, it scoured along the terrible ridge of the Craig-na-tuirc like the wind, and rushed headlong towards the cascade. In deadly terror, the portly baronet had thrown himself off this fierce and shaggy little charger, but too late; he was just at the edge of the fall over which the pony went headlong like a flying Pegasus. Desperately Sir Horace clung to the bracken and heather on the verge of the chasm; but both gave way, and he toppled over!—sight, sound, hearing, and sensation left him as he fell into the abyss, believing all was over; but the sharp, cool, smoky spray revived him, and on recovering, he found himself safely and softly shelved on a turf-covered ledge of rock, from which an ascent unaided was totally impracticable, as the cliff above him was a sheer wall of twenty feet high; and a safe descent was equally impossible, for below, two hundred feet and more, pouring like ceaseless thunder, the cascade roared, boomed, boiled, and whirled; he shut his eyes, and for the first time since childhood, perhaps, endeavoured to arrange his thoughts in prayer.

Imagine the sensations of this right honourable baronet, and M.P. for ‘the gentlemanly interest’—this old Regent-street loungeur and man-about-town, accustomed to all the butterfly enjoyment, the ease, elegance, and luxury wealth can procure, and London furnish, on finding himself at midnight in the region of old romance and much imaginary barbarism—in the land of caterans, brownies, and bogles, cowering like a water-rat on a narrow ledge of rock, and on the verge of that tremendous cascade!

Prayer was difficult, new, and unnatural to him; he closed his eyes, and after shouting hopelessly and vainly, he endeavoured not to think at all; terror absorbed all his faculties, and now were he to live for a thousand years he could never forget the miseries and horrors he endured.

His senses wandered, and while the endless linn, stunning and dashing, poured in full flood and mighty volume over the trembling rocks, at one time he imagined himself addressing the House on the Abjuration Oath, the Scottish Appellate Jurisdiction, or some other equally sane and useful institution; or at the opera listening to Mario, Alboni, or Piccolomini; now it was the voice of his daughter, and then the laugh of his ward, Fanny Clavering. The quaint wild stories of the Highland foresters flitted before him, and while strange voices seemed to mingle with the ceaseless roar of that eternal cataract; damp kelpies sprawled their long and clammy fingers over him; paunchy imps and bearded brownies swarmed about his ears like gnats in the moonshine; while grey spectres seemed to peer and jabber at him, from amid the pouring foam and impending rocks.

He grew sick and faint with fear and hopelessness, for he was a cold, proud, and narrow-hearted man; hence the agony of his mind was the greater when he found himself face to face, and front to front, with Death!

Hours passed away; they seemed months, years, ages, still he remained there in a state of torpor and coma. He might fall into the stream; then all would be over; he might linger on for days, his cries unheard, for the country was desolate and depopulated—for days until he perished of slow starvation, and his bones would be left to whiten on that shelf of rock after his flesh had been carried away by the hawks and eagles!

‘Horror! horror!’ he exclaimed, and shut his eyes.

Suddenly, voices that seemed human met his ear!

He uttered a wild cry for mercy and for succour, and the loud Highland *haloo* of Callum Mac Ian responded. By a lucky chance we had discovered the lost man, when every hope was dying in his arid heart.

A mountain-ash, the sinewy roots of which grasped the fissures of the rocks, and were knotted round them, overhung the chasm, and from this Callum, supported by Clavering and me—the captain was a brave, active, and athletic fellow—lowered down a stout rope, which we desired Sir Horace to tie securely round him; but he was so paralyzed by fear, or so benumbed by cold, that though we reiterated the request again and again, with all the energy his urgent danger could inspire, we were unheeded.

‘Dioul! ’smeas so na’n t-alam!’ (the devil! this is worse than alum!) grumbled Callum in Gaelic; ‘this old fellow will have the cat’s departure in the cascade if he closes his ears thus!’

‘What in heaven’s name shall we do?’ asked Captain Clavering; ‘good fellows, can’t you advise?’

‘Go down into the cascade,’ said I.

‘Eh—aw—the deuce! good gwacious, you cawnt mean that,’ said Snobleigh, with a chill shudder; ‘deaw me—what a boaw!’

‘He does mean it,’ replied Callum, coldly; ‘but that shall be my task, for though his spirit is brave, his arm is less strong than mine, and I shall meet the danger first. It was our task of old—I am his co-dhalta, and come of race that were the leine chrìos of his father’s on many a bloody field—but I forget that you are Englishmen, and know not what I speak of.’

Even while he said this, Callum had flung aside his bonnet and plaid; tied one end of the rope round the ash, and knotted the other round his waist, and begun to descend into the chasm, finding grasps for his hands and rests for his feet where other men would have felt for them in vain; and scaring the polecat from its lair, and the chattering night-hawk from its perch, by his hearty shout of triumph, as he reached Sir Horace, and transferred the rope round his inert and passive form

‘Air Dhia! the old man is like a bundle of dry bracken,’ said the bold Highland forester with some contempt; ‘hoist away sirs, and be sure that you have a tight hold of *your* end of the rope!’

Assisted by Mr. Snobleigh, who was in a high state of excitement, the Captain and I drew up the poor baronet, who was almost dead with renewed terror on finding himself suspended like the golden fleece over that roaring gulf; however, we landed him safely, and laid him at length on the thick soft heather to recover his breath and animation, while we lowered the rope to Callum, who with our assistance scrambled up the wall of rock like a squirrel, and stood beside us again.

‘Mona mon dioul!’ said he, with a hearty laugh, such as can only come from a throat and lungs braced by the keen mountain air? ‘this will be a night for the new laird to remember!’

CHAPTER V.

CALLUM DHU.

MORNING was beginning to brighten the sky behind the sharp peaks of the eastern hills as we slowly descended from the lofty summit of the Craig-na-tuirc. We had got our English visitors up to that altitude very well; but getting them *down* from it proved a very different and more arduous affair: Callum at last lost all patience, and saying that he wished he ‘had a keallach to carry the dainty bodach in,’ hoisted Mr. Snobleigh, *bongré malgré*, on his shoulders, and sturdily carried him to the foot of the mountain, leaving to Captain Clavering and me the task of laughing, and supporting the crest-fallen baronet.

The sun had risen above the mountains when we reached the narrow path that traversed my native and old hereditary glen; the morning wind was lifting the light leaves of the silver birches, and rustling the wiry foliage of the Scottish pines that clothed the steep sides of the lovely valley. At times a roebuck started up from among the green and waving bracken, to vanish with a wild bound into the gloomy thickets; and the pale mist was wreathing the dun summit of Ben Ora.

A flood of amber glory rolled along the hills, lighting up in quick succession each rocky peak and heath-clad cone, and filling all the glens with warmth as the sun arose; and Callum Dhu, whose mind was full of the ancient usages and superstitions of the Gael, raised his bonnet with reverence to the god of day.

'Pon my soul, you *are* a rum one!' exclaimed Mr. Snobleigh, as he was set on the ground again; 'but—aw—aw—fine fellow after all; we owe you I don't know how much for your bravery, and I for this canter down hill,' he added, unclasping his portemonnaie.

'I am neither a horse nor a servant,' said Callum, with a dark expression in his eye.

Now that Sir Horace was free from danger, and felt somewhat mollified towards mankind in the Highlands generally, every bitter thought which the teachings of my Celtic mother, the precepts of my nurse, and the example of Callum could inspire, returned with renewed vigour to my breast; and on reaching the rugged bridle-road, with a haughty, hostile, and distant aspect, I touched my bonnet, and on seeing the baronet's carriage approaching (together with Mr. Snaggs on a trotting mountain garron), was about to withdraw, when Clavering politely requested me to stay.

On the patrimonial estate of my forefathers, I found

myself regarded as little better than a shepherd, and treated by these pampered strangers as a mere gilly, trapper, or bush-beater; and my fiery spirit revolted within me, on reflecting that the poor attire Callum and myself wore, declared us to be little better. But find, if you may, a Birmingham baronet, or a cotton lord, whose titles came with the Reform Bill, who will acknowledge that a Scottish chief whose name and lineage may be coeval with Old King Cole, or the Wars of Fingal, can be equal to his own.

The carriage halted; a liveried lacquey sprang from the rumble, banged down the steps, and opened the door, on which Laura Everingham and Fanny Clavering alighted to welcome and embrace Sir Horace, who received this demonstration with the proper and well-bred frigidity of one who abhorred 'a scene;' but his daughter hung upon his neck, calling him her 'dear papa—her own papa,' while observing with alarm that he trembled excessively, his whole nervous system being seriously shaken, as well it might.

'You are ill, dear papa!' said Laura, regarding him anxiously.

'A draught from St. Colme's well might do him good,' said Callum Dhu; 'but perhaps he has water enough in him already—and so, a good sup of whisky—'

'Right,' said Captain Clavering, searching in the pocket of the carriage, and producing a flask of brandy, a 'nip' from which greatly revived the old gentleman, who, in a few words, made his daughter and her friend acquainted with the danger he had run, and the courage by which he had been rescued.

'So you see, Mr. Snaggs,' said the baronet, 'our Celt here, with the beard like a French *sapeur*, has been to me a real friend.'

'Glad to hear it, Sir Horace,' mumbled Snaggs, with one of his detestable smiles; 'but how seldom

do we find one—what is it the divine Blair saith, Mr. Snobleigh?’

‘Eh—aw—don’t know, really.’

‘It is *this*, my dear sir; “there is a friend that loveth at all times and a brother that is born for adversity. Thine own friend, and thy father’s friend, forsake not.”’

‘Aw—vewy good—devilish good, indeed!’

Miss Everingham, while her pale cheek glowed, and then grew pale again, fixed her bright eyes, full of tears, and gratitude upon Callum and me, and while touching our hands, timidly, exclaimed,

‘Oh, how shall we ever thank you—how repay this!’

‘Aw—aw—’pon my soul, that is just what I have been thinking of,’ said Snobleigh, who ‘mouthed his words as if he had been reared in the Scottish law courts, where we may daily hear the most astounding and miraculous English that tongue can utter.

My heart throbbed; a new and undefinable emotion thrilled through me, at the touch of Laura’s soft and pretty hands, and the truthful, thankful, and earnest glance of her soft blue English eyes.

‘Ah, that devil of a pony!’ sighed Sir Horace; ‘I hope its neck was broken at the cascade. Egad! it started off with me as if it had been running for the Ascot Cup!’

‘So did all our cattle. How lucky that we were dismounted!’ observed Miss Clavering.

‘It was like the Start for the Derby,’ laughed her brother.

‘Or the Doncaster Cup and Saucer,’ added Snobleigh, ‘Sir Horace leading the way.’

‘But it is time we were moving,’ said that personage. ‘Come—you, sir, to whom I owe so much—what is your name?’

‘Callum Dhu Mac Ian.’

'Ah, well ; get into the rumble, and come with us to Glen Ora House, and you shall have lunch and a good bottle of wine with the butler.'

'I do not lunch, neither do I dine with lacqueys,' replied Callum, proudly.

'Whew! aw—I see—these Highland fellows are all alike. Clavering, have you any money about you?'

The captain handed his purse to the baronet, who took from it, and from his own, the gold they contained, and turning to Callum, said—

'My good fellow, here are fifteen sovereigns ; but you will call on me at Glen Ora House, and bring your friend with you ; new coats and shoes, &c., are at your service ; but what the devil is the matter with you ?'

'Monna, mon dioul ! is it money you would offer me?' asked Callum, as he drew himself up with the air of an Indian king ; 'so you value your life at fifteen dirty guineas?'

'How, fellow ; do you really wish more?'

'*More!*' reiterated Callum, fiercely ; 'I am a poor man, who, when I lie down at night, thank God that one other day is passed, though I know not where the food of to-morrow may come from. The hills teem with game, and the rivers are alive with fish ; yet I dare neither shoot one nor net the other. But keep your gold, Sir Horace. Every coin of it is accursed, for it has come to you through the filthy hands of your factor, and every groat of it is stained by the sweat—the tears—the blood of the Highlanders of Glen Ora, from whom it has been extorted and torn by Ephraim Snaggs, that merciless and rapacious oppressor of the poor!'

Sir Horace stared at this outburst, which Callum Mac Ian, notwithstanding his sharp Celtic accent, and Gaelic being his native language, spoke in good English, and with all the purity and fluency of an educated Highlander. The factor, who was close by,

muttered something about 'an insolent idle poacher;' but Captain Clavering patted Callum on the shoulder, and exclaimed, in his jolly off-hand way,

'You are a trump! ha, ha, ha—'pon my soul, I like this!'

'You are the most puzzling fellow imaginable!' said Sir Horace, who had now recovered his self-possession, and with it his usual bearing, which was cold, pompous, selfish, and aristocratic (I am sorry to add, ungrateful); he added, 'would your friend take the money?'

The expression of my eye, I presume, startled him, for he asked,

'Who are you, sir, may I ask?'

'Alan Mac Innon,' I replied briefly.

'The idle, roving son of a poor widow,' suggested the amiable Mr. Snaggs, with a dark look.

'Widow of the last Glen Ora, Captain of Grenadiers in the Black Watch,' said Callum, sharply; 'Co-dhalta,' he added to me, in Gaelic—'be not offended—they are strangers, and know no better.'

'Well, well, I must leave to our sermon-quoting friend, Mr. Snaggs, the task of rewarding you, for, egad, I know not how to treat you,' said Sir Horace, turning towards the carriage and handing in Miss Clavering and his daughter Laura; 'but give them a dram, Clavering—it will be acceptable all round, I have no doubt.'

Callum Dhu produced from his jacket pocket a silver-rimmed quaigh, which had belonged to the ill-fated Mac Ian of the '45, and from which it was averred *Prionse Tearlach* himself had drunk. The captain filled it with brandy for me, and I drank and bowed to all. It was refilled for my foster-brother, who, while lifting his bonnet, bowed politely to the strangers, and then turning to me, added,

'Mo Cheann Chinnidh-sa! Beannachd Dhe' oirbh!' (i.e., My own chief—God bless you!')

My heart swelled; *his chief!* and I had no right to the soil, beyond the dust that adhered to my shoes; yet Callum's respect for me was as great as if I possessed all the lands of the Siol nan Alpin.

'Egad, this is like some of the things I have read of in the Scotch novels,' said Sir Horace, with a supercilious smile; 'is it not Laura?'

'Exactly, papa.'

'If I had only my sketch-book here,' added her friend.

'Aw—yaas—vewy good,' drawled Mr. Snobleigh, as he applied a vesta to his meerschaum; 'here we have a couple of bare-legged Sawney Beans, and all we want is a witch with a caldron—

"Fillet of a fenny snake,
In the caldron boil and bake:
Eye of newt and toe of frawg,
Wool of bat and tongue of dawg,"

and all that sort of thing—a brownie—aw-aw—a black dwarf, and so forth; eh, Miss Everingham?'

'Anything you please, Mr. Snobleigh, now that dear papa is safe.'

'Safe,' added the frank Tom Clavering; 'but for our brave and sturdy friends, he had now perhaps been at the bottom of yonder lock—or *loch*, as they call it.'

'It is a bit of romance, Laura, love,' said Miss Clavering, with one of her brightest smiles; 'do not the place, the costume, and the whole affair, remind you of—what is it—you remember the book, Mr. Snobleigh?'

'Eh—aw, yaas,' was the languid reply; 'but do you admire the costume, eh? I was once nearly dispensing with the superfluous luxury of pantaloons myself, and, aw-aw, exchanging from the Grenadier Gawds into an 'Ighland corps, which threw us into the shade in the Phoenix Pawk.'

'The deuce you were,' said Clavering; 'that would

be to commence the sliding-scale, Snob, my boy ; from the Guards to the line, and from thence'—

'Eh—aw—to the dawgs.'

'You are a noble fellow,' said Laura Everingham to Callum ; 'and I shall never, never forget you !'

Callum bowed.

'Give my dearest love to Mrs. Mac Innon—the kind old lady your mother,' she added to me ; 'and say that I shall ever remember her kindness—poor dear old thing—and she so ill too !'

'Aw—Snaggs, old fellow—do you think she has any knowledge of the aw—aw—second sight ?'

'Why ?' inquired Snaggs, with a furtive glance at me.

'I have made up a devilish heavy book on the Derby, and wondaw rathaw which horse will win,' said Snobleigh.

Snaggs smiled faintly, and reined back his pony.

Although at that time only the half of what this fine gentleman said was understood by me, I gave him a glance so furious, that after attempting to survey me coolly through his glass for a second, he grew pale, smiled, and looked another way.

At last, the baronet grew weary of all this ; he pocketed his purse, and stepped into the carriage ; his friends found seats also—the steps were shut up—the door closed, and with its varnished wheels flashing in the morning sun, away it bowled, the horses, two fine bays, at a rapid trot, and Snaggs spurring furiously behind. Callum and I were left on the narrow mountain-path with saddened, humbled, and irritated hearts, that smarted and rebelled under the loftiness of tone which the possession of 'a little filthy lucre,' enabled these *blasé* voluptuaries to assume towards us, who were the old hereditary sons of the soil.

'I would ask you to my hut,' said Callum, 'but for three days no food has been there.'

‘Come, Callum—come with me, and though I have but little to offer, that little shall be shared with you and a thousand welcomes to it,’ said I, and we turned our steps together homeward.

CHAPTER VI.

WHICH TREATS OF MANY THINGS.

I HAVE said that Laura Everingham was pretty rather than beautiful, and graceful rather than dignified. I may add, that she was winning rather than witty; but her friend Miss Clavering was both beautiful and brilliant; and frequently as I had seen both these attractive English girls, it was Laura, whose gentleness, voice, and face, made the most vivid impression on me; and thus, with my mind full of her image, I returned slowly and thoughtfully towards the old jointure-house of Glen Ora.

Three weeks passed away.

The great service we, or Callum, rather, had rendered to Sir Horace, was forgotten, for the adventures of that night had given the baronet a violent and all-absorbing fit of the gout, and a fever which confined him to bed; and amid his friends, the luxuries which surrounded him, and the frivolities of fashionable life, he forgot that save for the fearless heart and strong arm of Mac Ian he must have perished by the waters of the Uisc Dhu, without leaving, perhaps, a trace of his fate behind. And poor Callum—he whose Spartan virtue had declined the proffered reward—was often almost starving; for his little crop had failed; his patches of wheat and potatoes were blighted, though carefully reared on the sunny side of Ben Ora; and, like others in the glen, he anti-

cipated with sorrow and anxiety the usual visit of the pious and uncompromising Snaggs when the term-time arrived.

My poor mother's health was failing fast, and as it failed, her spirit sank. She lacked many comforts which I was without the means of procuring; and though old Mhari and her niece Minnie were unwearying and unremitting in their kindness and ministry, she seemed to be dying literally by inches, yet without any visible ailment—a painful and a terrible contemplation for me, who, except the people in the glen, and the ties of blood old Highland custom and tradition gave between us, had not another relative in the world; for all my kindred—ay more than thirty of them—had died, as I have said, in the service of their country.

She was passing away from among us, and now, for her sake, I regretted that my foster-brother had not stooped to avail himself of the reward proffered by Sir Horace; for even that small sum would have been at her service, as honest Callum Mac Ian loved and revered her as if she had been his own mother.

With such sad, bitter, and humiliating reflections, the memory of the winning smile, the thankful glance, and soft pretty manner of Laura Everingham, struggled hard for mastery; but as weeks rolled on, these pleasing recollections gave place to a just emotion of anger, at what I deemed her cold and haughty neglect of my mother, whom she had neither visited nor invited to the *new* house of Glen Ora. Vague suspicions floated in my mind that Snaggs the factor was in some degree to blame for this apparent discourtesy, and these surmises afterwards proved to be correct. Moreover, the moustached Captain Clavering, and his perfumed friend, Mr. Adolphus Frederick Snobleigh, whom we saw shooting and deer-stalking on the hill sides, usually passed me with a

nod or glance of recognition, because I was coarsely clad, and to them seemed but a mountain gilly, though every bonnet in Glen Ora was veiled at my approach in reverence to the name I inherited. But this was the result of old Celtic sympathies—the ties of clan-ship and kindred, the historical, traditionary, and poetic veneration of the Highland peasant for the head of his house, humbled and poor though that house may be; sympathies deep, bitter, fiery and enthusiastic, and beyond the comprehension of a devil-may-care guardsman like Clavering, or an effeminate *blasé parvenu*, and man-about-town, like Snobleigh.

Once a liveried lacquey with a well-powdered head brought a beautiful bouquet of flowers ‘with Miss Everingham’s love to Mrs. Captain Mac Innon;’ but as this knock-knee’d gentleman in the red plush inexpressibles was over-attentive to our pretty Minnie, her lover Callum flung him out of the front door, and tore his livery; and such was the report made by Mr. Jeames Toodles of his reception at the old jointure-house, that no more messages came from the family of Sir Horace.

Now came the crisis in the fortunes of the cottars of Glen Ora. The postman who travelled once weekly over the mountains, and bore the letters for the district, in a leathern bag strapped across his back, brought for each resident, myself included, a notice that Mr. Ephraim Snaggs would be in the glen on a certain day, to hold a rent-court, and collect the arrears; with a brief intimation, that if all demands were not satisfied in full, the houses would be destroyed, and the people driven off. That night, there went a wail of lamentation through the glen; the women wept, and the men gazed about them with the sullen apathy in which a despairing mariner may see his ship going down into the ocean, for there were neither remedy nor mercy to be expected. Our

people were able to live comfortably in the glen, as for ages their forefathers had done, marrying and giving in marriage—increasing and multiplying, till their corn patches and little green cottages dotted all the mountain slopes; but curbed by the game-laws, and thence deprived of those substitutes by which nature replaced the sterility of the soil—ruined by the wanton destruction of the kelp manufacture, and by having their rents doubled, tripled, and quadrupled with the deliberate intention that they should be unable to pay them, and hence afford to the feudal lord of the land a LEGAL EXCUSE for sweeping them to the sea-shore, that the glens may be made a wilderness for game, and their hearths a lair for the deer, the fox, and the wild cat—the peasantry found themselves helpless! And thus it is, that in virtue of a fragment of sheepskin, we find men in Scotland, exerting over their fellow-men a murderous and inhuman tyranny; such as was never wielded by the worst feudal despots in the middle ages of Germany, or in the present days of Russia. But to resume my story:

In addition to our little household, we had now to support Callum Dhu, who had been afflicted by a sickness—I verily believe, the result of mere want and privation, for he was too proud to acknowledge, that occasionally days elapsed without his fast being broken. He was entitled to four hundred merks Scots, and a good dram for every fox's head; but as he was weak and ailing, the foxes got into places beyond his reach, and rabbits became scarce. We could not see Callum starve; for never did brother love brother more sincerely than my fosterer loved me; and but for this sentiment, and his ardent regard for Minnie and his native glen, the poor fellow had long since abandoned his hut, and joined one of our eight Highland regiments.

Now came 'the day—the great, the eventful day,' when Snaggs the factor, accompanied by his clerk

(the latter custodier of a wooden box and a green-baize bag), both on trotting Highland garrons, appeared at the lower entrance of the glen, their advance into which was witnessed by the cottars with greater excitement, and certainly far more terror than their forefathers, when beholding the *Sliochd Dhiarmed an Tuirc*, numbering a thousand swordsmen under Black Colin of Rhodéz, march through the same pass against the Mac Innons of Glen Ora, and the Mac Intyres of Glen O.

And now, with the reader's permission, I will devote a short paragraph to Mr. Snaggs.

He was externally a very religious man, and grave in his deportment, being an elder of a dissenting kirk. Having been bred to the law in Edinburgh, he spoke with an extremely English accent, as nothing Scottish is much in vogue about 'the Parliament House;' for unfortunately, the language which our Lowlanders received from their brave ancestors who came from the Cimbric Chersonese—a language in which the sweetest of our poets have sung—the language spoken by Mary Queen of Scots, in which Knox preached, and all our laws are written, is voted vulgar by the growing 'snobbishness' of the Scottish people themselves—excuse the term pray, but I know of none more suitable—hence Mr. Snaggs spoke with a marvellous accent, and it would have been quite in vain to quote to such as he the words of honest Ninian Wingate, when he warned John Knox—'Gif ye throw curiositie of novationis hes forgot our auld plane Scottis qwhilk your mither lernit you, in tymes coming I sall wryt to yow my mynd in Latin, for I am nocht acquynt with your Southeron.' Mr. Snaggs went to kirk thrice on Sunday; he was a member of various tract-distributing societies, and always wore a white neckcloth, and scrupulously accurate suit of black; he was a great believer in whisky-toddy and the patriotism of the Lord Advocate. Honesty and

charity were ever in his mouth, but never in his heart or hand; he never swore by aught save his honour, which was a somewhat tattered article. He never was known to do good by stealth 'and blush to find it fame;' but he subscribed largely to all *printed* lists, especially such as were headed by philanthropic and noble depopulators. His keen grey eyes were expressive alternately of cunning and malevolence, while his mouth wore a perpetual smile or grin. Cringing and mean to the rich, Snaggs was a tyrant and oppressor of the poor, and led the van of that all-but-organized system of extermination pursued by certain infamous dukes, marquises, and lairds towards the poor Highland peasantry; and he was a vehement advocate for the substitution of bare sheep-walks and useless game-preserves, instead of glens studded by little cottages, and teeming with life and rural health, and peopled by a brave and hardy race, who in the ranks of war gave place to none, and who, although they have no feudal charters, are by right of inheritance the true lords of the soil.

Such was the smooth, pious, fawning but terrible Ephraim Snaggs, who made his appearance in Glen Ora punctually at eleven o'clock on the appointed day. Now we had no longer any hope of remaining in the old jointure-house, for I do not believe that anything save a miracle would have raised fifty pounds among us, and the age of miracles is past.

CHAPTER VII.

THE RENT COURT.

I SHALL never forget the emotion of shame that glowed within me on finding myself compelled to avoid this miserable worm.

‘He is coming! he is coming!’ exclaimed Minnie, wringing her hands, as we perceived from the dining-room window two mounted figures appear in the gorge of the glen.

‘Ochon! ochon! ochon!’ chorused old Mhari, lifting up her hands, ‘the sorrows that have fallen upon us would sink the blessed ship of Clanronald.’

Callum uttered a hearty oath in Gaelic, and pulled his bonnet over his knitted brow.

Mr. Snaggs dismounted at the door and gave his green bag to Minnie, on whom he smiled familiarly, and then perceiving that she was pretty, he pinched her rosy cheek, and eyed her with a glance that had more of a leer than benignity in it; but he was always singularly *suave* to Minnie. Being too indisposed to receive him, my mother remained in her own room, and I—knowing that we had not the cash to meet his demands, took my rod and went to the Loch nan Spìordan for our supper; as there the *tarr-dhiargan*, or red-bellied char, were in great plenty, and the banks were a favourite ride of Laura Everingham. For Snaggs I left a note, filled with the old excuses, of wet weather, bad crops, corn destroyed by the south-west wind, sheep with the rot, cattle with the murrain, hard times, and so forth. He read it over—smiled faintly, and after carefully folding and docketing it, he seated himself at a table which was placed in front of the house under an ancient lime, on the branches of which many a cateran from the isles had swung in the wind. There his clerk arranged his papers, and while the poor dejected defaulters came slowly down the glen, communing sorrowfully together, Mr. Snaggs regaled himself on bread, cheese, and a dram which Callum Dhu placed before him, with more of old Highland hospitality than the factor merited.

The excitement was general; thirty-two families, the remnant of our once powerful tribe, all linked

and connected together by ties of blood, descent, and misfortune, hovered on the brink of ruin.

One by one, the tenants approached bonnet in hand, and before this man of power and parchment bent their heads that under braver auspices would not have stooped to the whistle of a cannon-ball. Poor people! their tremulous but earnest excuses for the lack of money, though their small rents varied only from fifteen to twenty pounds or so, and the half-uttered prayers for mercy, from those who could no more pay this, than liquidate the National Debt, were all the same.

One named Ian Mac Raonuil had been ten years a soldier, and though thrice wounded, was unpen sioned, as there was a *break* in his service, having enlisted twice. Latterly he had earned a scanty subsistence by fishing in the salt lochs beyond Ben Ora; he was now sixty years of age, and had seven children. He could pay the old rent, but was totally unable to pay the *new*, which was exactly triple what had ever been paid for his poor cottage within the memory of man. The factor shook his legal head—made an entry in his black-book—handed to the haggard-eyed Mac Raonuil (as he did to all) a pious tract, and summoned the next on his fatal roll.

‘Alisdair Mac Gouran.’

A fine-looking old Highlander, upwards of seventy years of age stepped forward. His tall and erect figure was clad in coarse blue cloth, and his long locks, which were white as snow, glittered in the sun, when he politely removed his bonnet before the grand vizier of the new proprietor, with the usual greeting, as he knew no language but *Gàidic*,

‘*Failte na maiduin duibh*’—(Hail—good morning to you).

‘*You* have your rent at least, I hope, Alisdair?’ said Snaggs, with a grin on his thin lips.

‘I have the old rent,’ replied the cotter with a sickly smile.

‘But the *new*?’

‘A chial! what would you be asking of me? I have the old rent, and by the sweat of my brow and the toil of my children’s tender hands have I earned it. It is here. Have mercy on us, Ephraim Snaggs, and do not double the rent. You stand between us and Sir Horace—between us and starvation. He will be advised by you for good or for evil—he is an Englishman, and like a Lowlander, can know no better. You are aware that my croft is small, and that my eight children have to support themselves by fishing; but the famine was sore three years ago; our potatoes failed, and as you know well our little crop of wheat was literally thrashed on the mountain by the wind. All that remained was devoured by the game of the Duchess. I then fell into arrears. I, like my fathers before me, for more generations than I can number, have regularly paid rent and kain to the uttermost farthing—for God and Mary’s sake, take pity on us now, Mr. Snaggs. Accept the old rental, but spare us the new—for a little time at least, or eleven human beings, including my old and bedridden mother, now past her ninetieth year, will be homeless and houseless!’

‘Mac Gouran,’ said Mr. Snaggs, with mock impressiveness, while his malevolent eye belied his bland voice; ‘the divine Walton says, “can *you* or any man charge God that he hath not given enough to make life happy?”’

‘God gave, but the duke, the lord, and the earl, have taken away,’ answered the Highlander, sharply.

Snaggs grinned again—took the money, gave a receipt, and with it a printed tract. Then he made another entry in his fatal book, and a groan escaped the breast of Mac Gouran, for too well did he know what that entry meant. His cot was in a picturesque

place where Sir Horace wished to plant some coppice; so the humble roof, where twenty generations of brave and hardy peasants had reared their sturdy broods, was doomed to be swept away.

All who came forward had the same, or nearly the same, excuses to make.

Gillespie Ruadh—or Red Archibald—Minnie's uncle, was also in default; but Snaggs, who had cast favourable eyes on his pretty niece, spoke to him with such excessive suavity that old Archy was quite puzzled.

Many professed their readiness and ability to pay the old rent, but their total incapacity to meet the new and exorbitant one, which they knew too well was but the plea, the pretence, on which they were to be driven from the glen, that it might be well stocked with deer and black cock. The last summoned by the factor was Callum Dhu Mac Ian.

My fosterer, who was viewed as a kind of champion by the people, pressed the hand of Minnie to reassure her, and with one stride appeared before Snaggs in his tattered Highland dress. He carried a gun in his hand, and had a couple of red foxes, hanging dead over his left shoulder. A dark cloud was hovering on Callum's brow and a lurid spark was gleaming in his eye, both indicative of the fire he was smothering in his heart—a fire fanned by the lamentations of the people, who were now collected in little family groups and communing together.

'How are you, Callum?' asked Snaggs, with a sardonic grin, holding out his left hand, as his right held a pen: but Callum drew back, saying proudly,

'Thank you—but I would not take the *left* hand of a king.'

'Well then, neer-do-weel,' said Snaggs, surveying the tall and handsome hunter with an eye of ill-disguised antipathy, 'what have you to say?'

'I am no neer-do-weel Mr. Snaggs,' replied Callum

loftily, and disdaining to touch his bonnet or bend his head.

‘Pay up then,’ was the pithy rejoinder.

‘I never was asked for rent before. I and mine have dwelt rent-free under the Mac Innons of Glen Ora since these hills had a name. We were hunters, father and son in succession, as you know well, and paid neither rent nor kail; we owed nothing to the chief but an armed man’s service in time of war and feud; so I see no reason why it should be otherwise now.’

‘I am afraid, my fine fellow, that the sheriff and the law will tell you another story.’

‘D—n both, with all my heart!’

‘What—dare you say so of the law?’

‘Yes—and it must learn, that instead of me paying to Sir Horace, he must, as his betters did of old, pay to me a sum for every fox’s head I bring to his hall.’

‘You are three years in arrear, Callum.’

‘Three hundred and more, perhaps, by your way of reckoning; but the last proprietor is dead—our debts died with him.’

‘Your idea is a very common one among these ignorant people,’ rejoined Snaggs, with a smile on his mouth and a glare in his wolfish eye; ‘but I must condescend to inform you, that the law of Scotland says, when a landlord or overlord dies, the rents past due belong to his executors. Sir Horace took the estate with all its debts, and the half-year’s rent then current, with all arrears, are his due; and this rule applies especially to grass-farms, as you will find in the case of Elliot *versus* Elliot, before the Lords of Council and Session in 1792; and the landlord has a hypothec for his rent over the crop and stocking; hence your furniture and plenishing are the property of Sir Horace Everingham.’

‘Ha-ha-ha! A broken table, two creepies, a kail-

pot and crocan; an old casheroim, some mouldy potatoes, and a milk bowie!

‘And remember,’ added Snaggs, impressively, ‘when a tenant who is bankrupt, remains, notwithstanding a notice to remove, the landlord may forcibly eject him in six days, as you will find in a case before the Lords of Council and Session in 1756. This is the wisdom, *not* the cunning of the law, my dear friend, for, as the learned Johnson says, “cunning differs from wisdom as much as twilight from open day.”’

‘A nis! a nis!’ cried Callum, in fierce irony, as he stamped his right foot passionately on the ground, and struck the butt of his gun on the turf; ‘Snake! by the Black Stone of Scone you come to it now!’

Minnie clung in terror to her fiery lover.

‘Laoighe mo chri,’ she whispered, ‘be calm and tempt him not!’

‘Mr. Snaggs, I am but a half-lettered Highlandman, and know not what you mean; but this I know—and here I speak for my chief Glen Ora, as well as for his people—the sun shines as bright, and the woods are as green, as ever they were twenty centuries ago, and yet we starve where our fathers lived in plenty! Why is this?’

‘Because you are a pack of lazy and idle fellows.’

‘We are *not*,’ retorted Callum, fiercely; ‘the dun hills swarm with fatted deer; the green woods are alive with game, and the blue rivers teem with fish; but who among us dares to use a net or gun? For now the land, with all that is in its waters, its woods, and in the air, belong to the stranger. God was kind to the poor Celts, Mr. Snaggs, in the days before *you* were born,’ he continued, with unintentional irony. ‘He gave us all those things, because He saw that the land, though beautiful, was very barren; but you, and such as you, have robbed us of them, and one day God will call you to an account for this. Listen:

in the days of the kelp manufacture, we made twenty thousand tons of it annually, here on the western coast alone—ay, we *lazy Highlandmen*, raising *two hundred thousand pounds sterling every year*. This work, with a cow's milk, butter, and cheese, a few potatoes, and a few sheep, for food and clothes, kept many a large family in happiness, in health, and comfort; rents were paid strictly and regularly in rent and kain, and arrears were never heard of. But the Parliament, influenced by the English manufacturers, DESTROYED US by taking the duty off barilla; and when Lord Binning said, that a hundred thousand clansmen in the West would starve, the English Chancellor of the Exchequer replied—"Let them starve—I care not!" may God and St. Colme forgive his soul the sin. There were only forty-five Scotsmen—time-serving and tongue-tied Scotsmen—in that House, opposed to six hundred wordy Englishmen, so how could our case be otherwise? Now, this was only thirty years ago, and since then arrears, ruin, misery, and famine have fallen upon the people of the glens; the castles of their chiefs have become English grouse-lodges, and the West Highlands are well nigh a voiceless wilderness, from the Mull of Cantyre to the Kyle of Duirness—two hundred and fifty good miles, Mr. Snaggs.'

'Where the deuce did *you* pick up all this stuff—this Lay of the Last Outlaw?' sneered Snaggs, with unfeigned surprise, while a murmur of assent from the poor tenantry followed Callum's words.

'I could tell you more, Snaggs, esquire and factor,' replied Callum, still maintaining his fire; 'esquire means nothing now in this world, though *factor* may have a terrible signification in the next; I can tell you, that these poor people whom you are about to evict—for I know their doom is sealed—have a right in the soil superior to that claimed by any landlord or overlord either. The Lowlanders, like the English,

were feudal serfs, while we—the Celts—were free-men, and our land belonged not to the chiefs, but to *the people*; it was ours; but lawyers came with their feu-charters and damnable legalities, and then the patriarchal clansman became what you find him now, something between a slave and an outcast—a wretch to be retained or expelled at the will of his landlord. The chief was a thing of our breath, whom we could make or unmake; but the land, with its mountains, woods, and waters, was the unalienable birthright of the people; it was their home—their dwelling-place—their grave! The King of Scotland could neither give it nor take it away, for it was the patrimony of the tribes of the Gael; and it was for this patriarchal right in the land that John of Moidart and Ranald Galda died at the battle of Blairleine!’

‘And so the land belonged to the Gael,’ continued Snaggs, with his calm sneer; ‘but who gave it to them?’

‘God!’ replied Callum, lifting his bonnet with reverence; ‘but no doubt, Mr. Snaggs, a lawyer like you will have more faith in feu-charters, and bonds, and bank-notes, than in Him; it is only to be expected of one of your dirty trade; and now I have only a few words more.’

‘I am glad to hear it.’

‘It would be a blessing for Scotland if you, and every man such as you, were groping among the weeds at the bottom of Loch Ora, each with a good-sized stone at his neck; and it would be a greater blessing if the unwieldy estates of her absentee proprietors were held by residents who would spend their rents—not in London and in Paris—but among the people from whom they are drawn, and on the soil from whence they are raised; and for this reason, Mr. Snaggs, and many others, the sooner Scotland is rid of her fustian chiefs and so-called nobility the better for herself. So much, Mr. Snaggs, for the Lay of the Last Outlaw!’

With these words Callum gave the table a kick, that sent it flying right over the head of Snaggs, whose religious tracts, rent-books, papers, and luncheon, were scattered in every direction by this champion of Celtic rights, who shouldered his fowling-piece, and hastened up the glen to meet me, and relate all that had passed.

CHAPTER VIII.

MINNIE.

THOUGH few men in their senses ever think of consulting Hansard, I may mention, that the debates in 1823 will be found to corroborate much of what Callum advanced in his own peculiar way.

Minnie, who was an amiable and good-natured girl, became alarmed by the sudden violence of her lover, and its probable effect upon the temper of Mr. Snaggs; she busied herself in collecting all that worthy's papers, dockets, and religious tracts, which had been spilled and scattered abroad by the unexpected capsize of the table, at which he had been seated with much legal dignity and assumed benignity of aspect.

'Thank you, my good girl,' said Snaggs, on recovering his breath and lawyer-like composure; 'thank you—I shall not forget this.'

'Thank *you*, sir, a thousand times,' replied Minnie, curtsying very low, as she thought of her old uncle's unpaid arrears.

Minnie Mac Omish was a very pretty girl; under a little lace cap, her silky brown hair was braided in two thick masses over her temples and little ears, and enough remained to form a heavy knot behind, where

two very bewildering little curls, that were the joy of Callum's heart, played upon her plump white neck. Her eyes were large, blue, and expressive; her bust full and perfect; her figure firm and graceful, and a healthy bloom, that came with the free mountain air, tinged her rounded cheeks with red.

'You are a good girl,' continued the factor, slipping a half-crown into her hand, 'and this will buy a ribbon for your pretty neck,' he added, kissing her cheek, much to Minnie's surprise.

'Oh, Mr. Snaggs,' said she, anxiously, and with tears, as the worthy elder still lingered near her, after mounting his pony, 'I hope you will forget Callum's fury, and show some mercy to my poor old uncle, Gillespie Ruadh—he is old—his wife is sick, and they have seven children.'

'The mystical number seems to be the established one in Glen Ora, my dear,' said Snaggs, retaining the girl's hand in his, despite her timid efforts to withdraw it; 'by-the-by, lass, can you tell me how *many* cattle are in the glen?'

'No.'

'You do not know?'

'We never count them, sir.'

'Why?'

'It is so unlucky.'

'Whew!—how?'

'Some would be sure to die after we had reckoned them; and St. Colme knows we have few enough for the poor people.'

This was said, of course, in Gaelic, but Snaggs understood it, for, pressing her hand, he added, more kindly,—

'My good girl, I wish I had you in my own house at Inverness (I am a quiet old bachelor), that I might teach you the folly of believing in such personages as St. Colme, and in these old remnants of popery and superstition, which warp the ideas of the

people, and prevent the diffusion of a purer religion into these barbarous districts. Be assured, my dear girl, "that when religion is neglected," as the divine Blair says, "there can be no regular or steady practice of the duties of morality."

'But how about my poor old uncle, sir?' she urged again, with tears in her eyes.

'Gillespie Ruadh is long—very long in arrear,' said Snaggs, pretending to consult his note-book, while squinting over it, at the pretty face that was so anxiously upturned to his; 'let me see—let me see—'

'In arrears?'

'Ay, heavily—not a payment has he made since Whitsunday was two years.'

'Alas! I know that,' said Minnie, beginning to weep.

'Now, don't spoil those pretty eyes of yours, Minnie—'

'What shall I tell my uncle?'

'Oho,' whispered Snaggs, over whose eyes there shot a strange and baleful gleam; 'he asked *you* to intercede with me?'

'Yes, sir,' replied Minnie, with hesitation.

'Meet me to-night at dusk—'

'Where?'

'At the Clach-na-greiné,' said Snaggs, sinking his voice lower still.

'But why at dusk, and why at such a lonely place?'

'Is not one place the same as another—when the spirit of God is everywhere? But tell no one of this; and when there, I will give you a message—ay, it may be a receipt in full for Gillespie.'

'Heaven will reward you, sir.'

'It rewards all who have faith, even as a grain of mustard-seed, Minnie,' said the factor, touching his garron with his riding-switch. 'Can you read English, Minnie?'

‘A little, sir.’

‘Then take these tracts, “The Sinner’s Deathbed” —“The Pious Policeman”—“The God-fearing Footman”—read them to your friends, and say they were given by Snaggs the factor, whom they hate so much—and see that you have all the contents by rote to-night, when we meet at moonrise near the Clach-na-greiné. But say not a word to any human being on the subject, or the sequel may prove the worse for your uncle Gillespie Ruadh—do not forget Minnie—at moonrise;’ and with these words and an impressive gleam in his glassy deceitful eyes, Mr. Snaggs trotted down the glen to join the minister in prayer at the bedside of a dying cotter, and thereafter to dine with Sir Horace at the new manor-house of Glen Ora.

CHAPTER IX.

THE RED PRIEST OF APPLECROSS.

I HEARD, with the utmost alarm, the relation of all that had passed, and felt assured that my doom and the doom of our people were sealed. To Mr. Snaggs, Callum had said nothing more than I would have said, but the chances are that, had I encountered him, my bearing might have been more violent.

‘The glen will be swept like Glentuire,’ said Callum, as we descended the hill slowly and thoughtfully; ‘swept bare as my hand, devil a doubt of it.’

‘And the old jointure-house, Callum—our last home on earth—sick and ailing as my poor mother is, how is she ever to be got out of it?’

‘Never alive, I fear me.’

I shuddered at his answer, for he as well as I knew the strange old tradition connected with it.

Lachlan Mohr Mac Innon, about twenty years before his fall at Worcester, had been seized by a covenanting and reformatory spirit, and while the fervour lasted, had demolished an ancient chapel of St. Colme, and with the stones thereof, built the said jointure-house. This was considered an act of sacrilege so deep, that the Mac Donalds of Keppoch, and other Catholic tribes, were on the point of marching in hostile array to Glen Ora, when the influence of a wandering monk of the Scottish mission restrained them. This personage, whose adventures have been given to the world as the Capuchino Scozzese, and who is still remembered in Ross-shire as the Red Priest of Applecross, cursed the deed in Latin and Gaelic, and predicted, that as Lachlan Mohr had built a house for the dowagers of his family to live in, not one should ever *die* there; and strange enough, though it had been inhabited for about two hundred years, no member of our family was ever known to pay the debt of nature within it; though many who were sick, ailing, or longing for death, after dwelling long there, perished by violent ends or sudden diseases elsewhere.

Angus Mac Innon, who fought at Culloden, left a widow, a daughter of Barcaldine, who attained a vast age, and lived beyond a century, attenuated, bed-ridden, sickly, and querulous, in the last stages of emaciation and second childhood. Longing for a crisis to her sufferings, in the same year in which her present Majesty ascended the throne, she insisted on being conveyed on a pallet into the open air, and, like the Lady May, of Cadboll, to defy fate, and test the truth of the terrible prediction. Four of our people, Alisdair Mac Gouran, Ian Mac Raonuill, Red Gillespie, and Mac Ian, the father of my fosterer, bore her slowly and carefully on a palliasse; and whether it might be the result of fancy acting on a highly-nervous temperament, or the weakness of a

system worn away with age, I know not; but to the no small horror of her bearers, the aged widow of Angus expired at the instant she was passing the threshold.

Now, my mother had long been sickly and almost bedridden, and thus though I could scarcely put much faith in the prediction of the Red Priest of Applecross, which had been impressed upon me in childhood by my nurse, the mother of Callum Dhu, as something to be spoken of in whispers, and thought of with awe, yet I looked forward with vague apprehension to our expulsion from the house; as she was wont to affirm that she was so feeble and worn by time, that the life in her was not natural, and that if once she passed *the door* of the fated mansion, her doom would be similar to that of Angus' widow. A strange terror seized me with this thought, for my mother was my only tie to the glen, to my country—to existence itself!

Weary of dark conjectures, and with a heart full of dim forebodings, while Callum and Minnie were in another part of the house, I entered my mother's little parlour. She was again seated at a little tripod table, with her bible and her knitting before her.

'You know all, Allan,' said she, anxiously.

'Yes, mother,' said I, and flinging myself into a chair, I pressed my hands upon my temples, and then we relapsed into moody silence.

My mother sighed deeply.

What need was there for words to express our anxious thoughts? From time to time I gazed earnestly at my only parent—my only living relative. Age had traced deep lines upon her pale sad face; but care had planted furrows deeper still. We sat long silent; at last she said in a trembling voice—

'The evil day is coming, Allan, when the fire on this hearth—so long boasted as the highest in Scotland—will be quenched at last.'

I bit my lips till the blood came. Poverty had made me as powerless as if a wall of adamant enclosed me, and I could see no means of extrication from our present difficulties.

‘Even money if we had it would not satisfy them, mother,’ said I.

‘Why?’

‘Because Sir Horace is resolved on having this house pulled down, and a new shooting-box built in its stead.’

‘A little time, Allan—dear Allan—would have made *me* at least independent of this poor dwelling, unless indeed the curse that was laid on Lachlan Mhor——’

‘Oh, mother, do not speak or think of that!’ I exclaimed, hastily, while half kneeling and half embracing her, ‘there is to be a gathering on the Braes, and a shooting-match. Miss Everingham gives a hundred sovereigns—think of that, mother, a hundred sovereigns to the best rifle-shot. I may win them, or Callum, and that prize would pay a portion of our debts; hear me, mother, dear mother! and if I lose, there is still hope for us in Callum. We have done this man, Sir Horace, a service—Callum Dhu saved him from a dreadful death at the Black Water—might we not ask a little time, a little mercy at least, for your sake, mother?’

‘No! I would rather perish than stoop to sue from such as he, for mercy or for grace. No, no; if it is written in the book of fate that the stranger shall rule here, then let our glen be swept bare as the Braes of Lochaber. But oh, *mo mhac! mo mhac!* (my son! my son!) your home and grave will lie in a land that is distant far from mine.’

‘*Mo mhathair! mo mhathair!*’ I exclaimed in a wild burst of grief at her words, which I vainly endeavour to give here literally in English; ‘even when you are gone, I cannot go to that distant land

beyond the Atlantic. There is no heather there, nor aught that speaks of home; the broad salt sea shall never roll between your resting-place and mine. I will trust to the honesty, the manliness, and the sympathy of Sir Horace; he will never be so cruel as to unhouse the widow of a brave Highland officer, who carried the colours of the Black Watch at the Battle of the Pyramids, and led three assaults at Burgos and Badajoz.'

My mother was a Scottish matron of the old school—a genuine Highlander, with all a Highlander's impulsive spirit, warmth of heart and temper—their pride and their prejudices if you will; but honest prejudices withal, of that bluff olden time which scorned and spurned the cold-blooded conventionality of the new. My suggestions or hopes of temporizing with Sir Horace, whom she could never be brought to view otherwise than as a sornor in the land, and usurper of our patrimony, though the poor man had bought it legally, honestly, and fairly at its then market-price, brought on such a paroxysm of irritation, sorrow, and weakness, that I became seriously alarmed for her life, and committed her to the care of Minnie and old Mhari, whose *fion-na-uisge batha*, or wine distilled from the birch, was considered in Glen Ora a sovereign remedy 'for all the ills that flesh is heir to;' and was deemed moreover very conducive to strength and longevity.

I was now summoned by Callum, who earnestly begged my company, if I could spare an hour with him.

CHAPTER X.

THE STONE OF THE SUN.

I HAVE now arrived at a point in the history of that acute factor, pious elder, and severe moralist, Mr. Snaggs, which I would willingly, but cannot omit, without leaving in my narrative a hiatus which every dramatist, novelist, historian, and biographer would unanimously condemn. With the suspicion natural to a Celt, Minnie mistrusted Ephraim Snaggs, and informed Callum of the proposed meeting.

Callum's eyes flashed fire! he grasped his skene, and bit his lips, with a dark expression on his brow; for it was well known in the district that two handsome girls had already been wiled by Snaggs to distant towns, where, after a time, all trace of them was lost; and when questioned by their friends (he had taken care to *evict* and expatriate their relations), he had only groaned, turned up his eyes, twiddled his thumbs, and quoted Blair.

The peculiarity of his request, the solitude of the place, and its traditionary character, excited the keenest suspicion in the mind of Callum Dhu, and he begged of me to accompany him to the trysting-place, to which we accordingly proceeded, and there ensconced ourselves among the thick broom, juniper-bushes, and long wavy bracken, about an hour or so after sunset.

In a wild and solitary rift or ravine, that opened at the back of Ben Ora, and the rugged sides of which were covered by the light feathery mountain-ash, the silver birch, the hazel, and the alder, amid which the roe and the fallow-deer made their lair, stood the Clach-na-greiné, or *stone of the sun*. A huge misshapen block, on which some quaint figures and

runes or words in an ancient and barbarous language were discernible; it was a relic of the Druids, whose religion, a corruption of the older faith of the Magi, had inspired them to worship the God of Day as the essence of fire. Here had the spirit of Loda descended on their souls, and here in latter times the posterity of Mac Ionhuin (or the Son of Love) were wont to meet in arms, to hail and inaugurate their young chiefs; here justice was administered, and the guilty were flung into the Poul-a-baidh, or drowning-pool; here the Red Priest of Applecross anathematized the sacrilege of Lachlan Mohr; and here in 'the glimpses of the moon,' the famous white stag of Loch Ora, which was believed to be bullet-proof, and to have a miraculous longevity, was seen at times.

In the centre of this obelisk was a round hole, through which the lovers of the district had been wont for ages to join hands in testimony of their mutual betrothal: this formed a strong and sacred tie of mutual fidelity, which none had been known to break without suffering a violent death.

It happened as old Mhari had told me a hundred times, and as Callum Dhu was ready to affirm on oath, that among the men who followed my father into the ranks of the Black Watch, there was one who had betrothed himself solemnly to a girl of the glen, through the hole of the Clach-na-greiné. Forgetting both him and her trothplight, this girl fell in love with a handsome stranger whom she met at a harvest-home in Glentuiric. He danced with her repeatedly, and whispered of her beauty and of his passion until her head was turned, and her heart so far won, that he persuaded her to cross the mountain of Ben Ora with him; but her confidence being mingled with fear, she begged of a companion to follow them a little way. The moon was bright, and as they proceeded, she observed with growing

alarm that he carefully avoided every stream and rill of running water, and that his face, though manly and beautiful, was deathly pale in the white moonlight. They descended into the ravine, and anon were seen in the full blaze of the moon, near the great rough column of the Clach-na-greiné. A shadowy cloud obscured it for a time. When it passed away, the maiden and her pale lover had disappeared. The Druid obelisk stood on its grassy mound in silence and loneliness. The damsel was never seen again. Her earthly lover also proved false; he married a Spanish wife, and after escaping the whole Peninsular war, was killed at the side of old Ian Mac Raonuil by the *last* shot that was fired from the hill of Toulouse.

A hundred such traditions combined to make the place wild and unearthly. The path to it from Glen Ora lay through a skeleton forest of old fir-trees, which, being entirely denuded of bark and foliage, were white, bleached, and ghastly in aspect; while the stone was generally covered by numbers of the hideous reptile which is known in some parts of the Highlands as the *bratag*, and is spotted black and white, and when eaten by cattle, causes them to swell and die.

But enough of the Clach-na-greiné.

Minnie had not been many minutes seated on a fragment of rock near it, and had barely exchanged the appointed signal with Callun—a verse of a song, to which he replied by a low whistle—when Mr. Snaggs, who had left his pony among the blasted pines, was seen hastening to the rendezvous with a cat-like step and stealthy eye.

‘I am punctual, you will perceive, my dear girl,’ said he, taking her hand kindly in his; ‘the broad white moon seems just to touch the huge black shoulder of Ben Ora, and throws the shadow of that grim obelisk along this horrid ravine. If one were

to shout here, would the sound be heard in Glen Ora, think you?

‘No, sir,’ replied Minnie, with a shudder.

‘You are very confident or courageous, my dear Minnie, to venture so far to meet *me*,’ said he, in his most winning tone. We were close by and heard everything.

‘Courage is nothing new in Glen Ora,’ said Minnie.

‘But your people belonged to Glentuire?’

‘Yes, of old,’ answered Minnie, proudly; ‘the Mac Omishes of Chaistal Omish.’

‘A most euphonious name—are you sure?’

‘Do you doubt it?’

‘Yes—for so beautiful a face as yours, Minnie never came of the race of Glentuire.’

‘They were braver than they were bonnie, perhaps, Mr. Snaggs,’ said Minnie, with reserve.

‘But now about your uncle’s farm, Minnie—it lies with yourself to keep Gillespie Ruadh in the glen and it lies with you to level his cottage to the earth and drive him into a Lowland workhouse, or to the distant shores of America.’

‘With *me*?’ was the breathless query.

‘Sit down on this green bank and listen to me. We must be wary, my dear girl, in treating with the denizens of this glen, for they are sinful ones—sloth is sin, and they are slothful,’ said Mr. Snaggs, drawing close to her side, and patting one of her pretty hands with his right hand, while it was firmly clutched by his left; ‘we must be wary—religion is the life of the world, and wickedness is always its own punishment.’

‘Sir?’ was the perplexed interjection of Minnie.

‘I was about to remark, my dear,’ resumed the moralist, putting an arm round the waist of the girl, who became flushed, and who trembled violently, ‘that we should take care of the beginnings of sin;

but as the divine Wilson remarks, "nobody is exceedingly wicked all at once;" thus I might kiss you, as I do *now*—so might a young man; but I do so, with all the emotions of a father stirred within me—yes Minnie, the emotions of a father, an elder, and a factor; yet were a young man to do *this*, as the divine Blair remarks——'

'But about my uncle's farm?' urged poor Minnie, in great perplexity; 'we have long expected a rich cousin from India, where, as his letters said, his fortune and his liver were growing larger every day; but he has never appeared—and then my uncle omitted to sow his corn last year in such a way as to save it from the birds and fairies.'

It was now Mr. Snaggs' turn to look perplexed.

'From the fairies?' said he.

'Yes—for after a field is sown, our farmers mix some grain and sand together, and scatter it broadcast, saying at every handful, "the sand for the fairies, and the corn for the birds;" and these mixed grains become all that the birds and fairies take. But the minister told him that this was a sinful superstition—so the crop rotted in the ground, or was destroyed between the Marquis's grouse and the mildew.'

'Hush—did you not hear something stir among these bushes?' said Snaggs, with alarm, as Callum raised, and ducked down his head suddenly; 'pooh! a polecat or a blackcock—listen to me, Minnie; I am always kind to *you*, whatever the glensmen may say of me.'

'Yes, sir.'

'Seldom is there a time, that I come over the hills from Inverness, without bringing something for you—a ribbon, a rosette, a gaud or a gown-piece—eh.'

'True, sir—and many, many thanks for your kindness to a poor girl like me.'

‘Not at all—not at all, when she is so sweet and pretty, Minnie.’

‘Sir!’

‘Do you not understand me?’

‘No.’

‘Then give me another kiss to begin with.’

Minnie innocently enough tendered her soft cheek, to which the fatherly Snaggs applied his lips like a leech, and his eyes began to sparkle, as he surveyed the fine slope of her shoulders and contour of her bust. He became excited, and retaining one of her hands in his, clasped her tightly by the waist.

‘I have ever been kind to your uncle, Minnie.’

She was about to break away, but these words restrained her, and she gazed anxiously into the eyes of Snaggs, who, therefore, kissed her so tenderly, that I had much ado to retain Callum in his lair among the long bracken. Poor Minnie, in her distress, looked beautiful—her face was so full of expression.

‘I have kept Gillespie Ruadh in his farm without raising its rent, which would have been rather futile, as he has not paid a sixpence to me for these past two years.’

‘God will reward you, sir,’ said Minnie, weeping.

‘Cannot *you* reward me too, Minnie?’

‘I, sir—a poor girl without a halfpenny in the world!’

‘You. Would you not like to leave the glen and enter into the service of a lady in the Lowlands. I know one, a fine and motherly old dame, whose strict, moral, and religious principles—’

‘No—no, I could not leave Glen Ora and the Mac Innons.’

‘The Mac Innons,’ laughed Snaggs, ‘will soon be but a memory here: long ere this day twelve months, the grass will grow as green on their hearths, as it waves on the hearths of Glentuirc.’

‘Then I will still have Callum Dhu,’ murmured Minnie, in a voice that trembled.

‘Callum Dhu,’ reiterated Snaggs, with scornful impatience; ‘what is he that you should regret him?’

‘My betrothed husband,’ said Minnie, with honest pride; ‘and none can reap in harvest or handle the cashcroimh like he; but he preferred to be a hunter like his fathers before him; and at shinty, wrestling, racing, tossing the stone, the hammer, or the caber, there is no one on the Braes of Loch Ora like Callum Dhu Mac Ian.’

‘Stuff! These qualities, lassie, only fit him for the trade of a housebreaker. Better would it be for him if he read his prayers; for as the divine Blair sayeth, “every prayer sent up from a secret retirement is listened to.” See, here is money, dear Minnie,’ continued the wily Snaggs, holding before her a handful of bank-notes; ‘those wretched pieces of paper which cause so much misery and crime, will be yours if——’

‘If—what?’

The tempter whispered in her ear, and his eyes gleamed in the moonlight.

She uttered a half-stifled scream.

‘For Heaven’s sake let me go, Mr. Snaggs, or I shall scream for help,’ said Minnie, as a rosy crimson replaced the paleness of her cheek.

‘None can hear you.’

‘Be not so sure of that,’ she retorted, with a scornful smile.

‘Remember your uncle, his sick wife and family! Why are you so afraid?’ he whispered; ‘I will be your protector for life, Minnie, and will open up a thousand new scenes and pleasures to you. Let me teach you that you were not born to live always in this dull and hideous glen. Oh, Minnie, have my eyes not told you the secret of my heart?’

‘I am getting quite faint,’ said Minnie, overcome by excitement and alarm.

‘Apply my handkerchief to your nostrils—this strange perfume may revive you.’

He placed his voluminous silk handkerchief close to her face. In a moment a tremor passed over the form of Minnie, and she sank senseless on the grassy mound of the Clach-na-greiné. With a triumphant chuckle the pious moralist knelt down and threw his arms around her; but in the next moment a fierce shout rang in his startled ears, and the strong hand of Callum Dhu was on his throat, while the blade of a bare skene glittered before his eyes.

For a moment these two men glared at each other like a snake and a tiger. In the next, the frail moralist was dashed upon the turf, and the iron fingers of Callum compressed his throat like a vice, until his eyeballs were starting from their sockets.

‘Mac Innon,’ cried my fosterer, ‘what shall I do with him? we are near the old Hill of Justice—his life in your hands—say but the word, and the last breath is in the nostrils of our tormentor!’

‘Let us drag him to prison,’ said I.

‘Prison—ha—but there is none nearer than the Castle of Inverness.’

‘Then let us fling him into the Poul-a-baidh, where the bones of many a better man are whitening among the weeds.’

‘Right—mona mon dioul! but few stones will be on your cairn, dog!’

And snatching by the throat and heels the terrified wretch, who could scarcely gasp for mercy, we rushed to the edge of the pool, where justice was executed of old, and flung him headlong in.

‘The curse of the Red Priest be on him!’ cried Callum, as Snaggs disappeared with a scream of terror. Anon, he rose to the surface, floundering, dashing, and bellowing for aid, until he laid hold of

the long weeds and broad-bladed water-docks, that fringed the margin, and after being nearly suffocated by the floating watercresses (of which, I suppose, he would in future share the horror of the learned Scaliger), he scrambled out in a woful plight, and ran towards his pony, which was cropping the scanty herbage that grew among the blasted pines. The moment he was mounted, he turned towards us a face that was ghastly and white with fear and fury; he was minus a hat, and his grizzled hair hung lank and dripping about his ears.

‘Scoundrels!’ he cried, ‘for this outrage you shall both rot in the Castle of Inverness.’

‘I will not be the only one of my race who has been within its towers,’ said I; ‘but they suffered for fighting brave battles on the mountain side—not for ducking a yelping hound like you.’

In token of vengeance, he shook his clenched hand at us, and galloped away. Long before this, the situation of Minnie attracted all our attention, and excited our wonder and alarm.

‘Laoighe mo chri—speak to me—hear me!’ implored Callum, kneeling beside her on the grass and taking her tenderly in his arms. But she remained quite insensible and unconscious of all he said to her.

‘By what witchcraft did she faint thus?’ said Callum—‘she, a strong and healthy girl—so full of life and spirit too!’

‘Snaggs spoke of a perfume in his handkerchief.’

‘A perfume,’ responded the black-browed Celt, grinding his teeth; ‘what could it be?’

‘Oh—this phial may tell,’ said I, picking up a little bottle which lay on the turf beside Minnie. It was labelled ‘Chloroform.’

‘Dioul! what is that?’ asked Callum.

‘An essence invented by a Lowland physician. It makes even the strongest man so insensible for a

time, that you might cut off his leg and draw all his teeth without having the slightest resistance offered.'

'Insensible!'

'Ay, as a stone; look at our poor Minnie.'

'The unchanged villain!' exclaimed Callum, swelling with new wrath; 'dioul! why did I not gash his throat with my skene as I would have scored a stag? He had some dark and sinister end in view; he deemed Minnie but a poor, ignorant, and unprotected Highland girl, who knew no language but her native Gaelic, and had no idea of aught beyond the sides of the glen; but as far as grass grows and wind blows will I follow and have vengeance on him!'

Minnie recovered slowly and with difficulty: she was sick and had an overwhelming headache, with such a weakness in all her limbs, that we were compelled to support, and almost carry her between us to Glen Ora. Callum mingled his endearments with muttered threats of vengeance on Snaggs, and as I knew that he would keep them too, I was not without anxiety as to the mode in which his wrath might develop itself.

Two days after this affair, on the application of Mr. Snaggs, the sheriff of the county granted warrants of removal against every family in the glen; and these long-dreaded notices of eviction were duly served in form of law by a messenger-at-arms, in the name of 'Fungus Mac Fee, Esquire, Advocate and Sheriff,' a position that worthy had gained, after the usual lapse of time spent in sweeping the Scottish Parliament House with the tail of his gown.

Six days now would seal our doom!

Such was the result of poor Minnie's intercession for her old uncle, with the admirer of the 'divine Blair.'

CHAPTER XI.

MY MOTHER.

My mother was now so frail, weakened by long illness and by being almost constantly confined to bed, that I dared not communicate to her the fatal 'notice,' which had been served on *us*, in common with all the people in the glen; but I never hoped that she would remain long ignorant of the ruin that hovered over all, while the garrulous old Mhari was daily about her sick-bed.

The moanings and mutterings of that aged crone, together with her occasional remarks whispered in Gaelic, of course to Minnie, soon acquainted the poor patient that every door in the glen, including her own, had been chalked with a mark of terrible significance; and that the crushed remnant of a brave old race which had dwelt by the Ora for ages—yea, before the Roman eagles cowered upon the Scottish frontier—was at last to be swept away.

It gave her a dreadful shock—our fate she knew was fixed: and while Mhari, Minnie, and the older people of the glen, croaked incessantly among themselves of the old legend of the Red Priest and 'the curse he had laid on the stones of the jointure-house,' my mind was a chaos; for I knew not on what hand to turn, or where to seek a shelter for my mother's head. She had her little pension as a captain's widow—true; but we had so many dependants who clung to us in the good old Celtic fashion, and for whom our little farm had furnished subsistence, that to be driven from it was to tear asunder a hundred tender and long-cherished ties, which few but a Highlander can comprehend.

A little hope was kindled in my breast, by my foster-brother reminding me of that which (in the hurry of other thoughts I had forgotten)—the great annual gathering on the Braes of Loch Ora being now almost at hand; and that he or I—it mattered not which—might win one of the handsome prizes which the generosity of Cluny Mac Pherson, the Laird of Invercauld, and other true Highland gentlemen, offered to the men of the mountains on such occasions, to foster their ancient spirit, to develop their hardihood, and excite their emulation in feats of strength and skill.

‘Mother,’ I whispered, and stooped over her bed, ‘the gathering takes place in three days—the daughter of the Englishman——’

‘Sir Horace—well,’ she muttered with a sigh of anger.

‘Yes, dear mother—Laura Everingham and her friend, Miss Clavering, have made up a purse of guineas (some say fifty, others a hundred) with a silver brooch, for the best rifle-shot, and Callum and I have sworn to win it if we can.’

‘How many better marksmen than either of you have, ere this, sworn the same thing?’

‘But God will aid me, mother. I will shoot neither with pride nor with a desire to emulate any one; but to find bread for our starving household—to satisfy the cravings of the villain Snaggs, and to keep this roof a little—a very little—longer over your head.’

‘And this prize you say——’

‘Will, at least, be fifty guineas, mother—think of that.’

‘I do,’ she moaned, ‘and weep the day when a son of mine contends in the ring with gillies and sword-players for fifty paltry pieces of gold!’

‘Dear mother—do not speak thus; what would you have me to do?’

‘Scorn alike the prize and the donor.’

‘The prize I may—but the donor—ah, mother, you know her not; but think of this money and all it may do, if fairly and honestly won; how long is it since we saw fifty guineas at once, mother? It will pay part of our arrears, and win us a little time, if it cannot win us mercy from Snaggs and his master.’

I dared not add that I had also in my breast a desire to appear to advantage before the winning daughter of Sir Horace, and the lingering hope of eclipsing the holiday Captain Clavering and that mustachioed popinjay Mr. Snobleigh, who had been rifle-practising incessantly to gain the ladies’ prize. Yielding to the pressure of our affairs, and, perhaps, to her inability to argue the point with me, my mother gave her reluctant consent that I *might compete*.

She was very weak and faint, and before I left her, beckoned me to kiss her cheek. Then she burst into tears, and this sorely startled me—for it was long since I had seen her weep. Her great lassitude required composure, and more than all, it required many comforts, which, in that sequestered district, and with straitened means, she was compelled to relinquish: thus, when I addressed her now, a time always elapsed before she could collect her scattered energies to understand or reply to me. This prostration of a spirit once so proud, so fiery and energetic—this emaciation of a form once so stately and so beautiful, with those gentle hands now so tremulous—those kind eyes now so sad and sunken, and those weak, querulous whisperings of affection, with the pallor of that beloved face, smote heavily on my heart, which was traversed by more than one sharp pang, as the terrible conviction came upon me, that she could not be long with us

now. Yet Mhari, Minnie, and Callum Dhu, all strong in the belief of the legend of the Red Priest of Applecross, believed that she was perfectly safe while enclosed by the four charmed walls of the old jointure-house.

‘The lamp may flicker,’ said Mhari, with a solemn shake of her old grey head; ‘but, please God, it can never go out while we keep it here.’

Accompanied by Alisdair Mac Gouran, Ian Mac Raonuill, Gillespie Ruadh, the three patriarchs of the glen, and all the other male inhabitants, among whom were five-and-twenty sturdy fellows, a few being clad in tartan, but by far the greater number wearing the coarse dark-blue homespun coats, ungainly trousers, and broad bonnets of the peasantry, with four pipers in front (in the Highlands everything partakes of the warlike), we marched from Glen Ora, and crossing the shoulder of the great Ben, descended towards the Braes, where the gathering was to be held, about ten miles distant. Callum carried my rifle as well as his own, and his confidence that we would win Laura Everingham’s prize was somewhat amusing; but it arose less from his certainty of our skill than from the fact of our bullets being cast in a famous mould or *calme*, of unknown metal, which had belonged to the father of old Mhari, who was never known to miss his aim. In short, it was universally believed in the glen to be enchanted. All the glensmen had in their bonnets a tuft of heather and the badge of Mac Innon, a twig of the mountain pine; and most of them wore the clan tartan plaid, which is of bright red striped with green. We brought with us our own provisions, cheese, bannocks, and whisky, which last never paid duty to Her Majesty, as the reader may be assured.

Though my suit of tartans was far from rich or handsome—nay, I might almost say that it was very

plain—it was correct, and with three feathers of the iolair in my bonnet, and my father's old 42nd's claymore, having *Biodh treun*—be valiant—inscribed on its blade, my pistols, horn, skene-dhu and biodag, I marched over the crest of the hill which shaded our Highland glen with as much pride in my heart as if all the well-armed Mac Innons that ever followed my fathers of old were behind me; for this native pride, and a glow of old romance, as a poor Highland gentleman, were all that remained to me now.

The summer morning was bright and beautiful; the air was fresh and keen, and we drank it in at every pore; the unclouded sun was in all his brilliance; the pipes rang loud and clear; and Callum, with three or four others, sang one of the warlike songs of Ian Lom. The gallant coileach-dhu (or black cock) rose before us at times; the uscag sang merrily among the black whin-bushes, and the mountain-bee and the butterfly skimmed over the purple heather-bells. My heart grew light; I forgot for a time that my mother was sick and dying—that ruin hovered over us; and, boylike, I thought only of the sports of the day, and the glory of our people carrying off the prizes on the same green braes where Lachlan Mohr had routed Clan Dhiarmid an Tuire in the days of the great Cavalier.

The spirit of those who accompanied me rose also. Even Ephraim Snaggs, his notices of eviction, and his legal terrors, were forgotten. The veteran Mac Raonuill marched with his head up and his war-medal glittering, as he told old yarns of the brave Black Watch, and Callum urged that we, this day, should give place to none; but remember, that the Mac Innons were the *head* of the five tribes—the Mac Gregors, Grants, Mac Nabs and Mac Alpines, who have ever been linked together in Celtic tradition, as the descendants of five royal brothers, and are hence known as the Siòl Alpin. The Highlander broods

over these old memories, and treasures them up as his only inheritance, and they are his best and highest incentive to noble daring in the hour of battle, and to kindly emotions of clanship in the day of peace.

‘Blessed,’ says Andrew Picken, ‘be that spirit of nationality or clanship, or by whatever name the principle may be called, which opens up the heart of man to his brother man; and in spite of the trained selfishness to which he is educated in artificial life, bids the warm and glorious feeling of sympathy gush forth in circumstances of sorrow and of trouble, to cheer the drooping heart of the unfortunate, and prevent his swearing hatred to his own species.’ *

CHAPTER XII.

THE GATHERING.

THE day was clear and beautiful; the unclouded sun, I have said, shone in all his splendour through a summer sky. The vast amphitheatre of hills which surround the braes of Loch Ora were mellowed in the sunny haze, or the silver vapour exhaled from the little pools of water that dotted all the heath-clad plain. At the base of Ben Ora, which towered above the braes, the monarch of all the adjacent mountains, the gathering took place. The lower part of the hill was dotted by a line of snow-white tents and marquees, over which waved various flags and streamers. Amid these tents were a number of carriages; but the horses had been untraced, unbitted, and were quietly cropping the herbage, or enjoying their feeds

* The Black Watch.

of corn in the background. A great oval space was formed by the spectators who had crowded hither from all quarters to witness the games; the tall ruins of an ancient tower, once the stronghold of the Thanes of Loch Ora, enclosed one end of this oval; the waters of the dark-blue loch, rolling up to the base of the mighty mountain, enclosed the other; and here the red-funnelled steamers from Glasgow, Oban, and Inverness, were disgorging their passengers in hundreds at every trip. The slope of Ben Ora resembled a parterre of flowers, so varied were the dresses of the ladies. Fringed parasols of the most brilliant colours were fluttering on the soft wind; and the blue sunshades and broad bloomer-hats of the fairer portion of the assembly, mingled with the wide-awakes, Glengarry bonnets, and those peculiar tartan caps or crush-hats, which, with the checked coat and 'fast' waistcoat, generally indicate Messrs. Brown, Jones, and Robinson—the thorough Cockney when touring in the Highlands. Appetized by the long ride, drive, or march to the Braes, or by the morning's sail up the sunlit loch, already the merry-makers had begun to uncork their bottles and unpack their hampers, amid a fund of laughter, frolics, and nonsense; and white cloths were spread on the grass, on the roofs of carriages, or any other available place; while champagne cooled in the mountain stream, and pale Bass, Guinness XX Dublin stout, *uiskey*, cold grouse, veal and venison pies, tongue, fowl, milk-punch, ices, hock, and seltzer-water, with all other accessories for pic-nicking were in requisition. In other places were knots or groups of Highlanders, talking in guttural Gaelic, laughing or croaking over their ills, or drinking toasts—'up with horn, and down with corn'—'the mountains and valleys,' &c., while troops of children, bare-headed and bare-legged, swarmed and gambolled about them, filling the air with shrill and strange cries of delight.

Among the *élite* of the company was a stately Duchess, whose family have long been notorious in the annals of cruelty and eviction; and whose glens have been swept of thousands of brave men, after the artifices of an infamous factor, the oppression of the game-laws, the destruction of the kelp manufacture, the slaughter of the flower of the clans in the Peninsular war, and other Highland evils, had driven the people to starvation and despair! There were present also a couple of chattering countesses, and many old ladies, whose pedigrees were considerably longer than their purses; but who, nevertheless, deemed themselves the prime patronesses of the gathering, as they usually were of the Northern Meeting. Flounced, feathered, and jewelled, with clan tartan scarfs, they regarded with just and due condescension the crowds of richly-dressed and handsome South-country women, many of whom were attired *à outrance*, complete in elegance and fashion from bonnet and bracelet to their kid shoes. These, our decayed Highland tabbies regarded with the good-nature which generally falls to the lot of such wallflowers, who may, as Swift has it—

“Convey a libel in a frown,
Or wink a reputation down;
Or by the tossing of a fan,
Describe the lady and the man.”

Among the *élite* of the male sex were various holiday warriors attired in gorgeous clan tartans. Some were distinguished by one eagle's feather in the bonnet, marking the gentleman; others by two, indicating the chieftain; but very few by *three*, the badge of a *chief*. The principal of the latter, was the Most Noble the Marquis of Drumalbane, Admiral of the Western Isles and Western Coast of Scotland—one whose forefathers had led their thousands to the field, and from whose glens our most splendid Highland regiments had marched to many a torrid clime

and bloody victory ; but whose vast territories were now a deathlike waste, where nothing was heard but the bleat of the sheep and the whistle of the curlew. In Glenarchai alone, this enterprising exterminator had converted thirty thousand acres into a hunting-forest. He was attended—not by a thousand brave men in arms—but by a few puny footmen and Lowland gamekeepers attired as Highlanders, and a few gentlemen who wore in their bonnets the eagle's wing, and carried at their necks each a silver key, as captains of certain ruined fortresses among the mountains of the West Highlands.

The varied tartans and magnificent appointments of these holiday Highlanders had a barbaric and picturesque effect. Their belts and buckles, jewelled daggers and pistols, snow-white sporrans, tasselled with silver or gold, their brooches studded by Scottish topazes and amethysts, and all their paraphernalia of mountain chivalry, flashed and sparkled in the noon-day sun ; while long bright ribbons and little banneroles of every colour streamed from the ebony drones of more than a hundred war-pipes.

Beside these gay duinewassals, the poor men of Glen Ora seemed but a troop of reapers or fishermen ; but we stepped not the less proudly, because to the same march with which our pipers woke the echoes of the hills, our fathers had thrice left Glentuire to sweep the Campbells of Breadalbane from Rannoch and Lochaber to the gates of Kilchurn.

In this epoch of civilization and ridicule, when even patriotism, religion, and love are made a jest, the reader may smile at these references to a past, and what we *conventionally* deem a barbarous age ; but a mountaineer never forgets that the brave traditions of other times are ever his best incentive to heroic enterprise and purity of thought.

In the centre of the vast oval formed by the spectators, tents, and carriages, lay the sledge-hammers,

the uprooted cabers, the putting-stones, cannon-balls, broad-swords, targets, and other appurtenances of the games.

On halting and dispersing my followers, my first impulse was to scan the crowd for Miss Everingham, now that I could appear before her in my proper character, and to better advantage than I had hitherto done; and just as the sports were beginning, I saw the baronet's four-in-hand drag, the team of which, the showy Captain Clavering handled in first-rate style, come sweeping round the base of the hill, with its varnished wheels and embossed harness flashing in the sun; the captain, whose costume was most accurate, from his well-fitting white kid gloves to his glazed boots, adroitly halted it in the most central and conspicuous place. I was standing close by where he reined up, and then the *sense* of Laura's presence made my heart beat violently, while my colour came and went again. No notice was taken of me for some time by the party of well-dressed fashionables who crowded the drag, till the studied respect shown to me by the peasantry, not one of whom passed or approached me without vailing his bonnet, attracted the attention of Sir Horace, who was quietly surveying the *canaille* through a double-barrelled lorgnette. He then gave me a formal bow and conventional smile, but barely condescended to notice, even by a glance, my foster-brother Callum Dhu; but for whom (as Callum himself said,) 'the red tarr-dhiargan had been then perhaps nestling among his hair at the bottom of Loch Ora.'

Near the carriage-steps stood Mr. Jeames Toodles in all the splendour of red plush investments for his nether-man, and spotless white stockings on his curved but ample calves. He bore a gold-headed cane and an enormous bouquet, and from time to time cast furtive glances at Callum Dhu, who, being

armed to the teeth, he deemed little better than a cannibal or Tchernemoski Cossack.

Snobleigh— we beg pardon—Mr. Adolphus Frederick Snobleigh—who cantered up on a dashing bay mare, languidly gave me the tips of his fingers, with a dreamy ‘aw—how aw ycu—glad to see you old fellow—any noos to-day?’ But Clavering, who had more of the soldier about him, shook me heartily by the hand, examined the lock and barrel of my rifle, and praised the piece; then he turned to his sister and Miss Everingham, both of whom greeted me in a manner so winning and gay, that even the heart of my mother, encrusted as it was by old Highland prejudices, would have been won.

I still remember how my heart throbbed when Laura’s soft and velvet hand touched mine; for her glove was off, and then the little white fingers on which the diamonds were flashing, rested on the window of the carriage.

‘And *you* mean to shoot for my prize to-day!’ said she, while her sunny eyes danced with youth and pleasure; ‘how kind of you to honour us so far as to compete for the purse which Fanny and I have made up. We hope you will prove victorious—indeed, we are quite certain that you will, Mr. Mac Innon.’

‘*Mr.* to the head of the Siol Alpine!’ growled Callum, under his thick black beard.

I pardoned her that prefix, which always jars on a Celtic ear, for her good wishes were so warmly and so prettily expressed.

Alas! how little she knew the agony that was gnawing my heart, under an exterior so calm. How little could she conceive the breathless eagerness with which Callum and I longed to win this wretched prize—an eagerness fired by no spirit of rivalry; but by an honest desire to keep a crumbling roof above the head of my dying mother—for a very

little longer. And away over the dun mountains, far from this gay scene of mirth and sunshine, my heart wandered to that little darkened room where she was lying in a half-torpid state, with pretty Minnie reading or knitting beside her, and old Mhari creeping and creaking about her bed on tiptoe.

Laura Everingham knew nothing of all this, and she looked so pretty in her white crape bonnet, with her sunny English smile, her blooming cheek reddened by our healthy Scottish breeze, that I deemed her all the happier in her ignorance of the misery her presence—or, at least, the presence and the projects of her father, were about to work among the old race of Glen Ora. Young, ardent, and enthusiastic, could I fail to be flattered by her notice, pleased by the preference which her good wishes inferred, and dazzled by her beauty?—for I will uphold that her mere prettiness became absolute *beauty*, when one knew more of Laura, and learned to appreciate her goodness and worth.

‘When will the games begin, Fanny? I am so impatient,’ said Laura; ‘look at that love of a horse—he eats corn from the groom’s hand; and see, Clavering, such a pet of a bonnet on that old thing’s head. Who is she—does anybody know? Of course they will, for every one in the Highlands knows every one else. But who would expect to find such bonnets in Scotland? Who is that handsome fellow in the green uniform, with the enormous gold epaulettes—a Russian officer?’

‘No,’ answered Fanny, with a droll smile, ‘he is only an archer of the Queen’s Scotch body-guard, who is to shoot for a prize to-day. From the care with which his whiskers are curled, I will take heavy odds that *he* don’t win.’

‘And that tall handsome fellow with the black beard—oh such a love of a beard it is! Heavens, it is the man who saved my dear papa’s life!’

‘He is my foster-brother, Miss Everingham; he, too, means to compete for your prize.’

‘Aw—the fellow seems so strong that he might squeeze the wataw out of a whinstone; and aw—aw, as for tossing that fwightful cabaw—goodness gwa-cious!’ yawned the languid A. F. Snobleigh, surveying the six feet and odd inches of Callum through his eyeglass.

‘He is quite a model of a man, Laura,’ said Fanny Clavering; ‘I would marry him in a moment if he would have me. He looks so like—’

‘What we read of in romances.’

‘A bandit—a wild mountain robber—and I have always thought it would be so exciting, so delightful to marry a real robber, and be the bride of a real bandit or corsair—oh, I should love a corsair of all things, especially if his bark were a fine steam yacht, we should have such delightful pic-nics among the Greek Isles, and trips to the garrison balls at Corfu!’

‘You perceive, Miss Everingham,’ said Captain Clavering, laughing, while he smoothed his unparallelled white kid gloves, ‘our noisy Fanny has a strong love for the charms of nature in an unsophisticated state. Hence her rapture at the long whiskers and bare legs of these Highlandmen.’

The cold, artificial, and aristocratic Sir Horace, whom the gold of his father, who died a wealthy Manchester millionaire and docile ministerialist, had made a baronet and king of our Highland glen, received all who approached his carriage with the same bow, the same smile, the same welcome, and nearly the same set of stereotyped phrases, good wishes and warm inquiries; and thus he graciously received his facile and obnoxious factor and factotum, Mr. Snaggs, who had been delayed by the ceremony of founding a new dissenting chapel, and who now galloped up on his barrel-bellied and knock-kneed pony, which he rode with a huge crupper and creaking saddle. A

dark, almost savage scowl flitted for a moment across the usually placid and affectedly benign visage of 'the moralist,' and admirer of Blair, as our piper Ewen Oig passed and repassed him, playing the march of Black Donald; and then he smiled with malicious triumph, as if anticipating that day now so near at hand, when the war-pipe of Mac Innon would be hushed for ever by the shores of the Western Sea.

I exchanged a glance full of deep and bitter import, with the calm, stern, and stately Callum Dhu; then we withdrew a little way, for the vicinity of this man's presence was hateful to us, and now, amid a buzz of tongues began the great business of the gathering—a gathering summoned to foster the nationality of a people, whom the grasping aristocracy are leaving nothing undone to exterminate and destroy.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE STONE OF STRENGTH.

HAVING many of my own adventures to relate, I will confine my narrative chiefly to the achievements of those in whom I am most interested—the men of Glen Ora; and even in that I must be brief. In all those athletic sports, which in time of peace were of old, and are still the principal amusements of the Gael, there were many stout and hardy competitors; but Callum's known fame for strength and agility, together with his cool and confident air and graceful bearing, made them all dubious of victory, yet there were on the ground the flower of that poor remnant, who now represent the once powerful clans of the West.

Young Ewen Oig, the most handsome lad in our glen, elicited a burst of applause, and won the first prize for the sword dance, a species of Pyrrhic measure, performed over the crossed blades of two claymores; and he was also the victor of the dangerous Geal-ruith or race up hill, when nearly twenty strong and active Celts, hardy and swift as mountain deer, flung their belts, bonnets, and plaids on the ground, and with their kilts girdled tightly about them, started in a line at full speed up the steep slope of the Craig-na-tuirc, for the goal, a rough misshapen block that marked the scene of some forgotten conflict.

In the broadsword and target exercise the old men bore away the palm, for these warlike accomplishments are disused by the young; but, for the dangerous feat of swinging the sledge-hammer and tossing a long iron bar fairly over-end-long, by one turn of the foot, the silver medals were bestowed on Gillespie Ruadh; while the victor of the Clach-neart, or *stone of strength*,—one of which in the days of old usually lay at the door of every chief, that he might test the muscle of his followers, was Callum Dhu, who flung it a full yard and more, beyond the most powerful champions of the adjacent glens and clans.

Then came the play with the Clach-cuid-fir, a more serious test of strength.

In the centre of that great arena, formed by the circle of wondering and excited spectators, lay two stones, one of which was a square block about four feet high; the other was smaller and weighed two hundred and fifty pounds in weight. This was the *clach*. In the Highlands, he who could lift the lesser and place it on the larger block was esteemed *a man*, and entitled from thenceforward to wear a bonnet. Though much disused in general, this severe Celtic feat had still been remembered and practised by the men who dwelt in our remote districts; but as most of

those who came with me were youths whose energies were scarcely developed, or old men whose strength was beginning to fail, Callum Dhu alone advanced to the clach-cuid-fir, and, taking off his bonnet, bowed to the people, in token that he challenged all men present to the essay.

His air, his garb, his bare muscular limbs, his stately port, erected head and ample chest, gave him the aspect of one of the athletæ of the Roman games. Thrice he waved his bonnet in token of challenge to the people, and though a murmur of admiration greeted him, there was no other response. At his neck hung a brass miraculous medal and little crucifix, for Callum had been reared a Catholic, and these he carefully adjusted before he began. Every eye and opera-glass were fixed upon him, while grasping the ponderous clach, and with a simple, but scarcely perceptible effort, he raised and placed it gently on the summit of the greater block.

For a moment the people paused as if they had each and all held in their breath, and then a loud, long and hearty plaudit made the sunny welkin ring: and my breast expanded with honest pride in Callum's strength and prowess.

'Heavens—such a love of a man!' exclaimed Fanny Clavering, with astonishment and delight sparkling in her beautiful eyes.

'Regulaw brick—aw!' added her cavalier, Mr. Snobleigh, whose glass was wedged in his right eye.

'Egad!' exclaimed Captain Clavering, with honest English warmth and admiration; 'this is the mettle of which the Scots make their Highland regiments.'

'Such were our men, sir,' said I, bowing; 'but there are few now between Lochness and Lochaber, who could perform a feat like this.'

'The greater is the cause of regret.'

'Now, Callum,' said I, 'let us have no more of this. You have tasked your strength enough for one

day—and remember you have long been weak and ailing.’

‘I have been struggling to give pride and pleasure to Minnie, and if I conquer, ’tis as much for her sake as for yours, Mac Innon. She pinned this cockade on my bonnet when I left her, and reminding me of the former prizes I had won, smiled on me, as she alone can smile; for Minnie is the fairest flower on the banks of the Ora. But what seeks this red-legged partridge here?’ he continued, in Gaelic.

This was applied to the valet of Sir Horace, Mr Jeames Toodles, who, notwithstanding the splendour of his livery, his red plush nether habiliments, laced hat and heraldic buttons, approached timidly to say, that ‘Sir ’Orace vished that ere thingumbob lifted again, if the gentlemen had no objections.’

Callum gave the liveryman a withering glance, and touching his bonnet to the ladies, pushed the clach off the lower block with one hand.

‘Oh, papa,’ exclaimed Miss Everingham, ‘how can you be so cruel as to ask this? Don’t you see that the poor man looks quite faint, after all he has done already?’

‘Never mind,’ said the baronet, from his well-stuffed carriage; ‘up with it again, my man, and here is a sovereign for you!’

While something like an emotion of rage and humiliation made the eyes of my fosterer flash fire, he snatched up the ponderous clach, and after poising it aloft for a moment, while he trembled in every limb, while every muscle and fibre strained and stood like cords and wires of iron, and while the perspiration oozed from every opening pore, he dashed it down upon the lower block, and shivered it into fifty fragments.

I saw that he was deathly pale, when Mr. Jeames Toodles approached him with the sovereign, but whether in anger, or that his strength had been wantonly overtasked, I know not—probably both. Dis-

daining to touch the coin, the poor half-starved fox-hunter said to the valet, with a glance of quiet contempt—

‘Put that in your pocket, my friend, and thank your master for me. Dioul!’ he added, in Gaelic, ‘does this man think to pay us like English ropedancers, or the fellow who squeaks in Punch’s box at the fair? Air Dhia! we have not yet come to that!’

‘You are a noble fellow,’ exclaimed Fanny Claver-
ing, patting his brawny shoulder with her pretty hand, while her fine eyes sparkled; ‘I shall never—never forget you.’

‘Miss Clavering,’ said Sir Horace, coldly; you forget *yourself*.’

Then came the tossing of the caber—a tree which is cut short off by the roots, and must be balanced by a man in the palms of his hands, and which he must toss completely round in the air, so that it may fall endlong in a direct line from him. In this feat, none ever excelled a little tribe named the Mac Ellars, who for more than a thousand years had resided in Glentuirc; but about twelve months before this time, they had been expelled with great cruelty by Snaggs. Their huts were burned down, and several persons who were old and bedridden, were wounded—three mortally—by the soldiers from Fort Augustus. These had been ordered to fire through the thatched roofs to force the people out, after which the whole were driven at the bayonet’s point to the sea-shore, where they were ironed and embarked on board the famous convicting ship, the *Duchess*, which awaited them at Isle Ornsay, to convey the whole tribe to the nearest port of the American coast; so, when the caber was carried to-day, the strong hands that were wont to toss it high aloft, amid the honest shouts that woke the rocky echoes of Ben Ora, were now assisting to clear the vast forests of that Far West, where the sun of the clans is sinking.

CHAPTER XIV

THE SEVEN BULLETS.

Now came the rifle-shooting, which deserves an entire chapter to itself. The first prize was no less than a hundred sovereigns; the second was fifty.

Laura Everingham and Fanny Clavering had constituted themselves the patronesses of this feat of skill; but though the purses, on the acquisition of which the whole energies of Callum and myself were devoted—in no spirit of vain-glory, as I have said, but goaded on by the spur of sheer adversity—was made up by them and their female friends; yet Fanny by her air and bearing, her energy, in short by the very noise she made, assumed the supreme direction of affairs; thus the gentler Laura, in her little white crape bonnet and lace shawl, seemed a mere appendage to her beautiful, brilliant, and ‘Di Vernon’ looking friend.

Fanny was a free and dashing girl, with whom *you* must have fallen in love, my bachelor friend, for she was one who made herself everywhere as much at home as the fly in your sugar-basin. She wore a broad hat and feather, which gave a piquancy to her fine eyes and expressive features. She had on a dark green riding-habit, with yellow gauntlets, and carried a gold-headed switch. She was a showy girl—the pet of the Household Brigade, and the counterpart of her brother the Guardsman, only a little more merry, and much more wilful. She was a good horsewoman, and rode hurdle-races and steeple-chases; a good hand at whist, rather a sharp stroke at billiards, and would deliberately sweep up the pool with the prettiest white hands in the world. She waltzed divinely, was considered glorious in a two-handed flirtation, or private theatricals, where she shone to admiration as

'Di Vernon,' or the 'Rough Diamond.' Fanny could make up a good book on the Oaks, and had always a shrewd guess as to the winner of the Derby; she had the Army List and the Peerage at her taper finger-ends, and knew all the last novels and music as if they had been her own composition. Once upon a time she was nearly riding herself for the Chester Cup; and those who peddled and punted at mere county races, she despised as heartily as if she belonged to the Hussars or the Oxford Blues. In short, Fanny knew everything from the Deluge to the deux-temps, and from the misfortunes in the Crimea to the mystery of crochet—moreover, a word in your ear, my dear reader, our charming friend had some thousand pounds per annum in her own right, and 'expectations' without end.

She had urged the more timid and retiring Laura to club their prize for the rifle-shooting; and now she appeared on the ground with a smart grooved rifle in her hands, to compete with all comers, on the part of herself and of the shrinking Laura, who had never laid her little hand upon a fire-arm in her life, and begged to be excused doing so now.

About thirty Highlanders, armed with rifles, crowded near her, but respectfully waited until Mr. Snaggs, whom she had requested to assist her, called over their names as they stood on the list, and to each as he stepped forward, the factor somewhat ostentatiously handed a—religious tract.

Meanwhile, Captain Clavering, Mr. Snobleigh (who wore a green sporting-coat with bronze buttons, on each of which was a fox's head), Callum Dhu, Ewen Oig, a few more privileged persons, and I, remained by her side, and now all the spectators pressed forward with interest to witness the shooting.

Callum and I were wont to shoot deer running, at four hundred yards, and to pierce a potato when tossed into the air, using spherical rifle-balls; thus

we had little doubt of our success ; but we meant to challenge the holiday huntsmen of the Lowlands to a trial of skill they little thought of.

The shooting proceeded with great spirit and rapidity, and it was admirable, for all the competitors were expert sportsmen. The targets were of iron, placed against the wall of the ruined tower, in a place which was sheltered from the wind, and afforded a long and level range. We shot at five hundred yards, and though the average was six balls out of twelve, put into a six-foot target, Callum, whose hands shook after tossing the caber, struck the nail on the head at two hundred yards ; and Ewen Oig, I, and other Highlanders, easily put each, eight consecutive sphero-conical balls into the target, at an average of four inches from the bull's-eye ; and at one hundred and eighty yards broke every quart-bottle that was placed before us.

There was a deliberation in the air of Callum Dhu that confounded the competitors. After squibbing his rifle, he carefully measured the charge of powder, poured it slowly down the barrel which he held straight and upright ; then he moistened the wadding, poised the bullet thereon, setting it fairly in with his forefinger and thumb, and then he drove it firmly home. Then he capped, cocked, and placing the butt-plate square against the top-arm muscle, levelled surely and firmly to prevent the rifle from 'kicking.' A moment his keen bright hazel eye glanced along the sites, and while, impressed by these grave preparations, all held their breath, he fired with a deadly precision that none could surpass.

Clavering struck the bull's-eye thrice in succession at two hundred yards : but his shooting was not to be compared to ours ; and we were greeted by bursts of applause in which he joined loudly, for he was a fine, frank and honest-hearted fellow.

'This beats everything I have met with, Miss

Everingham,' said he, with great delight; 'I have seen the Cockneys shooting at Chalk Farm—the Chasseurs at Vincennes and the Jagers at Frankfort, where ten targets were shot as fast as the markers could work; but these Highland marksmen beat them hollow, and this is in a land where the game-laws say the tenant shall not have a gun. Old Leatherstocking, with his boasted *Killdeer*, could do nothing like this.'

'All skill and practice, my dear sir,' suggested Mr. Snaggs, who had repeatedly been solacing himself by quiet sneers at Highlanders in general, and myself in particular; 'to allow tenants the use of guns would only lead to poaching and vice, "which," sayeth the trite Quarles, "is its own punishment."'

It was unanimously agreed that Callum and I were the victors of that day's shooting. Elated by the prospect of winning the prize, and feeling happy that I would thereby be honestly enabled to relieve, to a certain extent, the troubles of a sick and aged parent, after a moment's conference with Callum, I turned to Captain Clavering, saying,

'We have shot at your targets placed at five hundred yards, and were ready to have done so, had they been placed at a thousand yards, if our rifles had been furnished with telescope sights. We will now challenge *you* to a trial of skill, which may be new to you—with seven solid sugar-loaf balls shot from thirty-six inch rifled barrels.'

'Agreed,' said the Captain: 'I have shot a deer running at nearly five hundred yards, and have no fear.'

'Ewen Oig, bring our targets and hang one over the battlement of the tower,' said I to the young piper, who was the son of Gillespie Ruadh, and was lithe, nimble, and active. He took one of the small white targets we had brought with us from Glen Ora, and which measured about three feet square, and bore,

in black line upon it, the figure of a cross. With this he scrambled to the summit of the ruined tower, a daring feat, as it was more than seventy feet in height, and there he fixed it firmly by means of a hammer, nails, and holdfasts. We now approached within two hundred yards, and challenged the competitors two and two, to put *seven* bullets successively into the lines of the cross which measured two feet one way by one the other.

The impatient Mr. Snobleigh fired and missed.

‘You keep your head too high, sir,’ said Callum; thus, in firing, your line of vision does not follow the line of the barrel, and yours is rather more than thirty-six inches in length.’

Clavering fired twice, and twice splintered the edge of the target. All their other bullets were flattened like lichens on the castle wall, and he and Snobleigh drew back, muttering something about the unusual height and range.

Fanny now came forward with her smart rifle, which was decorated by ribbons, and which Snobleigh had loaded for her; she, and some one else, fired seven bullets between them, and one only struck the lower verge of the little target.

‘Now, sirs,’ said she to Callum and me; ‘it is your turn’—but Callum lowered his rifle and drew back.

‘What is the matter, sir?’

‘I cannot contend with a lady,’ said he, doffing his bonnet, ‘and more than all, with one who is among the fairest in the land.’

‘Shoot, shoot, I command you!’ said Fanny, while her dark eyes flashed with girlish triumph at Callum’s honest admiration of her great beauty.

‘Your will is a law to me, madam. My chief and I will fire by turn—he, four balls, and I, three; and here I must give place to him. Had your hand been as powerful as your eye, Miss Clavering, we had but little chance of victory to-day.’

'I told you he was a love of a man, Laura,' whispered Fanny to her friend, the charm of whose presence was for ever in my mind, and I was fired by an ambition to outshine the perfumed Snobleigh—he who owned a park and hall in Yorkshire, a house "in town," another in Paris; a stud at Tattersall's, a yacht at Cowes, a shooting-box on the Grampians, and a commission in the Foot Guards—while I—what did I own? only my father's name, with the poor inheritance of Highland pride, and the dreams of other days.

'We shall see if these boasting Celts can perform this fine feat themselves,' sneered Mr. Snaggs, as he adjusted his spectacles and came fussily forward.

'Factor,' whispered Callum in his deep voice, 'the breast of the villain who thought to outrage my Minnie is smaller than that target, yet my ball may reach it some day, *on the lone hillside, at a thousand yards!*'

Snaggs grew pale, as if the death-shot was ringing in his ears. As I levelled my rifle, the betting began. I fired and placed the ball in the black line at the very head of the cross. Then Callum stepped forward.

'Fifty to one, he hits the black line,' said Clavering.

'Aw—done—I take you—cool hundred if you like,' drawled Snobleigh, betting-book in hand!

'It is done, by Jove; right through the target!'

'Lend me the telescope.'

'I could hit the medal on your breast at half the distance, Captain Clavering,' said Callum, as he fired again.

'Thank you, my fine fellow; I would rather you found another mark. Bravo! in the very centre of the cross!' continued Clavering, who was looking at the target through his telescope.

Then I fired again, and lodged my bullet in the black line, a little lower down, and so we discharged

our seven bullets, planting them all fairly until the cruciform arrangement was complete, thus—



Then Ewen Oig, wild with excitement, sprang again to the summit of the tower, wrenched away the target, and it was carried round the field, with the pipes playing before it, while we, by three hearty bursts of applause, were hailed the victors of the shooting-butts.

‘By Jove,’ exclaimed Clavering, ‘I wish I could do this!’

‘So you might, Captain, easily, if your bullets had been cast in the same mould.’

‘How—what do you mean?’

‘In the mould of old Mhari’s father, the forester of Coille-tor.’

‘The deuce! you don’t mean to say they are charmed,’ said the Captain, laughing; ‘enchanted—bewitched?’

‘Perhaps they are, and perhaps they are not. I say nothing; but I wounded the white stag with one.’

‘Ha, ha, ha! capital—I like this!’ exclaimed Clavering.

‘Der Freischutz in the North—a second Hans Rudner,’ said Laura Everingham; ‘but the prizes are undoubtedly theirs.’

‘By Jove, how a few such fellows would have picked off the Russians from the rifle-pits!’

‘And this victor is our quiet-looking Allan Mac Innon,’ said Laura, her eyes beaming with a pleasure that intoxicated me.

‘He is a regular trump!’ added the Captain, with manly honesty, although he had been beaten.

‘He looks so calm and demure,’ continued Miss Everingham, ‘no one would have thought it was—it was——’

‘It was in him,’ suggested Clavering, squibbing off his rifle; ‘why don’t you become a soldier, Mac Innon—there is good stuff in you—’pon my soul, I like you immensely! don’t *you*, Miss Everingham?’

At this absurd question, Laura coloured to her temples, and grew pale again.

‘Well—aw,’ began Mr. Snobleigh, who looked irritated and discomfited; ‘I aw—nevaw saw such shooting certainly—beats Jerningham of ours, and *he* as the world knows, was matched—aw—aw—twenty-five pigeons—aw—against you, Clavering, for fifty sovereigns a-side; but I’ll back these ‘Ighland fellows against all England—aw.’

Now came the most exciting and, to me, humiliating part of the proceedings—the distribution of the first and second prizes for shooting.

Though poor, crushed and bruised by biting poverty, I could not, without an emotion of shame, accept the hundred sovereigns from the hand of Laura Everingham, and decline the more suitable gift of a silver cup, which was the alternative, in the case of a gentleman being the victorious competitor! Now in my inmost heart I felt that a poor and proud gentleman was the most miserable of all God’s creatures. Clavering’s words, ‘why don’t you become a soldier?’ were ever in my ears; but the thought of my old and dying parent, of whom I was the only prop and stay, stifled the more fiery energy that rose within me; and as we drew near the little covered platform, where the *élite* of the spectators were grouped around that beautiful but stony-hearted Duchess, the canting Marquis, the two Countesses, Sir Horace and others of their privileged order, I felt my spirit sink as if I was a very slave.

Here also stood Mr. Ephraim Snaggs, bearing on a

silver salver two purses beautifully embroidered. One was by the hands of Miss Everingham, and contained the hundred sovereigns; the other was by her friend, and contained the fifty.

While crimsoned by mortification, I heard my name pronounced, and found myself before Sir Horace, who, as the newspapers said, "in a choice, neat, and appropriate speech," duly emphasised in the true Oxford fashion, announced that I was *the* victor of *the* shooting-match, and entitled to *the* first prize—my companion to *the* second.

To accept this money seemed to me, educated as I had been by my proud and haughty mother, the very acme of shame and humiliation; but, at that bitter moment, I saw her in fancy stretched on her bed of sickness, wan with illness and with age, and about to be forcibly evicted at the stern behest of the very donor of this wretched coin—the curse of men, and cause of all their crime and misery. But for her sake I would gladly have scattered the money among the poor Celts who crowded round us, with exultation in their eyes, "that Mac Innon himself and no Sassenagh," was the victor; but I mastered my emotion; the Lowlander's proverb, *he yat tholis overcomes*, flashed upon my memory, and while my cheek burned with a fever heat, I received the purse from the hand of Laura Everingham, and again her soft touch gave me a thrill that went straight to my swollen heart.

With all a woman's quickness she divined the source of my emotion, and said tremulously,

'Mr. Mac Innon, you have, I think, some reluctance in accepting this prize; if you would prefer the silver cup, I am sure that dear papa——'

'No, no, madam; a thousand thanks for your generous delicacy; but—the money——'

'Will be more acceptable,' added Mr. Snaggs, spitefully. 'We have a proverb among us in Scotland, my dear Miss Everingham, anent "leaving a legacy to

Mac Gregor." Mr. Mac Innon is a Highlander, and possesses, I have no doubt, an accurate idea of the value of the current coin of these kingdoms.'

'Aw—aw,' drawled the vacant Snobleigh, taking his cue from the factor, and whom I heard though he spoke in a whisper, for my sense of hearing was painfully acute, 'I always thought this young fellow wondawfully well behaved for a Scotsman, but aw—aw—with all his cussed pwide and politeness he has taken your tin, Laura.'

My breast heaved—I felt the fire flashing in my eyes, and I glared at Snaggs with fury, while the impulse to dirk or shoot him rose within me.

'Ephraim Snaggs—liar, coward, and hypocrite, utter but another taunt or jeer, and I will strangle you like the dog you are!' I exclaimed in a voice so hoarse with passion, that Laura shrunk from me in terror, while I emptied the hundred sovereigns from the purse into my right hand, and flung them in a golden shower among the crowd, a startling and unexpected manoeuvre, which was immediately imitated by Callum, who tossed his fifty into the air; and thus in a moment we were as poor and as desperate as when the shooting began.

While the crowd scrambled for the money among the grass, a murmur—a cry of astonishment had risen on all sides, and then silence succeeded.

'What the devil do *you* mean, fellow, by refusing the money?' asked Sir Horace, who seemed highly irritated that Callum should presume to imitate his master.

'Because I did not come here for money.'

'For what then?'

'Honour—like my chief and fosterer Mac Innon.'

'Honour?' reiterated the incredulous baronet, coolly surveying through his glass the erect figure of the tattered huntsman, from his bonnet to his brogues. 'Oho, of course you have a pedigree like

a Welshman, beginning with Adam and ending with yourself.'

'In that case it might be no better than your own; but I am come of a long line of brave men, whose shoes, the son of a Manchester baronet, rich though he be, is not worthy to tie.'

The claret-reddened cheeks of Sir Horace grew pale at this fierce hit, while the stately duchess, the two *passé* countesses, and all the Highland tabbies of 'good family,' exchanged significant and self-satisfied smiles. The baronet was about to make an impetuous rejoinder, when Clavering said,—

'Sir Horace do, I beg of you, respect the feelings of these people, whose peculiar temper and ideas you cannot understand.'

'Papa, papa!' urged his startled daughter.

'You speak English well—devilish well, indeed, for a Highlander,' said Sir Horace loftily, gulping down his anger; 'how is this?'

'I am all unused to answer questions that are asked in such tones, yet I will satisfy you.'

'Do, for never did I meet an ignorant gilly who spoke so proudly to me.'

'A gilly I am, but *not* an ignorant one, Sir Horace. Thanks be to God, and to good Father Hamish Cameron, who now sleeps in his grave in the Scottish church at Valladolid, I can read and write, and do a little more. I am thus unlike the poor people round me, who are oppressed and destroyed, without knowing why and wherefore the land of their fathers, so dear to their hearts, is made a hunting-field for the dissipated and the idle of the south country, while they are driven from starvation to exile—we, the Gael, who since the Union have led the van of Britain's bloodiest battles. But I know that our enthusiasm, our traditions, and our ties of clanship seem mere trash and absurdity to such as you, Sir Horace—a cold-blooded conventionalist and man of the

world. I have learned to be aware that the game-laws, the loss of the kelp trade, misgovernment, and centralization are the curses of the Highlands—all this I know, though I am but a half-lettered gilly! I know a black-hearted villain when I see one, Mr. Snaggs, and I know a pampered tyrant when I speak to one, Sir Horace, and so *faillte air an duinne-uassal!* let us go Mac Innon.'

Sir Horace gave us a glance full of spite and anger; he felt that a peasant had dared to lecture him before a multitude; but now we marched off with our pipes playing, leaving the crowd of fashionables staring after us in astonishment, while the more ignoble mob still hunted for the scattered gold among the grass.

'We have done right and well, Callum Dhu,' said I; 'but think of my poor mother and of the eviction notices?'

'Your mother—ay, poor lady—there the dirk enters my heart.'

'If moved, she dies.'

'Nothing but the prediction of the Red Priest can save her now,' said Callum, lowering his voice, 'unless we defend the house by musket-shot, for if she passes its walls, she will die like the wife of Angus and your great-grandmother, the wife of Lachlan Mohr.'

CHAPTER XV.

THE SIXTH DAY.

We marched bravely and with pipes playing, while we were within sight of the crowds assembled on the green braes at the foot of the stupendous Ben; but

as soon as we had crossed the shoulder of the mountain, and begun to descend into that beautiful valley from which we were all about to be expelled, our spirit sank and the wild notes of Ewen's *Piob Mohr* died away, while dejected and silent, or communing only in low and foreboding whispers, the men of our fated tribe approached their humble homes.

The aged, the women, and the little ones came forth to meet and to welcome with acclamations, and outstretched arms the victors of the different games. The crest-fallen bearing of Black Callum and myself led them at first to suppose what they had hitherto believed to be impossible and incredible, that we had been beaten at rifle-shooting 'by the strangers.'

When I left the glen that morning, all my thoughts were bent on victory, and I saw only one thing in the world—a black spot on a white target; but *now* the blue eyes of Laura Everingham were ever before me, in all their variety and beauty of expression.

My mother's feeble voice fell sadly and reproachfully on my ear as I entered her chamber, and Minnie, drawing back the curtains, revealed the thin and aged form that seemed to be passing like a shadow from among us.

'You have won the prize, my dear boy, Allan?'

'Yes, mother.'

Her eyes were bent in love and sorrow on me. Oh, how full my heart was at that moment!

'A hundred guineas, Allan—think of that!'

'And Callum won the second prize,' said Minnie, with a timid blush of pleasure.

'Fifty more—one hundred and fifty! Oh, Allan, my poor boy. God's blessed hand was in this, to save us from the grasp of ruin!'

I wrung my hands, and throwing the empty purses before my mother, covered my face and sat down.

'What means this, Allan?' asked the poor woman, in a voice of tenderness and alarm; but I made no

reply. 'An empty purse, you have not—oh, you cannot have spent or lost the money?'

'Neither, dear mother—but pity me and bear with the weakness you have taught me?'

'What have you done?'

'Listen and you shall hear.'

I detailed to her the shooting, and told how Callum and I were the victors at any distance from one to five hundred yards, and how we showered our bullets into the bull's-eye, as fast as the markers could count them; how we challenged all to shoot seven consecutive balls into the black cross on the tower of the Thanes; how none save Callum and I could touch it at two hundred yards—a feat such as the Highlands had seldom seen before, and how we won the prizes.

I related how the hateful Snaggs had been there with musty morality on his oily tongue, and a hateful smile in his deep grey eye; how he had uttered sneers to which (without seeming to commit an outrage) I could not reply. I told her of the shame I endured when competing with shepherds and foresters for a prize, even from a lady's hand. I the heir of an old and respected line, and with all the pride in which *she* had reared me, swelling in my heart; I told her of the wily factor's taunts, and how Callum and I had flung the gold with scorn among the people, and departed from that great and long wished-for gathering on the Braes as poor as when this morning, so full of hope and spirit, we had marched over the mountains to attend it.

My mother heard me quietly to the end, and then applauded me as warmly as her feeble strength would permit. But I failed to feel this approval in my own heart, when beholding the emptiness of our household—the lack of comforts—yea almost of common food; and I cursed the pride that made me scorn a prize, which though less than a bagatelle to some—

to you, my good reader, I hope—would have been a Godsend to our half-famished family at Glen Ora.

Then Laura's face and eyes, her voice and accents came before me, and I fell, I knew not why, into a dreamy reverie over all I did.

My mother's illness and our penury pressed heavily on my soul. A lofty barrier seemed to surround me; a girdle of evils—a boundary beyond which I saw no outlet, from which there was no escape, and which I dared not and knew not how to surmount. Too proud to beg, and ashamed to dig, I became bewildered as the evil hour approached, when the authorities would arrive to evict the people of the glen. For the whole of the previous day no food passed my lips; I found eating impossible, I felt as one over whom hung a sentence of death; a dark, inevitable, and unavertible fate; and with the apathy of despair I saw the morning of the sixth day dawn, when the messengers and constables, or perhaps the soldiery from Fort William, would arrive to extinguish the fires, unroof the houses, and drive the people away.

Thoughts of armed, manly, and determined resistance floated darkly and fiercely through my mind; and I am certain that the same ideas were hovering before Callum, as he sat by his humble but untasted breakfast, sharpening his skene dhu, cleaning, oiling and examining his favourite rifle, the crack of which might never more wake the echoes of the mountains; and our pretty Minnie watched him the while with loving and anxious eyes. There were weapons enough in the cottages to arm the men of the glen, and their number was sufficient to have held against three thousand red coats, the gorge that led to the valley, for there our grandfathers had made a long and desperate defence against the ruffianly Huskes Brigade in 1746, and *we* were able to do as much again; but the steamers had opened up the lochs in our rear; and though we might have repelled the

authorities for a few days, we were sure of being overcome and severely chastised in the end; thus the rash and dangerous idea to taking arms to defend our old hereditary hearths and homes was no sooner formed than it was dismissed.

At night I could scarcely sleep, and if for a moment my eyes closed, distressing visions of flaming houses, and of women and children dragged forth by rural police and soldiers, came before me. I heard my mother crying for succour—but invisible powers seemed to chain my feet to the earth, and breathlessly I writhed and strove to aid her. Perspiration bedewed my forehead, when hands were roughly laid upon her bed to bear her forth, for the hour of eviction had come, and I remembered the widow of Lachlan Mohr. Then I was free—I sprang to my father's sword; but our tormentors flung themselves upon me! My mother was borne forth—now—*now*, she was at the threshold. I heard a faint cry, and all was over—she had expired! Then I would start up, with my heart full of horror, grief, and vengeance, to find that it was all a dream; but, alas, a dark and foreboding one!

The sixth day dawned. It drew slowly and heavily on—it passed away, and night darkened without Ewen Oig, who was posted as a scout on the lofty brow of the Craig-na-tuire, seeing any sign of the dreaded authorities approaching by the road which, like a slender thread between the giant hills, wound away in the distance towards the capital of the Highlands.

A little hope began to gather in my heart.

But they might come on the morrow.

My mother had caught the feverish excitement that reigned in our little household, and from the crooning and croaking of old Mhari, soon learned the doom that hung over us, and it had a most fatal effect upon her frail and delicate constitution. She became dan

gerously ill ; in her face I read that sad and terrible expression which comes but once, and my soul sickened with alarm !

After a late and hasty meal of broiled venison (poached by Callum), and shared with a staghound and the sheep collies, I despatched my fosterer with all speed for the doctor of the district, while I buckled on my dirk, and departed for the new manor-house of Glen Ora, to seek an interview with Sir Horace, and crave for my mother a little delay—that mercy which I disdained to seek for myself.

‘The moon *is full*,’ said Callum, as we separated ; ‘it is a lucky time to undertake anything.’

CHAPTER XVI.

SIR HORACE.

I soon reached the large and handsome modern villa, which crowned the plateau, where the square tower of the Mac Innons had been, for seven hundred years, the landmark of the glens. The hour was eight ; but the baronet and his friends were still at the dinner-table, and the brilliance of the wax-lights in the four tall windows of the magnificent dining-room, seemed to struggle with the bright flush of evening that reddened the sky above the darkening mountains of the west.

Through a spacious marble vestibule, adorned by gilded cornices, marble statues, and deer’s horns, I was ushered by the plushed and powdered Mr. Jeames Toodles, into an illuminated billiard-room, and here he asked me for my card.

‘Card !’ reiterated I, reddening, for I had never discovered a use for such a thing before ; ‘no card is

required ; say that Allan Mac Innon wishes to speak with Sir Horace, without a moment's delay.'

The valet gave a supercilious smile ; but, on perceiving me throw a hasty glance towards a rack of billiard-cues, he made a hasty retreat. After remaining for some time alone, and with no other company than my own bitter and galling reflections, I found the valet before me again ; Sir Horace was just finishing dinner, and afterwards had to confer with a gentleman on business.

'And cannot see me?' I exclaimed, making a stride towards the speaker—a gesture which caused him to shuffle backward in terror ; my heather-coloured kilt and fierce free mountaineer bearing had in them something new and appalling to him.

Mr. Toodles did not mean to say that exactly ; Sir Horace would see me in the course of a few minutes ; meantime, would I join Captain Clavering and Mr. Snobleigh, who were lingering over their wine, before ascending to the drawing-room ? I bowed, and followed the valet mechanically, with a breast that swelled with many strange emotions. If I committed, in thought, the double sin of covetousness and envy on that occasion, when contrasting the humility, plainness, and penury of my dilapidated home with the splendour and luxury I beheld, it was *not* for myself, but for the sake of one whom I felt assured would not be long spared to me now ; and whom not even the prediction of the Red Priest could protect from the hand of the Spoiler.

From the walnut sideboard the liveried servants were removing the dinner, the rich and overpowering odour of which filled that loftily ceiled, heavily curtained and gorgeous dining-room. To me it seemed a scene from a romance. The vases were richly gilt and mounted with precious stones ; the dessert, *entree* dishes, the soup-tureens, ashets, &c., with which the powdered lacqueys were trotting to and fro, were all

of silver exquisitely chased ; so were the classic wine-coolers, with the champagne in ice, and the ponderous branches of six wax-lights each. The wassail-bowl of silver had already made its tour ; and at a side-table was the coffee simmering, and served in antique china and silver.

But the coffee was neglected, for Clavering, Snobleigh, and two or three other sporting visitors, with Sheriff Mac Fee, were loitering over their wine, fruit, and nuts ; and the long polished table was resplendent with tall crystal decanters of the baronet's rare old port, vintage '34, sherry pure as amber, amontillado, first-growth claret, and straw-coloured champagne, foaming in goblet-shaped glasses, while old Hock, Stienberger, Malaga, and Moselle, stood in battalion under the sideboard, or in a cluster under the gigantic epergne.

'Welcome Mac Innon—delighted to see you, old fellow!' exclaimed Clavering, assuming the part of host.

'Aw—aw—how aw you?' added Snobleigh.

'Toodles, a chair for Mr. Mac Innon—wish you had come sooner—Sir Horace would have been happy to have seen you at dinner I am assured—hope you have dined, though? Ah—well, fill your glass—Toodles, champagne here, and pass the claret-jug.'

Sad, anxious, and most unhappy, I was silent, and drained the crystal goblet of champagne. Then my spirit warmed a little, and I joined in the conversation which naturally rose on local subjects, such as deer-stalking, grouse-shooting, and the famous white stag of Loch Ora, which many persons believed to be a myth, as no one could wound or kill it.

Even Mr. Fungus Mac Fee, the sheriff, could speak on these matters ; but to me, always rather superciliously, because he knew but too well that my family was fallen and poor ; while he always deferred to Mr. Snobleigh, who knew as much about deer-stalking

as of squaring the circle, or adjusting the longitude. This sheriff knew intuitively that I hated him.

After toadying to his party, spinning out a subsistence by scribbling in magazines and papers in defence of it; after writing, with the same laudable view, a history of Scotland, in which the clans were handled with such severity, and one might suppose the soul of Cumberland had been in his ink-bottle, Mr. Mac Fee found himself sheriff of a county; and after denouncing on the hustings, and through the medium of a journal (long notorious in Scotland for its anti-nationality, its hatred of the Celtic race, and for being the special utensil of the Government,) the waste of one administration, he had no objection to accept of numerous sinecures for himself and his connections, under their successors; hence, he scraped a sufficient sum to purchase the small estate of Druckendubh. He was naturally coarse, argumentative, and full of vapour and authority; but here, among men of undisputed wealth and position—at least, the position which wealth insures to every blockhead in this conventional age—Fungus Mac Fee was the most bland and suave of mankind.

‘Any news to-day, Mr. Mac Innon?’ asked the sheriff, raising his impudent eyebrows.

‘None, sir,’ said I, sharply, for our Scottish place-man knew enough of Highland courtesy to be aware that the prefix was offensive to me.

‘Have you not heard that the Russians have crossed the Pruth in two places, and mean to occupy Wallachia and Moldavia?’

‘Yes; but I have other things to think of, Mr. Mac Fee, and I wish, in my soul, that they were crossing the Braes of Loch Ora.’

‘A deuced odd wish that!’ said Captain Clavering, ‘but perhaps you don’t like that straw-coloured champagne—try the pink.’

‘Aw—try the claret-jug—you’ll aw—find it rathaw

the thing, said the languid Snobleigh, smoothing his bandolined moustache; 'Sir Horace is engaged in the library—aw—just now, with Mr. Snaggs—such a howibble name!—on business. Dem business—wish there was no such thing in the world; Snaggs is always annoying Sir Horace about something or other.'

My heart sank lower on hearing this; for even in this visit to the baronet, fate seemed to have conspired against me; but I should have remembered that naturally Sir Horace was frequently engaged in consultations with Snaggs, for being of a proud and tyrannical disposition, he was ever squabbling about rights and points of etiquette; taking offence where none was intended, and waging a legal—and to Snaggs most profitable—war, with the neighbouring proprietors, farmers, shepherds, and poachers.

'Fine girl that was, whom we met at the gathering the other day,' said the captain.

'Aw—vewy, for a Scots girl—but, aw—a little metaphysical,' responded Snobleigh, sleepily cracking a nut.

'Magnificent hand and arm, though!'

'Aw—rathaw—but she was so dooced pwoud.'

'She will have something handsome, gentlemen,' said Mac Fee, draining a glass of champagne at one vulgar gulp; 'when the people give place to fine fat sheep on her land. She is an heiress, and when six or eight of the small farms are formed into *one*—and you are pleased with her, captain?'

'I thought her the prettiest of all pretty girls—but flirting with her—pass the claret, thanks—would be mere waste of powder. I must keep my ammunition for better game.'

'Aw—Laura Everingham, I presume,' said Snobleigh, with a little spite in his eye and tone.

The Captain coloured slightly; a shade of annoyance crossed his brow, and regardless that I and others were present, Snobleigh continued to chatter

away; and even this exasperated me, for misfortune had rendered me unduly sensitive.

'I assure you, Clavering, that girl Everingham will come in for a jolly good thing or two, when Sir Horace departs to a better world. I—aw—fished it all out of old Snaggs the other night by quoting Blair, and passing the bottle, so I'm a devilish good mind to—'

'What—pop the question, eh?'

'Aw—yes.'

'Then you may save yourself trouble, Snob, my boy, for she has refused *me* already, and other two of the Household Brigade; but I don't despair yet—for I have the governor's interest.'

'And you proposed—aw—the devil! this was rathaw an extensive proceeding. I thought that I knew how to manage horses and women too. For that, one requires considerable—aw—'

'What?'

'Study—aw perseverance and care.'

'The ladies are infinitely obliged to you,' said Mac Fee.

'The future Mrs. Snobleigh particularly so,' laughed Clavering; 'Toodles fill that devil of a claret jug—what the deuce is Sir Horace about?'

'Snaggs and he must have arranged some pretty extensive clearances by this time,' suggested the sheriff, with a furtive glance at me.

'In truth, Clavering,' said Snobleigh, who had been pondering a little; 'I aw—would feel restless with a wife so simple and handsome among the gay fellows of the Household Brigade.'

'Yes—you would be like the husband some one writes about, who,

"While suspicion robs him of his ease,
Peculiar danger in a *red coat* sees;
Envies each handsome fellow whom he spies,
And feels his *horns* at every *cornet* rise."

Eh—ha ha, ha!

'Dem husbands—I hate them all.'

'Talking of the Brigade, have you heard of Jernyngham of your battalion lately?'

'He was well cleaned out before he—aw—disappeared from London; but don't know him now, poor devil.'

'It was at this "poor devil's" table you spent some of your happiest hours,' said Clavering, reproachfully.

There was a pause, during which I turned towards the door, sick of this empty conversation, and impatient to see the baronet. After the learned Mac Fee had delivered himself for the tenth time of some stereotyped remarks on the heat of the weather, and the excellence of the wine, Mr. Snobleigh observed with his most languid air.

'I am tired of this kind of thing, and must go back to town. Horrid slow here in the 'ighlands—and—aw—slow fellows all round about. Laura Everingham is chawming, no doubt; and—aw—your sister, Clavering, imparts quite a London air to the whole place; but I—aw—still long for Town. One always saves something, however, in this bawbawous weigion—beg pardon, Mr. Mac Fee, but—aw—aw—'tis so. Had Jernyngham been here, his stud had never been pounded at Tattersall's—his commission at Greenwood's, or his plate by aw—aw—the Lord's chosen people. Now, for instance, in the matter of gloves; in Town, I—aw—I take a walk—and spoil a pair; I take a canter along Rotten Row, or in Hyde Park, another pair; dinner, another pair, and for the opera or a ball, another pair, and—aw—aw—so on. And then when one is in debt, as of course everybody is but low scoundrels, the—aw—the saving in many things here is enormous; besides, one aw—acquires the habit of early rising.'

'So the Highlands are not without their advantages?' said I.

'Aw—yes. In London, if not for duty at Ken—

sington or the Tower, I breakfast at one, on coffee and a cigaw; but here I rise at *ten* appetised like an 'Ighland' awk—a glass of liqueur—tea, coffee, ham, tongue, game, fowl—aw, aw—dinner ditto; and after knocking about the balls a little, and having a *deux temps* with Laura, or a game at guinea points, then a devilled bone and champagne—then to bed at two in the morning—at *two*! aw—think of that Clavering—how Gothic—oh—aw—infernally!

'Now,' said the sheriff, 'what say you to our proposed little game at *écarté*?'

'Bravo I—aw must have my revenge on Clavering; he walked into me for aw—one thousand two hundred.'

'So much?' exclaimed Mac Fee, aghast.

'Aw yes.'

'I have his little bill for it, at three months, with a promise to renew,' said Clavering, laughing.

'Then what shall we have to-night?'

'Whist—at crown points.'

'No higher?'

'No—I have a thousand pounds on that devilish horse at the Oaks, and must trot easily.'

'Whist be it, then; and here they rose to adjourn, leaving me confounded by the ease with which they spoke of sums that to my simple Highland comprehension seemed enormous.

'Toodles—aw order some pink champagne and cigars to the card-room.'

'Cigars if you will,' said Clavering; 'but no champagne; dem it, no—I shall drink no more to-night of anything stronger than Father Adam's pale ale, while playing with *you*,' and just as they all left the dining-room by one door, I heard the voice of Sir Horace in communication with Snaggs, approaching it by another.

'To-morrow will decide the affair,' said Sir Horace, pausing with his fingers on the crystal door-handle.

‘To-morrow or the day after, at latest, my dear sir,’ responded the bland voice of Snaggs.

‘Of course I am deuced sorry for the old woman, and all that sort of thing—for she must be very unhappy; but we have a great duty to perform—a great duty to society, Mr. Snaggs, and old women must not stand in the way of improvement.’

‘To be sure, my dear Sir Horace; “every age,” says the divine Blair, will prove burdensome to those who have no fund of happiness in their breast—and as for the young desperado her son, nothing whatever can be made of him.’

‘Of course not; his head is filled with such quaint ideas and old Highland stuff, unsuited to modern times, habits, and usages, that he is a mere wild colt, and twice I have been told, pulled out of his stocking,—what do you call it?’

‘Skene Dhu, or Black Knife, my dear sir,’ suggested Mr. Snaggs.

‘Ah yes—a skin doo, upon you, sir. I know not why these Highland fellows are allowed to bristle about with their daggers and skenes, when there are laws passed against the wearing of arms. But the truth is, the sooner that this young fellow and his people are sent off to America by the *Sutherland*, under Captain Sellers, the better. There are some fine swamps to drain, moors to cultivate, and woods to cut down in the Canadas; and as for that great ruffian Callum Dhu, who nearly murdered poor Toodles the other day—dem the fellow, I’ll have him transported! Adversity teaches these fierce spirits no lesson.’

‘True, my dear Sir Horace,’ chimed in the moralist; “adversity,” exclaims the divine Blair, “how blunt are all the arrows of thy quiver, compared with those of guilt!”’

‘Dem Blair—I am quite sick of him, too; but let us have a glass of Moselle, and then we’ll join the

ladies in the drawing-room. *You* here, Mr. Mac Innon!’ he exclaimed, with angry surprise on seeing me; ‘how do ye do, sir,’ he added, with a dark countenance; ‘my friend Mr. Snaggs and I have just closed a long conversation about you.’

‘I am sorry to hear it, Sir Horace, for now I fear my visit here is bootless.’

‘You judge most correctly, if you have come to ask delay about my projected clearances.’

There was a glare in the sharp eye, and a smile on the thin lips of Snaggs, as Sir Horace said this. I felt my eyes flash fire as anger gathered in my heart; for heaven never intended me either for a temporiser or a diplomatist.

‘I was about to speak to you, Sir Horace, not of myself, but of my mother, who is aged, sickly, infirm, and unable to comprehend how any power on earth possesses a law to expel her from Glen Ora.’

‘Now, young man, you irritate me! This is the rock upon which all you Celts split your very obtuse heads. The good lady, your mother, with the rest of the people on that portion of my estate, must learn that the tenant has no right in the soil.’

‘None whatever, legally or morally,’ added Snaggs.

‘*Your* property!’ I replied, trembling with passion; ‘it would have been as much as your head is worth to have said this to a Mac Innon on the spot where you stand, a hundred years—ay fifty years ago. But it is of my mother I would speak—’

‘Nay, sir—excuse me—I will hear nothing; moreover, your presence here is an unwarrantable intrusion; the ladies, Mr. Snaggs, await us at coffee.’

‘Oh for a curse upon him ~~whose~~ mad extravagance and folly brought my father’s son to this humiliation!’ I exclaimed, with my hands clenched above my head; ‘but beware, Sir Horace, lest you drive me to distraction? Beware lest those who still regard me as their chief and leader—and to whom they all turn in this

time of sorrow and disaster—do not return with me in the night, and sheet this house in flames, before succour or assistance reach you!’

‘What say you, sir—the fellow’s mad! sheet my house in flames?’

‘Ay, and level it to the ground-stone. Why should the Scottish Celt be more patient, more enduring, more slavish if you will, than his Irish brother? Thank God, Sir Horace, that your estate, as you name it, is not in Galway or Connemara; for then we might have been drawing lots for who was to take a quiet shot, from behind some leafy hedge, at you, or at this white-faced villain, your legal mentor, Snaggs; but we Highlandmen deem a fat game proprietor but a poor substitute for the game itself.’

‘Fellow, do you dare to threaten me?’

‘Sir Horace Everingham,’ I exclaimed, fiercely; ‘but for your grey hair I would stretch you where you stand—ay, stretch you never more to rise.’

‘This is hamesucken, rank hamesucken!’ exclaimed Snaggs, as Sir Horace started back; ‘witnesses—help! Sheriff—Mr. Mac Fee—help!’

On hearing this strange outcry, Mr. Jeames Toodles, and four or five other liveried servants and grooms appeared.

‘This is—’pon my soul—indeed quite outrageous!’ cried the breathless baronet, keeping the dining-tables between us; ‘seize that Highland ruffian!’

‘Obstruct me here who dare!’ I exclaimed, unsheathing my dirk, and brandishing it before their eyes, in a style that made the plushed-phalanx fall back, I broke through, and knocking a couple of them down, escaped from the house, with a heart swollen by emotions of grief, shame, and the keenest mortification.

All was over now indeed!

And Laura?

CHAPTER XVII.

MR. SNOBLEIGH.

FROM the illuminated marble vestibule, I plunged out into the darkness of the night, and goaded by my fierce and terrible thoughts, was rushing down the avenue, when in my confusion I stumbled against a marble Psyche, that stood in the centre of the carriage-way, about a pistol-shot from the door, and fell, stunned and almost breathless beside the pedestal.

I thought of my feeble mother about to be torn from the roof that had sheltered her so long; I thought of my brave father now beneath the sod, and of his fathers in that old ancestral burial-place, where 'shaded by sepulchral yew,' lay the warriors and the patriarchs of our tribe, and where I would never lie; I thought of all that had been, but could never be again; the stirring past, with all its shadowy glory; the humiliating present with all its bitterness; the dark and dubious future with all its doubts and fears; and a storm—a devouring fever—raged within me!

Placing my hands upon my temples, I pressed my hot and throbbing brow upon the cold marble pedestal, and endeavoured to reflect and to breathe.

The three windows of the drawing-room, which in the French fashion, were constructed to open down to the Portsoy marble steps that descended to the lawn, were all unclosed, as the heat of the atmosphere was great, and the luxury, lights, and music within made me scan for a moment this magnificent apartment from the place where I lingered. It was crowded by objects of *virtù*, and the subdued lights of the crystal chandeliers, and chaste girandoles, fell on antique Sevres and China vases; on oriental jars and Dresden china plateaux; on the Warwick vase in

verde antique; on velvet hangings draped up with gold; on Dianas and Apollos, &c.; on Rosso de Lavanti marble pillars; on bronzes and Medician vases, glittering antique buhl and or-molu tables, and all that might please the eye, or gratify the whim of a moment.

The notes of a piano—one of Errard's best—and the voice of a female singing, came towards me, and I raised myself from the ground on my elbow to listen. My heart beat wildly. The air was soft and sad and touching; and—though then unknown to me—it was the divine *Spirito Gentil* from the opera of Donizetti. She who sang was Laura, and my ears drank in every gentle note; the fierce conflict of pride and passion died away within me; my heart was melted by the gentler emotions that Laura's influence roused, and I could have wept—but not a tear would come.

I could see her figure, with Clavering standing beside her, patting time with his gloved hand, and turning over the leaves of the address to Leonora. I wished him any place but there.

Laura looked charming!

From the crystal girandoles that stood on the little carved brackets of the piano, the light fell in bright rays over her black silk dress, which, in its darkness, contrasted strongly with the pure whiteness of her beautiful neck and delicate hands. Her face was full of sweetness and animation, and her soft voice so delightfully modulated, was full of an enthusiasm that lent her usually pale cheek a flush, as she sang that winning Italian air with all its requisite pathos.

'Aw—vewy well—she does sing diwinely!' said a voice near me. 'Alboni—even little Piccolomini herself, could not surpass her.'

'Hush—pray,' said another.

'Aw—now it is ended—bravo!'

Close by me were Mr. Mac Fee the sheriff, and Mr. Snobleigh, smoking each a choice cuba, and

hovering so near the marble Psyche, that I dared not move, lest I should be observed and suspected of eaves-dropping.

'A dooced bad cigaw,' said Snobleigh, endeavouring to light a refractory cabana, and swaying about in a manner that sufficiently indicated how the fumes of the champagne had mounted into that vacuum where his brains should have been; 'dem—I think your 'Ighland air spoils them; and aw—aw—you admire Laura—eh; aw—now it draws; a fine girl—say yes—why the devil don't you say yes?'

'Beautiful—and you are tender in that quarter?' simpered the servile Mac Fee.

'Aw—yes, and have some devilish serious thoughts of matrimony, too.'

'Marriage is a serious thing, Mr. Snobleigh.'

'Aw—yes—demmed serious when one marries age, ugliness, or aw—poverty; but with, with a charming young person like Miss Everingham—it alters the case entirely. But don't you observe, old fellow, that Laura talks too much of that aw—aw—peculiar individual—that species of outlaw, as Mr. Snaggs names him—'

'Young Mac Innon?'

'Dem! yes—but to tease me of course. What is that now? Fanny Clavering at her aw—aw—everlasting song—

"I dare not seek to offer thee
A timid love like mine—"

'Like hers indeed—aw—aw—ha! ha! it has been offered to half the fellows in the Household Brigade. Curse that pink champagne—it makes one so devilish shaky in the aw—legs. Yes—Laura has talked so much about this 'Ighland colt, Mac Innon, ever since the shooting-match, that I—aw don't half like it. In fact, Clavering—a good judge of both horses and aw—women—swears that she loves him.'

'You cannot be serious?'

'Aw—yes, frightfully serious. But only think of a girl like Laura troubling her—aw head about such a wild Highland Sawney Bean? I should like to see him handling my yacht, the *Bruiser*, in a stiff nor'-easter off Cowes; taking the mettle out of a four-in-hand team; aw—making up his book on the Derby; widening the winnaw at the Oaks; knocking the balls about at billiards, or aw—aw—getting a child of Judah to fork out the tip, or achieving anything else that savours of town life, or of civilization. The chawming Laura in love with him indeed; 'pon my soul the idea is—aw too absawd!'

'Absurd, indeed,' chorused Mr. Mac Fee.

'Absawd—my dear fellow, absawd!' added Snobleigh, as he staggered away, followed by the obsequious Mac Fee.

Laura spoke of me frequently, and Clavering thought she loved me!

Loved me—could it be credible, or was it the mere jest of a heedless heart, that linked our names together—a linking that, in love, has a nameless charm to the young, the timid, the tender, and the true. What a tumult was raised in my breast by this casual revelation! I scarcely dared to breathe. If aught was wanting to increase the bitterness of the struggle waged by pride and love within me, it was the words of the thoughtless Snobleigh.

But these bright hopes of a vague and joyous future—and all their train of burning thoughts and ardent aspirations, were doomed to be crushed and forgotten for a time, by the terrible tidings awaiting me at my desolate home.

Midnight was close at hand, when, turning away from this abode of luxury and splendour, where every comfort that wealth can procure surrounded the cold and selfish Sir Horace and his pampered household, I bent my steps towards the mountains, and by a narrow path through a dark and moonless copsewood

—or rather, an old primeval forest of the Middle Ages, I hastened towards Glen Ora.

I had much to reflect on, and above all the flood of bitter and anxious thoughts that rolled like a dark and tempestuous sea around me, I saw the image of Laura Everingham; for, boy like, and full of mountain poetry, legendary lore, and old enthusiasm, to me she naturally became a goddess, and the guiding-star of all my hopes and aspirations; while serving to temper with something of reason the fiery anger with which I was tempted to regard the cruelty and harshness of her father; who, like too many of our new Highland proprietors, was but the slave of mammon and the tool of a cunning factor.

While threading my way—somewhat hastily I confess—through a deep and savage cairn, which was terrible of old as the shade of a mysterious spirit—a rushing sound, a crashing of branches struck my ear, and something white passed near me, like a sunbeam, or a flash of fire.

‘The white stag!’ I exclaimed, in a breathless voice, and involuntarily grasped my dirk, while the perspiration started to my brow; for by an old tradition in the glen, it was affirmed, that whenever danger was near the race of Mac Innon, a *white stag* crossed the Braes of Loch Ora.

‘My mother! my mother!’ was my next thought, and like a mountain deer, I sprang away to reach the old jointure-house of our family.

CHAPTER XVIII.

DEATH.

DAWN was stealing across the dun slopes of Ben Ora and the grey rocky scalps of the Craig-na-tuire, when

I reached the crest of a hill which overhung my mother's residence ; and there I paused to draw breath, and to survey a scene which, though familiar to me as the features of my own face, never lost the charm of its lonely beauty.

Diminished by distance, the little thatched cottages in the glen seemed less than molehills, but green and silent, dotting the slope far down below, while above them rose the stupendous mountains piled up, crest on crest, to heaven. From the humble roofs, the smoke was beginning to ascend in long spiral columns into the clear and ambient air, as the poor, but thrifty housewives of the glen prepared their fires of guissemoney—the bogwood and black peat.

In this vast Highland solitude where I paused the breeze bore to the ear no sound of domestic life ; no sheep bleated, as of old, on the green hill side ; no horse neighed or cow lowed in the ample glen beneath, for the poor cottagers had long since parted with all for sustenance ; but there rang the ceaseless rush of the torrent, which plashed and glittered as it tore through the corrie ; the whirr of the plover, the hum of the heather-bee, or the distant roar of the rutting hind, as he rose from his dewy lair among the feathery bracken beside yonder old grey battle-cairn. Even these sounds were faint or undefined, and all nature seemed as motionless and still, as the stately stag with giant horns, that stood on a pinnacle of rock, against the rosy flush of the eastern sky. He seemed to be surveying the scene ; then he moved his lofty antlers, and lo ! between me and the gorgeous blaze of light that overspread the east, and threw out in black relief the sharp jagged outline of the rocky hill, there rose a forest of branching antlers, as, in obedience to their king, a noble herd of deer, calves, hinds, and harts, three thousand head and more, stood for a minute as if to show their whole array, and then with slow and measured steps, descended and wound

down the mountain side, until they disappeared among the sandy ravines and bushy corries which the streams and storms of ages have torn and riven in the bosom of Ben Ora.

There had been a great stalking expedition in the forests of the West, and the gillies of the Marquis of Drumalbane had been driving the deer for many miles along the shore; hence the collection of this vast herd, but amidst its masses I could discern no trace of a *white* stag. Then, whence the vision of last night? Was this animal indeed supernatural, and the harbinger of evil, as tradition affirmed it to be?

My gloomy forebodings increased as the brilliance of morning descended from the mountain slopes into the deep and dreamy glens, and as I hastened down the narrow path which led to my mother's house. No smoke was wreathing upward from its chimneys, and there was an aspect of still life about it which surprised and alarmed me. The door was wide open—an unusual circumstance. Anon, I saw a number of persons hastening to and fro between the cottages of the glen, and a little crowd of men and women gradually collected round the house. A deadly terror smote my heart, and every pulse stood still. Then my ears tingled, as a cry of lamentation woke the silent echoes of the valley. I sprang down the mountain side, rushed through the startled clachan, and at the door of the house met old Mhari, her eyes red with weeping. She threw her arms round me.

'My mother?' I exclaimed.

'She is dying!' replied the sobbing woman, in her own figurative language; 'she must soon be laid in the Place of Sleep, with her feet to the rising sun.'

'Dying!' I ejaculated.

'Why protract the poor lad's misery?' said a gentleman, who wore a suit of accurate black, with a white neckcloth, and silver spectacles, and whom I

knew to be the doctor of the district, and a great enemy of old Mhari, for whose universal specific for all complaints (wild garlic boiled with May butter) he had a great contempt; 'why add to what he must suffer?—tell him at once, that he may bear his loss like a Christian and a man. Mac Innon, your mother is dead—God help you, my poor fellow!'

It was so—dead—and now I had not a relation, not a friend in the world, but the poor people of the glen, to whom I was bound by the common ties of clanship and descent. On learning that I had gone to visit Sir Horace, and knowing well my fiery temper and proud disposition, my mother's gentle breast had been filled by a hundred tender anxieties and thoughts of danger. Finding herself alone for a little space, animated by what purpose heaven only knows—perhaps by a restless desire to breathe the fresh air of the glen for the last time; perhaps to look for me, or perhaps to test the worth of the old tradition, and so rid herself of a life that had become a burden; inspired by some mysterious impulse, and endued thereby with more than her wonted strength of thought and purpose, she had robed herself in a plaid and wrapper, and left her bed unseen, for she was found dead—dead on the rustic seat beside the porch, and consequently *beyond* the walls of the jointure-house. Here she was found by Callum Dhu, on his returning with our doctor, a dapper little country practitioner, whose attempts to restore animation proved utterly unavailing.

'Dhù! Dhù!' was the exclamation of Callum; 'assuredly the curse of the Red Priest is here!'

'Curse of—what do you say, my good man?' asked the doctor, with a cross air of perplexity; 'it is the result of an inward complaint under which she long laboured. She was highly susceptible—nervous—sickly and sensitive—I was always quite prepared for this fatal termination.'

‘But you never said so till now,’ retorted Callum; ‘so what avails your skill. Had she only kept *within* the door she might have lived long enough.’

I now felt myself above the reach of further misfortune. I had been the mark of Fate’s sharpest arrows, and a proud but fierce emotion of defiance swelled within me for a time. Even Snaggs and the coming terrors of the eviction were forgotten now. Thus I felt buoyed up, as it were, by a courage gathered from the very depth of my despair; but anon, the sense of loneliness that fell upon me was crushing and profound.

She who for years had watched over me, as only a mother watches over the last of her little brood; she who in age I had tended, nursed, and consoled, with a love, like her own, the most unselfish and unwearyed, had died at last, when I was absent, and when none was near to close her eyes—to kiss her pallid lip.

‘It is a warning!’ exclaimed her old nurse Mhari. ‘The men of Glentuirc are gone—those of Glen Ora must soon follow. *Surd air Suinard! chaidh Ardnamorchuan a doluidh!*’ *

Then came the funeral—all, all a dream to me.

The night had been dark and stormy, and in Glen Ora the keening of the women and the howling of the dogs, ‘who knew that death was nigh,’ mingled with the wail of the bagpipe and the sighing of the wind; and, like a dream, I see before me still the apartment hung with white, and all its furniture shrouded in the same cold, dreary, livery; the coffin lid bearing a vessel which contained a little salt, and all the doors left wide open, to give free passage to the departing spirit, which old superstition still averred was hovering near its earthly tenement; the low-moaned songs, or the deep and earnest lamenta-

* “Prepare Suinard, for Ardnamorchuan is gone to wreck!” a proverb.

tions of Mhari, Minnie, and other women of the glen; the cold, stiff, and conventional prayer by the parish minister; the wine and whisky, cake and cheese served round before 'the lifting,' and the slow, solemn march of *Gil Chroisd* (the servant of Christ), which Ewen Oig and Gillespie Ruadh wailed forth on their great mountain-pipes, as they headed the funeral procession, which departed about sunrise for the burial-place of our tribe.

The morning dawned on murky clouds of red and amber hue, piled in masses above Ben Ora, around whose rocky crest the ascending mist was wreathed like a mighty cymar. The sun arose, but gloomy, pale, and watery; and, to me, all nature seemed to wear the livery of gloom and woe.

The day was as dreary as our errand was mournful, and slowly the procession, which was formed by the whole male population of the glen, in number about a hundred men and boys, the aged supporting themselves on their staffs, and leading their grandchildren by the hand, wound over the hills, communing together on the virtues of the deceased, and of that olden time, to which a falling people ever look fondly back, as a faded woman to the days of her beauty—as the aged to the days of their youth.

All the funeral arrangements were conducted in the modern, rather than the ancient, Highland fashion. Old Sergeant Ian Mac Raonuill, who had served with my father in the Black Watch, had the charge of marshalling the procession, and at certain distances on the road he regularly cried 'halt-relief,' when four fresh men hastened forward to bear the coffin, which was carried for four miles on the shoulders of our people, until we reached the place of interment, on the shore of a great salt loch, or arm of the sea.

The day was still lowering; the sounding sea of the stormy Hebrides dashed its waves on the echoing beach; the eternal mist, like a mighty shroud, rolled

along the drenched hills and dripping heather; and through it, as through a veil, the joyless sun, shorn of his rays, seemed at times to hang in mid air, like an obscured lamp. Our hearts were heavy indeed. Even the Lowland Scots are peculiarly liable to be impressed by the appearance of nature at all times; then, at such a time of sorrow and foreboding, how much more so were we, who were bred among the stupendous scenery of the North, and by our race and habits were the creatures of strong and gloomy imaginations! And then the slow, sad, and wailing march of *Gil Chroisd*; how mournfully it rang between the silent mountains, and woke the echoes of that lonely shore, where the long-legged heron, or the gigantic sea-horse, were brooding on the slippery rocks, and where the wiry Scottish pines cast their shadow on the breakers!

At a place named Coil-chro, or the Wood-of-hazel-nuts, a turn of the path, as it wound over the headland, brought us in view of a gentleman and two ladies on horseback, attended by a smart mounted servant, clad in a grey surtout, and accoutred with a leather girdle, laced hat, and black cockade. The gentleman dismounted, and with much politeness and good feeling, in imitation of the local custom, remained on foot with head uncovered while the procession passed by. At a glance I recognized Captain Clavering in this polite stranger, and under the broad hats of the ladies the soft features of his bright-eyed sister and the gentle Miss Everingham. It was at this moment that old Mac Raonuil cried 'halt-relief!' and while a change took place in the bearers, Laura, whose eyes were full of tears, brought her horse close to me, and holding out her gloved hand, pressed and patted mine with great frankness and kindly sympathy.

'Heaven help you, poor Mr. Mac Innon,' she said; 'we all deplore your bereavement, and feel only

remorse and shame for the severity with which my angry papa—but what can *I* do?

I kissed her hand, and she did not withdraw it; while the beautiful expression that filled her eyes, to which her half-drooping lids lent a wonderful sweetness, made my heart swell with tenderness and gratitude; for human sympathy was doubly valuable, and hers was doubly dear to me at a time so terrible; but again the shrill notes of the wild pipe struck up—again the solemn procession went forward, and a turn of the road hid Laura from my view—yet her eyes seemed before me still, and her voice was lingering in my ear.

A half mile further on brought us to the ancient burial-ground; it was circular and surrounded by a low ruined wall of rough dry stones, as it had once been a Druidical circle. Here the grass grew with peculiar richness and rankness, for the dead of more than two thousand years lay there. Old stones, graven with quaint runes, lay half sunk, amid the moss and nettles, like the Celtic cross that marked where the Christianized Scot had laid his dust in the same grave with his pagan fathers, who had worshipped the God of Day and the Spirit of Loda. Close by stood an old chapel of the Kuldei, dedicated to St. Colme, the Abbot of Iona. It had been a ruin since the Spaniards, under the loyal and noble Marquis of Tullibardine, had landed in Glensheil, and fought the Government troops early in the last century; but a vaulted corner of this venerable fane was still used as a chapel by the poor Catholic Gael of the district. Here a rough deal table served them for an altar; a rough crucifix, and six candles, in clay holders, stood thereon, with a few garlands of freshly-gathered wild flowers, while heather was spread before it for those who chose to kneel. Near it was a miserable hut, or wigwam, where Father Raoul Beg Mac Donuil (*i. e.*, Little Father Ronald, the son of Donald),

a priest from the Scottish College at Valladolid, dwelt in prayer, penury, and misery; for among the poor clansmen of the impoverished and almost desolate West, the labours of the Catholic clergy are indeed the labour of love and self-denial.

Three Mac Innons had been Abbots of Iona, and one of them built this chapel. In ancient times, when one of the house of Glen Ora died, a grave was found in the morning ready dug; but by whose hands no mortal knew—for none had ever dared to watch so said old tradition; but even this mysterious sexton had left the country, unable perhaps, as Callum Dhu affirmed, to breathe the air that was infected by factors, gaugers, and rural police.

Before entering the burying-ground we performed the *deasil*, and went round it *with the sun*. The people insisted on this, and I had no wish or will but theirs; besides, the Celt is a great stickler for ancient customs. The parish minister permitted Father Raoul to say a prayer at the grave, for she who was gone had ever been kind to him, as a priest of that faith in which her forefathers had lived and died; and it is a noble feature in the Highland character, that neither priestcraft, rancour, nor bigotry could ever warp or sever the kindly ties of blood and clanship.

The Place of Sleep, or, as some still named it as in the Druid days, The Place of the Stones, was one of those old yew-shaded graveyards which still remain in many a desolate glen, to mark where our expatriated people were wont to lay their dead. Here we lowered her into the narrow house.

A little shovelling, a little batting of sods, every stroke on which went home to my aching heart, an uncovering of heads—a little time, and all was over. I felt more than ever alone in the world—for a recollection was all that remained to me of my mother.—my last relative on this side of that remorseless grave.

The minister patted me on the shoulder—the old priest shook me kindly by the hand, and led me away. In vain did they tell me, in hackneyed phrase, that those whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth; my rebellious spirit spurned the stereotyped idea. I felt myself a beggar and a lonely outcast—that all was over now, that every human tie which bound me to my home (but had I now a home?) was torn asunder for ever!

Omens of evil, such as serve to feed the superstitious mind, and to make a deep impression on a people so filled with poetry and wild fancies as our unlettered Gael, had not been wanting, as forerunners of these calamities; and these omens had been duly remarked by the aged dwellers in our glen, as the sure forerunners of direful events.

In the preceding winter, when the country was covered by snow, Gillespie Ruadh and others averred, that early one morning they discovered marks of the feet or talons of a gigantic bird, each impression being at least twenty yards apart. These tremendous footmarks were traced across the glen, and over Ben Ora, from the loch to the *sea shore*, where all trace of them was lost in the flowing tide. On hearing of this marvel, I hurried to the spot, but a fresh fall of snow had obliterated these strange marks, which were declared to indicate a departure of our people towards the western sea.

Moreover of late, the white stag had been frequently seen, and had even ventured to approach the lights in our cottage windows.

This animal, which the most expert of our foresters had failed to slay, was a tall, powerful, and gigantic stag, with antlers of remarkable size and beauty—royal antlers—*i. e.* having three points on each horn. These proud appendages it *never* cast; at least none had ever been found. According to the unvarying story of the hunters, stalkers, and keepers, it was

known to have been in existence for more than two hundred and fifty years; for Lachlan Mohr's father, Torquil Mac Innon, who was slain by an arrow at the battle of Benrinnes (excuse this antiquarianism, good reader, but your Welshmen, Celts and Irishmen, are full of such old memories), wounded it in the right ear, the half of which he shot away. Thereafter a fleet and fierce, but stately white stag, minus an ear, had roved, and was *now* affirmed to be roving, in the woods of Glen Ora.

If this was indeed the same that Torquil covered with his long Spanish arquebus, it must have rivalled those of Juvenal, or the hawks of Ælian, which lived for seven hundred years. Be this as it may, if on the shores of Lochtreig there was a white stag which never died, why should there not be another on the shores of Loch Ora? this was deemed unanswerable.

The swift white stag which now haunted the woods of the Mac Innons was certainly (as I had often seen by my telescope) minus the ear which tradition alleged old Torquil shot away; and this miraculous animal was affirmed to be the same which had passed the tent of Lachlan in the night before he was slain at Worcester, and which appeared before the calamities of Culloden. It had been visible often of late, and the poor unlettered Gael of the glen spoke of it in whispers one to another as a certain warning of the total ruin about to overtake them.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE EVICTION.

WHISPERING of these things, the men of the glen recrossed the mountains, but slowly and silently, for the voice of the pipe was heard no more on the

gloomy heath ; the boom of the climbing waves had died away on the distant beach, and evening was reddening the dun heathy slopes of the Ben when we drew near our home, and a cry of alarm burst from those who were in front of our funeral party. Large columns of smoke were seen to ascend from the hollow, and to curl in the clear air between us and the sky.

A chill came over the hearts of those who accompanied me. As for myself, I deemed, as I have said, that misfortune had shot the sharpest shafts at me, and now that I had nothing more in this world to care for, or to fear ; but yet I felt a sore pang, when, on arriving at a gorge of the hills, rightly named *Gar-choine*, or *The Place of Lamentation*, for there the Campbells had once defeated the Mac Innons, we came in sight of the beautiful natural amphitheatre of *Glen Ora*, and saw thirty columns of smoke ascending from as many cottages, and uniting in one broad and heavy cloud of vapour, that rolled like mist along the mountain sides. On the slope of the hill were clustered a crowd of women and children, screaming and lamenting, while at the far extremity of the glen, where the narrow and winding road that led to *Inverness* dipped down towards the *Caledonian Canal*, we perceived a train of carts laden with furniture—the miserable household gear of our poor cotters ; while the bayonets of a party of soldiers who escorted it—like a Spanish treasure or a Roman triumph—flashed a farewell ray in the setting sun, for resistance *had* been anticipated by Mr. Ephraim Snaggs ; and thus he had borrowed an unwilling party from the detachment which usually garrisons the secluded barrack at *Fort William*.

The glensmen paused on the brow of the hill which overlooked their desecrated homes, and their voices rose with their clenched hands in one heavy and terrible imprecation ; then with a shout they

rushed down towards their wives and little ones, where a fresh scene of grief and sorrow awaited them; for now we were homeless, and 'landless, landless,' as ever were the race of Alpine in the last century.

Snaggs and the Sheriff had taken their measures well to evict the people, destroy their dwellings, and seize the furniture when no resistance could be offered; by choosing a time when all the men of the glen were absent at my mother's interment. Yet they took nearly as many precautions before venturing up the side of the Loch Ora, as if the clans were still in their most palmy days, when Lachlan Mohr feasted his brave men on the best beeves of the Campbells, and had five hundred targets, and as many claymores, hung in his hall.

The barbarous cruelties exercised by a neighbouring Duchess and a canting Marquis upon the poor, had so greatly exasperated the Mac Innons, that at fairs and elsewhere, they had been in the habit of openly threatening an armed resistance to any attempt to evict them from the glen, where they—the aboriginal race—had dwelt for ages before Laird or Peer or feudal parchments had a name in the land. Calum's character and mine were well known to be reckless, bold, and even desperate; thus Messieurs Snaggs and Mac Fee took their measures wisely, and accordingly selected the time for attack, when the whole of the male population were at the grave of the Mac Innons.

The rural police of the adjacent districts were secretly ordered to hold tryst in a wood about six miles distant. There they arrived about midnight, and received a harangue from Sheriff Mac Fee on the majesty of the law; there an oath was administered to them, and there Mr. Snaggs quoted Blair, and gave them that which proved much more acceptable—a jorum of whisky and ale. On mustering

their forces, these worthy officials found that, including themselves, the Procurator Fiscal and a couple of clerks, with the police, they had only thirty men, but as well armed with hatchets, crow-bars, levers and pickaxes, as if they were about to invest the Redan. Doubtful still of success, application had been made to the Commandant at Fort William for a serjeant's party of twelve men from the Irish Fusileers, with twenty rounds of ball-cartridge each, as there was a fear that the same rifles which had done such wonders at the recent Gathering, might cover the legal person of the great moralist. Thus the whole *possé* marched in array of battle into the glen, where, to the terror and dismay of the women, they appeared about half an hour after the last of the funeral procession had disappeared over the summit of the hill.

An immediate and indiscriminate attack was made upon the cottages and on the old jointure-house; and amid the shrieks, outcries, tears and lamentations of the women, the usual work of eviction and destruction progressed with as much spirit as if Huske, Hawley, Cumberland and Co., had left the infernal shades to visit upper air. Delay and mercy were craved alike in vain by these poor people. In vain did more than one young mother hold her new-born babe aloft; in vain did the daughters of those who fought with Moore and Wellington, implore pity, on bended knees, with clasped hands and streaming eyes, as they clung about the knees of Snaggs and Mac Fee; but each was "sullen as Ajax," and bent on upholding the dignity of the law and of wealth. The inmates were summoned to come forth, and if they refused, were roughly dragged out, some with babes at their breasts, and batoned with such brutality, that the Irish Fusileers, whose hearts revolted at the police, and who in their own land had seen too much of similar work, used the butts of their muskets

against the limbs of the law, and thus offered some protection to our women.

Every article of furniture was flung out; box-beds were torn down; chairs, tables, kail-pots, and kettles, spinning-wheels, caups, quaighs and luggies, clothing and delft, were thrown on the sward, and in many instances destroyed in a spirit of sheer recklessness. Every little object which time, tenderness, or association made valuable in the humble eyes of the cottagers was demolished or carried off. The domestic shrine was rifled; its *lares* desecrated—its household gods destroyed. Everything eatable or drinkable was at once appropriated by the plunderers. The thatch was torn down; crow-bars and levers were applied to the huge boulder-stones, which in many instances formed the corners of the poor huts, and by one or two wrenches, the whole fabric was tumbled in a heap of ruin. The cabers and couples were cut through by saws or axes; and thus every hut, house, barn, stable, and hen-roost were destroyed. The old jointure-house was gutted of its furniture, every vestige of which was piled on carts with the miserable chattels of the people, and driven off towards the nearest market-town; not an article of my property escaped, save a few old seals and rings, which, with my father's sword, old Mhari and Minnie concealed about their persons. Then the mansion was unroofed; the doors hewn down; the windows dashed out; and the floors torn up and burned, to render it totally uninhabitable. Thus from house to house, from cot to cot, and from barn to byre, went these ministers of destruction; the sick mother of Alisdair Mac Gouran, a woman in her ninetieth year, and whose grey head had not left her pillow for three years, was borne out and flung on the damp hill side. Women scarcely recovered from the pains of maternity—and others on the point of becoming mothers, were alike

brought forth, and those who resisted, or vainly attempted to save some prized article, though of little value, were beaten with batons until forced to relinquish their hold.

Seated by her fire, Widow Gillian (the relict of a soldier whose patronymic was Ca-Dearg), and who was the mother of three sons in our Highland Division, boldly refused to come forth, or to yield up her husband's silver medals, of which they endeavoured to deprive her. Rendered desperate and frantic, this woman, though aged, seemed stout and active; she clung, shrieking, to the posts of her bed; but the police tore her away. Then she caught wildly at the jambs of a door; but her fingers were soon bruised or broken by batons, and one constable tired of her screaming, dealt her a blow which fractured her skull, and covered her long grey hair with blood. Then she became insensible. Flora, her daughter, one of the prettiest girls in the glen, when seeking to defend her, received a kick in the breast, from which she never recovered.

Fire was now applied to all the remaining cottages; and their roofs of thatch, turf, and heather, with their old dry rafters of resinous mountain pine, burned bravely. The work of destruction was nearly complete.

Then the sheriff mounted his horse; Snaggs bestrode his trotting garron; the carts laden with such furniture as had not been burned, broken, or deemed worthless, were put in motion; the few sheep and cattle of the people were collected, and accompanied by the constables who were laden with everything they could lay hands upon, and surrounded by the pitying soldiers with their bayonets fixed, Messrs. Fungus Mac Fee, Ephraim Snaggs, and the Fiscal, headed the plunder of the glen, and departed, leaving that once beautiful little mountain-village a heap of smoking ruins—every hut levelled flat, or sinking

amid smoke, flame, and dust—the jointure-house reduced to four bare walls; while the women and their little ones, bathed in tears, or covered with cuts, blood, and bruises, remained in a stupor of silent astonishment and horror at this irreparable destruction, which divested them of shelter, of food, furniture, clothing, and everything, and just when the rain-charged clouds of night were descending on the hills.

Let not the English reader deem this atrocious scene overdrawn. In Sutherland, Inverness, and Ross, in Moidart and the Isles, such have been enacted with even greater brutality since the beginning of this century. Yet the brave, hardy, frugal and patient Highlanders have endured it without complaint. In form of law, murders have been committed in open day—but then it was merely the manslaughter of a few Highland paupers, to enforce the dignity of ducal wealth and the majesty of feudal law.

‘Thus it is,’ says the brave old General Stewart, ‘that the love of speculating in the brute creation, has invaded these mountains, into which no foreign enemy could ever penetrate, and has expelled a brave people whom no invader could ever subdue. It has converted whole glens and districts, once the abode of a bold, vigorous, and independent race of men, into scenes of desolation.’

CHAPTER XX.

DESOLATION.

NIGHT came down on that scene of lamentation and woe—on more than eighty human beings who were fashioned in the image of God, and were yet denied such shelter as He accords to the fox and eagle; but

though their hearths were desolate, and their old hereditary but humble homes demolished, the clearance could not be deemed complete, until the people were entirely swept away from the country.

Callum and I obtained shelter with the old priest Father Raoul, who afforded us a corner of his little hut; the poor man had but one pallet—and there we remained for a day or two, considering what steps should be taken to find food for those who were starving in the now desolate glen, and moreover to provide for ourselves.

Thus I found a temporary home, within a few feet of the spot, where she, to whom I had ever turned for consolation and comfort, advice and sympathy, was taking her eternal rest.

Meanwhile fresh cruelties and scenes of horror took place in that ill-fated glen, where the people were completely given up to the malevolent fury of Snaggs, who, as a man of the law, had a truly legal aversion to Highlanders.

The evicted formed a little bivouac on the heather. In one place lay a sick mother, stretched on a pallet, covered by her husband's plaid; around her nestled her little ones, gazing with awe and terror at this unusual scene; on the deathlike visage of one parent and the stern despair that lurked in the eyes of the other. Fires of turf and rafters were kindled, and round these, in little booths of rugs and plaids, nestled the younger children, and infants in cradles. Amid these the elder children sported and played, ignorant of the ruin that had come upon them, and in their heedless glee forming a strong contrast to their grief-stricken parents, whose once high spirit was crushed and broken now. Such is the effect of tyranny, starvation, and misrule!

The old soldier, Ian Mac Raonuill, burrowed a hole on the brow of a hill under a rock, and spread his plaid over it. Herein lay his wife, nursing a sickly

and delicate child, while he with his stouter sons slept on the sward. The air became chilly, and the cloudy sky was overcharged with dew; thus many who were sick and ailing, wandered about like ghosts on the midnight hill, unable to find either shelter or repose. Premature labour came on the wife of Gillespie Ruadh; and there, on the bleak side of Ben Ora, the wretched Highland mother brought her child into the world. Before morning she expired, and the aged widow Mac Gouran lay also a corpse, not far from her; for before dawn, there came on a tempest of lightning, wind, and rain, as if the very elements had conspired with the petty tyrants of the glen, to destroy the homeless Mac Innons. And while the blue lightning gleamed between the bare scalp of Ben Ora and the rifted brow of the Craig-na-tuirc; while the rain like a ceaseless torrent smoked along the soaking heather, and flooded every rocky chasm and sandy runnel; while the wind swept over the hills as if it would have torn up the heath by the roots, our poor people all nestled together, and, lifting up their voices, sang a psalm with touching piety. Amid this tempest the mother and her youngling died; and the beautiful Celtic superstition—that a woman who dies in childbed, whatever her offences in life—is borne by angels straight to heaven, was remembered now, as the people whispered it to one another, and drew comfort from it.

The sufferings of the night left them more wretched than ever.

To shelter the women, and to veil the dead bodies from the view of the children, a few cabers were propped together, and above these the men spread their plaids and grey frieze coats; but ere long there was a cry of alarm, and the infamous Snaggs, with a party of his levellers and armed constables, came upon them again. Then the coverings were torn off; the cabers flung aside, and the sick and the dead were

remorselessly exposed to the blaze of the hot morning sun. The booth which sheltered the children was demolished, and the wife of Mac Raonuil was dragged from her hole on the hill-side.

In vain did she weep and hold up her babe; in vain did the sick veteran, her husband, point to his wounded arm, his silver hairs, and three war-medals; the only reply was fierce abuse for daring to seek shelter, or to burrow, after a notice of removal had been duly served upon them.

A few ducks and hens, which had been wandering and scraping among the ruins of the cottages, were now collected and carried off by the constables, lest they might afford a day's food to the homeless, who were threatened with fresh vengeance by those jacks-in-office, if found in the glen to-morrow. Mr. Snaggs, who always spoke blandly, quoted Scripture and Blair on the folly of resistance; the beauty of submission to the will of God, and more especially of the new proprietor, for 'go they must—a ship was coming round to Loch Ora with sheep; and on the morrow there would arrive several hampers of a new species of game with which Sir Horace meant to stock the glen. Go then, my dear friends,' continued Mr. Snaggs, with a gloating eye at Minnie, who was kneeling over some sick children; 'go, and the Lord will provide for you in Canada—"for," as the divine Blair says, "neither obscurity of station, nor imperfection of knowledge sink below his regard those who obey and worship him."' "

With this trite quotation, the elder and the factor whipped up his pony, and departed with a couple of fat ducks dangling at its saddle-bow.

Next morning, the keepers arrived with their hampers of game on a cart, and as they entered the glen by the lower pass, the original inhabitants retired by the upper, (bearing their dead, their dying, the sick, aged, and little ones, slung in plaids over the

shoulders of the stoutest men,) towards the only shelter that remained to them—and assuredly the last which the Gael would think of adopting—the old ruined chapel of St. Colme upon the sea-beaten rocks of the western coast, for, as no Highland landlord will allow the evicted tenants of another to tarry within his bounds, the graveyards alone are *now* the neutral ground. There among the tombs they formed a new bivouac above the long rank grass that wrapped their fathers' dust. Close by were the moss-covered and lichen-spotted ruins of the old chapel, where the owl and the bat had their nests, and where the sombre ivy grew in luxuriance—a place of many solemn memories and many legendary terrors.

Location of every kind was refused by the adjacent proprietors; so with a vast tract of wild and rugged mountains and pathless hunting forests around them, our people were compelled to herd like cattle within the circular wall of the burying-ground; for most of the modern tyrants of the North share alike the love of game, the lust of gold, and a horror of the Celtic race.

It was on the fourth day that the widow of the Ca-Dearg (whose head had been fractured by the blow of a baton) died; and a cry for vengeance against her murderers went up to heaven from the denizens of that uncouth bivouac, as they committed her body to the earth; and it was fortunate that all the rifles and weapons of the people had been seized; for in Callum's breast and mine, there swelled up such a glow of fury, that we would assuredly have committed some fierce and retributive act, at which all Britain would have been startled.

'Are we slaves?' exclaimed Callum, furiously; 'I speak in English, Mac Innon; for, thank heaven, the Gaelic is the *only* language in the world that has no word expressive of slavery.'

'A bootless boast,' said I, gloomily; 'and what

matters it, when we may be murdered with impunity?"

'Evil has come upon us like snow upon the mountains, unsought and unsent for,' said he, as we closed the grave of the soldier's widow; 'poor old woman! Her blood has been shed by a staff that bore the royal crown and cypher—and for that crown her three brave sons are fighting in the East. A chial! a Highland soldier, or a Highland soldier's mother, are of less value than a grouse or plover—a sheep or a cow; for they cannot be shot for pleasure like the former, nor fattened to feed the southern market like the latter; and it is for a Government that treats us thus our soldiers fight and die! *Is samhach an obair dol a dholaidh.*'

'Alas, yes—silent is the progress of ruin!' I replied, repeating the proverb; 'but had our glen been in Tipperary, at what premium would the lives of Snaggs and Sir Horace been insured?'

'Sir Horace has driven us forth, that our glen may be peopled by wild animals; *but if fire will burn*, by the five wounds of God, and by the Black Stone of Scone, he will make little of that!' swore Callum, in a hoarse Gaelic whisper.

There was a dark and savage gleam in his hazel eyes as he spoke; and though aware that he referred to a project of vengeance, I cared not then to ask what it was.

Old Mhari was the wise woman and chief adviser and mediciner of the glen; she placed implicit belief in a hundred charms, spells, traditions, and absurdities that have come down to us through long and misty ages—yea, since the days of Fingal; for the supernatural is full of charms to the mind of a mountaineer. Thus Mhari was the custodier of one of those sanctified girdles which were usually kept in many Highland families, and which were bound about women in childbed. They were impressed with

strange and mystic figures; and the ceremony of binding was accompanied by words of Druidical origin; but Mhari was sorely perplexed and bewildered when the wife of Gillespie Ruadh expired amid the tempest, with this ancient girdle of maternity around her.

In a revengeful spirit, that bordered on the necromantic malevolence of the olden time, she fashioned an image of clay, which she named 'Ephraim Snaggs,' and selecting a time when the moon was full, placed it in a runnel which distilled between the rocks from a lonely tarn, among the sedges of which the dusky water-ouzel laid its eggs, and where the lazy bittern, whose croak forebodes a storm, made its home; and she believed that as the stream washed away the clay, and reduced it to a shapeless mass, and from thence to mere mud, so would the ungainly person of Mr. Ephraim Snaggs waste, pine, and decay: but most unfortunately, and greatly to the injury of Mhari's local reputation, this incantation of the nineteenth century turned out a complete failure; for though the runnel washed away the image in less than three days, Snaggs remained unharmed and well as ever; for we frequently saw him trotting his pony along the mountain path which led to the house of Sir Horace Everingham.

Though supported by the secret charity of the neighbouring clachans, our poor people were meanwhile enduring great misery. Their nights were passed shelterless among the dreary shades of the dead—each mother with her children clinging round her in terror and hunger; for their principal sustenance had been herbs, mountain-berries, and cold water.

Each morning they thanked God that another night was past; and each night they thanked Him for the sorrowful day that was gone. The wind whistled drearily from the ocean round the open ruins, and

over the long grassy graves, and bare, bleak headland of St. Colme. It seemed to bear on its breath a wailing sound, like a dirge of the dying, as it swept through the old yew-trees—but this, of course, was fancy.

With a heart that vibrated between love and hatred, anger and sorrow, I thought of Laura Everingham.

If the regret she expressed so prettily and so pithily for her father's previous severity and his factor's cruelty was sincere, what would her emotions be now?

But days passed away, and no message from her ever reached me at that wretched hut, which the poor but hospitable priest had invited me to share. This neglect stung me to the soul, and caused an anger that not even the memory of Laura's winning kindness, the strange admissions of Snobleigh in the avenue, and the memory of her soft smile or the beauty of her person could subdue; but I knew not that during this, our time of calamity, she and Fanny Clavering were paying a visit to a noble marquis, whose exterminating propensities have made him famous as one of the chief '*Barriers* to the prosperity of Scotland.'

Meanwhile Sir Horace, Sheriff Mac Fee, and Mr. Snaggs, after a voluminous correspondence with the Board of Supervision, had a steamer despatched to Loch Ora, to convey our people to Glasgow, where (without being landed) they were to be thrust like slaves on board of a vessel bound for America. Their final expatriation was fully resolved on by the trio; and none of the evicted were consulted either as to their wishes or destination, as they were alleged to be poor and ignorant Celts, who knew no language but their native Gaelic, and were helpless and stricken alike by poverty, sickness, and a wholesome terror of the powers that be.

The night was pitchy dark and somewhat stormy, when our poor outcasts saw the steamer that was to convey them for ever from their loved Highland home, ploughing the lonely waters of the deep salt loch that opened into the mountains; and a wail of despair ascended from the bleak burial promontory, as they heard the roar of the escaping steam, and the plunge of the descending anchor, when the vessel came to her moorings. Then the red light at her mast-head was watched for hours by the doomed and expatriated clansmen with emotions which no pen can describe, or pencil portray.

On this night it was averred that the *white stag* had been seen to hover near us in the gloom.

Low down along the base of Ben Ora, round the shore of the mirrored loch, and in the dark glen they had left, our people saw a wondrous blaze of light that illuminated the sky—that tinged the clouds with wavering fire, and lit the cold grey rocks and hills—the waving woods, and ghastly corries. It widened and grew on every hand, that marvellous sheet of flame, seeming to embrace the whole country in its fiery grasp; and with shouts of fear and wonder, the poor people, while gazing on this phenomenon, forgot for a time their own sorrows, and the approaching hour of their final expatriation.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE HEATHER ON FIRE!

ON this night Callum and I were loitering in the glen, among the ruins of our once-peaceful and contented mountain hamlet; but oppressed by sadness, on witnessing the new desolation of the place, we

wandered three or four miles away, and there older scenes of barbarity awaited us.

We sat down on some piles of stones that were half shrouded by the rising dog-grass, the moss, and the long feathery bracken. These marked the site of a few huts. Here once dwelt a brave little community named the Mac Ellars, one of whom had been my tutor, and here I had attended his little school, bringing each day with me, like other boys, a peat, as a contribution to his fire; for this is the old Highland custom, and the urchin who failed to do so was denied the privilege of warming his kilted legs for that day. Here often had I played the truant, and been threatened by my mother with *the Druid*—that venerable bugbear of the Highland urchin.

The Mac Ellars were all brave and hardy men, whose progenitors had occupied their 'holdings' since the days of Lachlan Mohr; and it was with them that Callum made the famous riot in Glen Ora, when burning the effigies of a certain English historian, and his miserable Scottish imitator, for their falsehoods and absurd antipathy to the clansmen and their national characteristics. But the youth of the clachan, twelve sturdy young lads, had been cajoled by a noble marquis and the duchess, his mother, into the ranks of the Sutherland Highlanders, and had marched to fight the Russians: *then* their cottages were levelled, and their aged parents were driven forth to beg, to starve, or die—tidings, no doubt, but ill-calculated to rouse the patriotism or fan the *amor patriæ* of the poor Celtic soldier, when chewing his green coffee in the frozen trenches of Sebastopol, or sinking under disease, with other victims of treachery and mismanagement, in the frightful hospital at Scutari; but fortunately for our Government, the poor clansman is animated by a love of home, which neither time can efface nor tyranny destroy. Thus were the Mac Ellars rooted out—the young sent to storm Sebas-

topol—the old to starve in the Lowlands, while the marquis and his *passé* mother were in a state of fervid Uncle Tommery, and, inspired by Mrs. Stowe's romance, were the leaders and patrons of anti-slavery meetings in the South, and fustian addresses to the women of America.

The ruined cottages which are met with at every few miles, amid the depopulated portions of our Highlands, dotting those vast glens which are silent and voiceless now as the most savage wilds of Hudson's Bay, or the great desert of Zahara, are well calculated to excite emotions of melancholy, as being the last relics of an old and departed race.

The wild gooseberry-bushes straggling among the stones; the old well, half choked by sand or weeds; the half-flattened fences; the garden-flowers growing rank among the encroaching heather, all told us the usual melancholy tale; and Callum and I sat in silence on the mossy stones, watching the daylight dying away beyond the distant sea, and full of our own sad and bitter thoughts.

He seemed wholly intent on polishing the butt of a steel Highland pistol, and while he did so, there hovered a dark and sombre aspect of ferocity on his brow.

We were silent, I have said, for both were too much oppressed to speak. Suddenly a black cock appeared on a fragment of rock near us, and clapped his wings as if in defiance. Quick as lightning Callum levelled the pistol and shot him dead; a moment the outspread pinions beat the heather, and then lay still, while the pistol-shot was pealing among the echoes of the wilderness. My fosterer leisurely reloaded and brought the bird to me; it was large, weighing more than five pounds, its sable plumage glazed all over with a shining blue, and its stomach gorged with bilberries.

‘I hope the report may not reach the ear of some

rascally keeper,' said I, throwing a hasty glance about me; 'if so, we shall be accused of poaching. It was a risk, Callum, to shoot that bird just now.'

'It is the last shot I may ever have on a Highland mountain,' said Callum Dhu, with a fierce sigh; 'and with little regret would I have put the same ball into the fat brisket of Sir Horace himself, if he stood within twelve paces of me, on this red heather to-night.'

For heaven's sake, Callum, do not speak thus,' said I; 'Sir Horace is less to blame than his evil mentor, Snaggs—I believe that in heart he is rather amiable.'

'Listen, Co-dhalta!' retorted Callum, turning upon me, and gazing with a full and angry frown. 'You love this man's daughter, and I like it as little as the good lady your mother (now, God rest her, in her grave) would have done. You love one who despises you—and yet your blood is as red as any in Scotland!'

'She does not despise me!' I responded, almost fiercely.

'Yet loving her is folly.'

'A folly that makes me happy.'

A folly that makes you miserable! Will you remember her only as the daughter of one who has the lives of Gillespie's wife and child, and of the widow of the Ca-Dearg to answer for?

'Sir Horace is no worse than the canting Marquis, or a hundred other proprietors in the North.'

'That is saying but little—there are many great men in Scotland still, deserving the dagger of Kirkpatrick and the bullet of Bothwellhaugh—and great is the pity that such pretty things have gone out of fashion. The best tune Rory Dall ever played men will tire of; and so I am tired of this Lowlander's tyranny.'

'He is no Lowlander,' Callum, said I, anxiously observing the fierce expression of my companion.

‘He is an Englishman, which is almost as bad.

I burst into a fit of laughter at this remark.

‘Ah—you laugh,’ said Callum, grimly; ‘let us see whose laugh will be loudest to-morrow. He has cleared the glen of men to make way for game—let us see what he will gain by that—the club-footed ouzel.’

‘How?’ I asked, glancing in alarm at the pistol on which he was carefully placing a percussion cap.

‘This very night I shall fire the heather.’

‘For heaven’s sake, Callum,’ said I, ‘beware what you do; for the consequent destruction of life and property may be terrible.’

‘I care not—these lords and holiday-chiefs are destroying the people—*let the people destroy the game that brings them gold.* I will fire the heather, I tell you!’ he added, in a fierce Gaelic whisper; ‘by that blessed star which led the wise men to the cradle of God, I have sworn to do so, and it shall be done, come of it what may!’

I was about to speak again, when the clatter of hoofs rang on the mountain-path, and Mr. Snaggs passed us on his shaggy-coated cob. Anger swelled my breast on seeing him; but he bowed to us with an ironical smile, and we saw—or thought we saw—that his eyes were brilliant with malice at the success of that “ingenious ferocity” with which he had extirpated the peasantry of the district. He rode slowly up the slope of the great Ben, and the outlines of his ungainly figure and barrel-bellied charger appeared in dark relief between us and the yellow flush that bathed the western sky.

‘What errand takes him to the Craig-na-tuirc to-night?’ I remarked.

‘The devil only knows: perhaps to see the desolation he has made, and whether any of our people have lit a fire in the glens below. There he goes—may evil follow, and destruction dog him close! may the curse

of the poor on whom he tramples, and the scorn of the rich whom he worships, be his lot ! I'll show them a flame on Ben Ora to-night that will startle all the Western Highlands !'

Callum drew forth his powder-horn, and after casting a keen but furtive glance around him in the dusk, and after seeing Mr. Snaggs fairly disappear in a hollow of the hills, he shook out the contents, laying across the narrow mouth of the glen a train on the soft dry heather and its bed of turf and decayed moss below. Careless of the event, and now resigned to whatever might follow, I observed him in moody silence, and not without feeling within me that longing for revenge which is so curiously mingled in the Celtic nature, with a wild sense of justice and of injury.

'This is a crime against the law,' said I, in a low voice, remembering that *muirburning* is a serious offence in Scotland, and that the Acts passed by the Parliaments of the first, third, fourth, and fifth Jameses concerning it, are alike stringent and severe.

'Curse upon the laws,' grumbled Callum ; 'if none were made, they would never be violated,' and with these words he emptied the last contents of his horn. Again he looked round him.

The sun had set long since ; the tints of the vast mountain had turned from purple to black, and no living thing seemed to be stirring in that intense solitude. Callum stooped, and fired his pistol at the train. The powder flashed, and rose like a fiery serpent along the grass ; the dry summer-moss, the decayed leaves and dead ferns ignited like tinder, and in a moment the thick heath and its bed of turf and peat below were wrapped in smoke and flame—a flame that spread on every hand, deepening and extending, as it rolled, like a devouring and encroaching tide, mounting up the sides of the glen before the soft west wind that blew from the dark waves of the salt lake

Fiercely it crackled, smouldered, and burned, in those places where the bracken or whins, the burr-docks, brambles, rank weeds, and gorse grew thick; but in others it rolled steadily on with great rapidity, spreading and widening in the form of a vast semi-circle, as if it would embrace the whole country in its grasp. As it mounted into the higher portions of the landscape, and seized on the thickets of silver birch and the resinous mountain-pine, the conflagration began to crackle, roar, and hiss, and its flames to shoot aloft and brighten against the sky like the wavering beams of the Northern Lights, tinging the clouds with pink and purple hues.

Now sheep and cattle, horses, rabbits, foxes, and fuimarts, with herds of frantic deer, fled before the flames; and screaming in their terror and confusion, the muirfowl flew hither and thither, or hung overhead among the vapour that shrouded the starry sky. The scene was strange, wild, and terrible; the more so that amid all this general alarm of nature there was not heard the voice of man in wonder or in fear; but the glens had been swept of their people, and the beasts of the field and the birds of the air alone remained.

With astonishment and somewhat of awe, I gazed on this strange and striking scene, while Callum Dhu surveyed it with a grim smile of triumph and derision on his weather-beaten face, which was reddened by the distant glow.

This was one of the most dreadful instances of muirburning that ever occurred in Scotland: the flames travelled at the rate of one hundred and fifty yards a minute, and soon embraced a front of nearly sixteen miles in length, being four miles more than that tide of fire which lately devoured the moorsof Strathaven.

The whole of the muirlands—covered with short dry summer heather, the thickets of fir and the game

preserves round the base of Ben Ora, from the mouth of the glen where we sat to the deep dark gorge of Garchoine, from the shore of the loch on the east to the hazel wood of Coilchro on the west, where the narrow path to St. Colme's chapel overhangs the foaming sea—a semicircle, as I have said, of sixteen miles—were sheeted in red and yellow flame. Above the mighty wreaths of smoke which rose from the blazing and falling plantations, and from the remains of old primeval forests, towered the huge mountain—the monarch of the western hills—like a dark and wonderful dome. At its base lay the loch gleaming in light, and seeming, in this nocturnal blaze, like a mighty mirror zoned by the smoke and fire, which gradually crept from the low districts upward to the summit of the craigs and hills, where it played in streaks of deep and fiery red, or flashed upward in forked and lambent flames before it died away in vapour.

In the deep and naked ravines, and those places over which the fire had passed, sweeping like a burning tide, the nests and lairs of the game, with every trace of animal and vegetable life, passed away, leaving only the bare black roots of the turf and heather, while vast columns of smoke hung motionless, like giants in mid-air as if the fires of the Day of Doom had sent them forth; and through these murky masses the broad round moon at times peered dimly and darkly out, like Fingal's shield, half hidden and half seen.

'Down, Mac Innon, down!' cried Callum, as a herd of terrified deer came rushing like a living torrent down a narrow ravine, which was threaded by a mountain stream, up the margin of which we were now ascending, as being the safest pathway through this land of fire: 'Hoigh! look at Mac Gilonie's dun cattle, how they come thundering down with the sparks at their heels!'

These words were barely uttered, when the frantic herd—three hundred and more—were upon us, with all their branching antlers lashing the air; but as we threw ourselves flat on our faces among the long bracken and dog-grass, this four-footed tempest swept lightly over us, and disappeared towards the sea-shore.

‘There they go towards the Atlantic—dun deer and red foxes, fat hares and long-eared rabbits, fuidarts, otters, and everything! By the blood that is in us, Sir Horace, but it is mighty little shooting you or yours will have hereabout for these some years to come! The people have gone towards the sea, and your devilish game have followed them. But see,’ added Callum; ‘what is that—a man mounted on a deer?’

‘No, no—a pony.’

‘How he gallops! Dioul! my fine fellow, take care of your neck.’

‘It is Snaggs!’ said I.

‘Snaggs—and he rides like fury—up hill too! now the pony falls—’

‘He is down!’

‘Up again—on foot, and he runs like a sow possessed by a devil towards the Craig-na-tuirc, with the fire rolling at his heels,’ said Callum, rubbing his hands in fierce glee.

‘Fire behind and a precipice in front.’

‘Dioul—we are giving him claw for claw at last!’

‘But we must save him, Callum—he will be scorched to death or dashed to pieces.’

A fierce laugh was his only reply. While all this passed in less time than I have taken to record it, we dashed along the stony ravine, guided by the rivulet, and though half-blinded by smoke, reached the Ora, which was there overhung by the Craig-na-tuirc. At that moment a wild and despairing cry for succour rang in the air above us.

‘Ay, bay to the moon, false wolf—but there are few ears now in Glen Ora to hear you!’ growled Callum through his thick, rough beard, as we began rapidly to clamber up the brow of the precipice, the summit of which was shrouded by smoke, and streaked with fire like the crater of a volcano.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE UISC DHU.

HAWKS, gleds, and eagles, with a hundred birds of other kinds, whose nests had been destroyed, were screaming, as if in anger or surprise, and flapping their wings about us, in the mid and murky air, as we clambered up, and thrice the wild cry of the despairing wretch tingled in my ears, before we reached the summit, after a half-hour of arduous exertion.

There, on the giddy verge, a strange sight awaited us.

Not far from the spot where Callum had rescued Sir Horace Everingham, and at a place where the steep rocky brow of the cliffs overhung the dark chasm through which the foaming waters of the black river bellowed, roared, and forced a passage towards the sea, we saw the miserable factor Snaggs dangling in mid-air like a crow, and clinging to the branches of a tough but withered mountain-ash, and to its stem, which—terrible to conceive!—projected over this dark Cimmerian gulf. Hemmed in on every side by the encroaching fire, which ran at his heels, he had been forced to retreat upward to the edge of the rock, and though all unused to feats of strength or agility, excess of terror had supplied him with both; for when the flames assailed the thick coating of turf,

soft heather, and crackling whins which covered the summit of the Craig, he was compelled to take refuge in the branches of the mountain-ash, and to these he clung, swinging above the dark vacuity below, with a tenacity of clutch and a horror impossible to portray.

But now the same fire which had consumed the tufted whins, the turf and heath, assailed the dry roots of the ash which twined among them, and soon the whole fabric of the tree was in a blaze; and as its fibres crackled and relaxed their tough grasp of the rocks and smouldering turf, the stem began to sink and yield with its own weight, and the weight of the fainting sinner who clung to it.

Such was the terrible tableau that awaited us on reaching a ledge of rock close by it.

As seen by the fitful glimpses of the moon through gauzy clouds and rolling smoke, the pale, white, ghastly visage of Snaggs was appalling. He still shrieked for succour and for mercy, and his entreaties were but a succession of shrill screams like those of a girl. His eyes glared; foam hung upon his lips, and his tongue was parched and swollen. I would have hastened to proffer him assistance, but the strong hands of Callum held me back by main force.

‘Mercy to the merciless?’ said he; ‘nay—he shall have such mercy as he gave the people of our glens—such mercy as he would have given my poor Minnie at the Clach-na-greiné. He is a fiend—so let him die a fiend’s death! Ha—ha! Mr. Snaggs—the tree is bending now; once it rose at the angle of forty-five, now it is quite horizontal. I wish every factor hung on its branches like fruit for the devil. Think of the old widow of the Ca-Dearg, and her silver hair all clotted in her blood; think of the cold, grey morning that dawned on the wet mountain-side, when the dying wife of the Red Gillespie lay with her new-born babe, and expired without a shelter from the

blast! Her babe is now where you can never be—for it is among the flowers that are gathered in heaven! Think of the cruel advice you have given this jolter-headed stranger—this Horace Everingham—whose presence has been a curse to us. Think of my Minnie and the evil you intended for her. Think of all your hypocrisy, your legal quirks and quibbles, and of all the villanies of your past life, for the root of the tree burns bravely, and will not last a minute more. Ha! ha! ha!’

The love of life, the lust of gold, and the dread of death and hell grew strong within the wretched soul of Snaggs, and his aspect became frightful. Matted by perspiration, his hair clung about his temples, and his eyes were starting from their sockets. With all the tenacity that love of existence, conflicting with an awful fate, can impart to the sinews of a coward, he clung to that withered ash, and swung wildly over the hideous abyss, where the black water foamed two hundred feet below.

Now his toes touched the brow of the rock, and anon his feet would beat the empty air in vain! The flames played about the roots; the smoke almost choked him, and slowly, gradually, fearfully the stem continued to sink and to yield, as the knotty fibres which so long had grasped the rocks were relinquishing their hold at last.

‘Mercy—mercy—mercy!’ he shrieked.

‘Such mercy as you gave the people in Glen Ora and Glentuirc—such mercy as you have ever given the poor and the trusting, I give you now—a tiger’s mercy!’ replied Callum, still holding me back, though it was physically impossible for me to have afforded the least assistance to Snaggs, circumstanced as he was then, and cut off from us by the flaming tree.

‘God—God!’ gasped the miserable wretch.

‘Call not on Him, hypocrite, for even He may fail one so steeped in wickedness as you. Hear me—I

am Callum Dhu Mac Ian. on whom you have never ceased to heap up insult, contumely, and contempt. I am well and young, and strong, having, with God's blessing, many years of life before me, while *you* are now in the jaws of death. You will go down into the depth of that dark linn like a stone, Mr. Snaggs; a splash, a bubble, and all will be over! One sinner more will have gone to his awful account—'

'Mercy!' he croaked.

The tree was still burning and beading!

'A time will come, a week, a month, a season perhaps, and the deep waters of Loch Ora will give up the ghastly dead. A corpse, swollen, hideous and frightful beyond all humanity, will be cast upon the pebbled beach, and it may lie there long undiscovered, amid gnats that swarm in the sunshine of noon, and birds that scream in the night—ay, very long, for our glens are desolate now, and for months a human foot may never press the heather there. That corpse will be *yours*, Mr. Snaggs! When found, it will excite awe and wonder, for the foolish mother that bore you would not know her sinful son; but anon horror and disgust will force the finders to cover it hastily up with earth and stones; and there you will rot, Mr. Snaggs, while your ill-gotten gear will be spent and enjoyed by others.'

'Oh, have mercy upon me!' howled Snaggs, who now ceased to make the smallest exertion, as every movement served more and more to dislodge the consuming root. 'Mercy—I tell you—mercy; my dear, good man, have mercy!'

'Dioul! how long that tree holds on!' cried Callum, stamping his foot; 'but now it bends! now it breaks! Hoigh—one moment more and all will be over, Mr. Snaggs!'

The white lips of the victim quivered; he was uttering a voiceless prayer—or perhaps it was the mere contortion and convulsing of his features. The

fitful light of the moon, and occasionally the gleams of the blazing heather and distant thickets, played on the rocks and wild plants of the chasm, imparting a satanic effect to the episode.

Suddenly the tree snapped with a crash that made my heart leap, and with a cry, amid a shower of sparks that flew upward, Snaggs vanished with the half-burned stem into the black gulf below, where the fierce and foaming mountain-torrent swept them away like autumn leaves, towards the deeper waters of the Loch, and the more distant waves of the Atlantic.

I never heard that his corpse was found.

‘It is God’s judgment,’ said Callum, who had gazed frigidly at this terrible sight, the realities of which I could not reconcile for a time, or believe to be palpable and true.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE RUINED COTTAGE.

‘THOSE who do injuries to others,’ says the delightful author of *I promessè Sposi*, ‘are not only accountable for the evil they inflict, but also for the perversion of sentiment which they cause in their victims.’ I am happy that this trite sentence occurred to me, for by this mode of reasoning we shall find Mr. Snaggs alone guilty of Callum’s unusual hardness of heart, and, in short, the author of his own untimely demise.

Chilled and almost terrified by the new and awful events of the night, I hastened away by the route we had come, descending the face of the rocks towards that part of the stream which lay below the cascade, and proceeding along its banks among the wet water-docks and green leaves which the fire, that was still raging in many parts of the muirland district,

had failed to consume. Midnight was past now. The moon was waning behind the summit of the scorched and burning hills. We were weary and looked about us for a shelter; but in every direction the country seemed dotted by the fires which yet smouldered in the thickets and morasses, reddening and flashing in every puff of wind.

‘Free — but homeless, houseless, penniless, and desperate!’ said I:—

‘A chial!’ responded my fosterer; ‘how many brethren we have in this wide world, which is all before us now!’

A ruined cottage afforded us a resting-place, and there we threw ourselves down upon the thick soft grass that was springing up within its four bare walls of turf and boulder-stones. I was so overcome by lassitude, that even the supernatural terrors of this place failed to scare me from it, and Callum, who would rather have passed the night in any other part of the mountains, could not leave me. A mouthful of whisky from his hunting-flask revived us, and to change the current of my thoughts, which were incessantly and upbraidingly reverting to the terrible scenes we had just witnessed, he told me several wild and quaint stories of Dougald-with-the-Keys, the former occupant of the ruined cottage, and in whose service Callum had been when a boy.

Dougald was a smuggler and distiller of illicit spirits. He had his manufactory in a hollow of the adjacent morass, a high rock overlooking which was the post of his scout. Malie, his lynx-eyed wife, generally watched for the hated exciseman, who might be wandering along the road from Inverness or Tain. He was named Dougald-with-the-Keys, from a bunch of mysterious keys which he bore at his sporran-belt. These rattled when he walked, and gave him, it was averred, a mysterious power; for once, when conveying to Inverness two casks of the mountain-dew,

slung across a stout pony, two excisemen gave him chase, and being well mounted, were about to make a capture of Dougald's distillation; but near the source of the Ora he shook his keys at them, and plucking a sprig of rowan, planted it by the way-side, uttering certain strange and terrible words. On approaching the sprig, the pursuers felt themselves constrained to alight from their saddles, and to dance round it furiously, hand-in-hand, while Dougald laughed and proceeded safely on his journey towards the Highland capital. The frantic and involuntary gyrations of the unfortunate excisemen were continued for more than two hours, until a passing shepherd pulled up the rowan-sprig, dissolved the spell, and permitted them to fall prostrate on the road, breathless, powerless, terrified, and resolved never more to meddle with Dougald, who continued to smuggle and distil in success and security, and had large sums to his credit, standing in the books of various discreet retailers in the vicinity of the Clachnacudden.

Once upon a time Callum had been despatched thither for payment, and was returning to the glen with a purse well filled with silver 'Georges,' and mounted on the active shelty which usually carried the casks. Pleased with the large sum he had to pay over to the gloomy, fierce, and avaricious Dougald, he switched up the nag as he entered the glen, and hastened on, for the double purpose of ridding himself of this important cash, and obtaining his supper.

The cottage and its little outhouses were buried in obscurity when he approached them; all was dark, yet the hour was not late, and, save a real or fancied sound of lamentation, all was still. According to his usual custom, Callum rode straight to the stable door, slipped from the bare-backed pony, which he had ridden in the Highland fashion, in his kilt, sans bridle and crupper. On opening the door, for the purpose

of bedding and foddering the little nag, he heard a well-known rattling of keys. The sound seemed to be in the air! The pony started—snorted—perspired and trembled; its eyes shot fire; its fore-feet were firmly planted on the ground, and remained immovable. Again the keys were heard rattling, and between him and the moon, Callum saw the figure of Dougald pass like a shadow along the summit of the little garden wall. The pony then sprang into the stable with a convulsive bound. An indescribable emotion—a horror filled the heart of my fosterer; and closing his eyes, lest he might see something still more appalling, he flung down a few armfuls of hay and straw to the pony, locked the stable door, and sprang into the cottage, to find Dougald stretched on the floor, a corpse, and his wife, Malie, lamenting over him; for at the instant Callum had seen his figure passing, as it were, through the air, he had sunk down and expired of some disease unknown.

Such stories as these, and others, Callum related in low and impressive whispers, and his powerful and poetical Gaelic, which invested every trifle with pathos or with terror, were but ill calculated to soothe a mind which ever and anon in fancy saw the pale visage and glaring eyes of Snaggs; thus I was glad when the breaking day began to brighten in the east, and we left the ruined hut of Dougald the Smuggler to survey the country, which was all black, burned, and desolate. Its aspect was strange and terrible; a sea of flame seemed to have rolled over it, sweeping every trace of life and verdure from its surface. The origin of that nocturnal fire was then involved in mystery; but the game over eighteen square miles was irretrievably destroyed, and Callum laughed in scorn.

‘*Let this be a hint for our Highlanders!*’ said he.

The desolation of the scene was now complete, as that which Abraham saw of old, when looking to-

wards the cities of the Doomed, he beheld the smoke of The Land of the Plain, ascending as the smoke of a furnace. A stripe of green was lingering on the lofty places, but all was scorched below ; thus

“ In mountain or in glen,
Nor tree, nor plant, nor shrub, nor flower,
Nor aught of vegetative power,
The wearied eye may ken ;
But all its rocks at random thrown,
Black waves, bare crags, and banks of stone.”

All this occurred only three years ago, but subsequent events have rendered the concealment of poor Callum's name unnecessary now.

Three days elapsed before the fire exhausted itself, or was extinguished, on the thickets being cut down in some places by the axe, and the heather torn up in others, to bar their progress.

Meanwhile the sufferings of the poor evicted people, who were bivouacked in the burial-ground of St. Colme, had been terrible. In their hunger and despair, some of them had made a species of meal or flour from the leaves and seed of the wild mustard, and bruising them together, had kneaded a kind of cake, which, when eaten with mountain herbs, brought on deadly inflammations and fluxes, of which they died so fast, that the frightful condition of the survivors reached the ears of the humane in the Lowlands. But why dwell on a subject that is of daily occurrence in the Scottish Highlands, and with the hourly horrors of which the columns of the northern press are constantly filled ?

A subscription was prepared for them, in common with the miserable Rosses, who were then being driven out of Sutherland, and the starved Mac Donnells, who were then hunted down like wild beasts in Glenelg ; but this relief was soon abandoned, through the malevolence of the usual enemy of the Celtic population—a scurrilous Edinburgh print, of which

Mac Fee, in common with other small wits of the Scottish Parliament House, was of course a supporter. Charity thus arrested and withheld, the result proved most fatal to the poor people of Glen Ora, who died daily—the strong man and the tender child together.

At last, as I have stated, the authorities, who had been packing our peasantry in ships like negroes from Africa, and despatching them in naked hordes from Isle Ornsay and elsewhere to America and Australia, proposed to the miserable remnant of the Mac Innons that they too should sail for that far-off land of the West, where the sun of the Celtic tribes is setting, and with something of despair they consented, for the most cruel and terrible ultimatum—death by starvation and exposure menaced them all.

I will pass over the touching scenes that ensued when the last of our people were torn from their native district, every feature and memory of which were entwined around their hearts—torn from their ruined homes—their father's lonely graves—from all they had loved since childhood, and when they were thrust, without regard to sex or age, on board of a small steamer in Loch Ora, for conveyance to Glasgow, where the great emigrant—or Celtic slave-ship, the *Duchess*, awaited them.

Many of these poor people, after the usual custom of the evicted Highlanders, made up little packages of earth—their native soil—to bear it with them to the wilds of America, as a relic or memento of their country; and in the hope that, in this little handful might be the seeds of the heather-bell and other native plants and flowers. Strong, deep, and undying is this pure and noble—this holy love of home, in the Highland heart. The unavailing sorrow, the unheeded agony, the mental and bodily misery of our evicted emigrants is a theme so constantly before the public, that we now regard the depopulation of a valley as quite a usual occurrence, like the fall of the

leaf or the coming of summer ; hence I will pass over this part of my narrative as briefly as possible.

The people sailed for Glasgow, and Callum and I, who were to follow and join them in a day or two, stood on the shore of the loch, and saw the steamer ploughing through its still blue waters, as it bore away the sad and wailing freight.

Near us, on the beach, knelt a man in prayer ; his white hairs were glistening in the setting sun ; his eyes were bent upon the lessening steamer, and his hands were stretched towards her. This was old Father Raouil, who was sending his last blessing after those on whose faces he would never look again.

Near him knelt Callum Dhu, with his bare knees in the sand, and his rough sunburned face covered by his bonnet—for the strong man had now given way, and was weeping like a child.

We are literally *the last of the clan*.

We watched the steamer till she diminished to a speck, and vanished round a promontory ; then we turned away, and, mechanically and in silence, ascended the desolate mountains, a community of thought—a unity of sentiment—leading us instinctively towards the deserted glen, although neither home nor tie remained unto us there.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE WHITE STAG.

THE excitement of this temporary separation over, my thoughts now reverted to Laura Everingham, whom I had not seen since the day of my mother's funeral, and from whom I was now on the verge of

being separated for ever—separated so hopelessly, that my heart sickened at the contemplation.

Oh how different were my fate, my fortune and position from those of that bright and happy girl, whose sunny English face and beaming eyes spoke only of a heart that had never known care or thought or bitterness. Now budding from the spring of youth into the summer of womanhood, her figure, though rather undersized, was beautiful and graceful, lithe and faultless, as all her pretty little ways were amiable and winning. There was a romance in loving her—a desperation in it that excited all my ardour; and (as Washington Irving says) ‘do not let us consider whatever is romantic as incompatible with real life.’

My hitherto isolated existence had given me few opportunities of seeing much of the world; hence, unhackneyed in its ways, I loved Laura more deeply and devotedly than I was quite aware of until this time of separation came.

Rambling erratically and in silence, Callum and I reached a sequestered part of the banks of the Ora, which had escaped the fires of the late conflagration.

The sun was setting now, and its golden rays played upon the water, above the surface of which the salmon rose at times, while the heron stalked among the sedges. A few corn-patches, sown by those whose hands would *never reap them*, were turning from pale green to warm yellow on the southern slope of the hills; the heather about us was in bloom; the wild flowers spread their fragrant garlands over the volcanic rocks, and the honey-bee hummed drowsily in the summer sunshine.

The scarlet berries of the mountain-ash kissed the sparkling current of this beautiful river, which teemed with spotted salmon; but these were all bought up for the southern markets, and it was as much as a man's life was worth to drop a line into

its waters. All was solemn silence round us now. An occasional deer scrambling along a ridge of rocks, and rolling the loose stones down the slope, where they continued to rebound until the sound died in the hollow below; or the splash of a large salmon, attempting to leap *up* the falls of the Ora, alone woke the echoes of the solitude.

A huge grey polecat, about three feet long, gazed at us from a fragment of rock without moving, and with an expression of wonder in its savage eyes; for by the result of the game-restrictions and other Draconian laws of our Highland feudatories, God's image was becoming somewhat as scarce in these districts as in Breadalbane, Sutherland, or on the Braes of Lochaber.

As the sunset lingered on our magnificent native mountains, Callum and I gazed about in silence. Every spot had its old and quaint—its terrible or beautiful—associations and traditions. On one side lay an inlet of the sea, blue, deep and overshadowed by the impending rocks, which were alleged in the days of our fathers to have been the haunt of the *Mhaidan Mhure*, or Water Virgin, a being with snow-white skin and flowing golden hair, and having a melodious voice, which mingled with the ripple of the waves, and foretold the coming rain. On the other side, deeper and darker still, lay a lonely mountain pool, from the oozy depth of which the *Taru Uisc*, or Water Bull, was wont to rise at midnight, to bellow horribly at the waning moon, and to scare the little fairies who danced among the velvet grass and blue bells, which covered the Siobh Dhanan, or Hills of Peace, which Druid hands had formed perhaps three thousand years ago, by the margin of their holy lake. Between us and the flush of the western sky rose the stupendous circle of their temple, the blocks of which were said to be enchanted, so that one might count them a hundred times, and never

find the same number twice. Farther off rose a ridge named Druim-na-dears, or the Hill of Tears; for there two hundred of our men, who joined the 42nd Highlanders, had waved their bonnets in farewell for the last time, and of that two hundred only *one* came back to tell how his comrades had all perished with Brigadier Howe, before the ramparts of Ticonderoga.

Thus every stone, and rock and linn around us, had their memories, their poetry, their imaginary tenants or their terrors—their tales of the times of old—and all these we were leaving for ever!

Our occasional communings and regrets, with many a long pause between, were suddenly arrested by a shrill cry of terror. We started from the grassy bank on which we had been seated, and saw a lady, wearing a broad hat and feather, and mounted on a little mountain pony, coming at full speed down a narrow path towards the deep and rapid stream, pursued by a furious stag—the far-famed *white stag* of Loch Ora!

With something of fear I gazed upon this gigantic animal, which, since my infancy, I had been taught to believe had a supernatural existence, and to be the forerunner of evil to the race of Mac Innon; but the reiterated cry of the fair fugitive filled my heart with other thoughts, on recognizing Laura Everingham, when wild with terror, and pale, as the fear of a dreadful death could make her, she rushed past me on her fierce little Highland garron. My resolution was formed in a moment; and before the stronger and perhaps braver Callum Dhu, had arranged his thoughts on the subject, I had sprung forward and unsheathed the skene which I always wore in my right garter. Rising superior to the flood of gloomy and despairing thoughts which had made me their victim, and heedless whether the terrible and traditional stag slew me and ended all my sorrows at

the feet of Laura, I rushed upon it with my skene-dhu—a weapon only four inches long.

The fury of my thoughts gave me treble strength, and insured me victory.

The aspect of this animal was appalling; its red eyes shot fire; a moment it paused, bellowing, roaring, and raking and stabbing, as it tore up the purple heather with its giant antlers; but with a cry of triumph I rushed full at him, and escaping by a blessed mercy his terrible array of points, buried my sharp skene-dhu in his broad chest.

Back went the noble head with its lofty antlers, the fore-legs were extended, and the knees bent as the red life-blood gushed out in torrents; but again and again my black knife was buried to its hilt in the snow-white chest of the stag—the wondrous stag of the Mac Innons!

His head rose and fell; his whole frame vibrated; he lolled out a hot steaming tongue, and sank at my feet, dead—this strange creature of a hundred gloomy legends—leaving me covered with gore—panting with excitement, and with the hilt of my skene-dhu glued to my right hand by the hideous puddle that had gushed upon it at each successive death-blow.

Laura was saved, and by *me*!

CHAPTER XXV.

THE GAEL AND THE SAXON.

‘HOGH, Mac Innon!’ exclaimed Callum Dhu, with a shout of triumph; ‘such a feat has not been done since old Glengarry slew the wild stag in the pass of Glendulochan!’

I lifted Laura (who was faint and almost sick with terror) from her pony, and placed her on the soft grassy bank, where I besought her to be calm, as all danger was now past; but, on perceiving that my right hand and arm were drenched in blood, she uttered a cry, and clasping my left hand in hers, asked me in the most moving terms whether 'I was hurt—if I was safe—uninjured—to speak to her, to say whether I was wounded or not?'

I forgot alike her exact words and my answer; for we were both trembling and confused; but in that moment of excitement each had revealed to the other, more of mutual regard than any circumstance, save danger, could have drawn forth. On recovering a little, I said,—

'For the act of to-day, I trust Miss Everingham, that you will think of me kindly when I am gone.'

'*Kindly!*' she exclaimed, while her blooming prettiness became absolute beauty, as her fine eyes beamed, and her face filled with ardour, and with an expression of gratitude and joy; 'ah how can you speak so coldly—kindly?—say gratefully, lovingly, prayerfully. You will ever have all the gratitude—the esteem, my heart can feel!'

'Thanks, dear Miss Everingham,' I replied, kissing her hand, while my voice and lips trembled; '*esteem* is the first element of love. Without it no passion can endure.'

She grew pale—looked down, and trembled.

'And you go?—'

'Yes.'

'But, when?' she asked, lifting her eyes sadly to mine.

'To-morrow.'

'And you return!—'

'Never.'

'Never?' she reiterated.

‘Never—oh never! I go to return no more. It is the doom of our race, my dear Miss Everingham.’

‘Oh say not so—but here comes dearest papa to thank you in better words than I can command.’

As she spoke, Sir Horace, accompanied by Miss Clavering, the Captain and Mr. Snobleigh, came down the mountain-path at a furious gallop, and with high alarm depicted in all their faces; however, a glance at the dead stag, at Laura seated, smiling on the bank, and her pony quietly cropping the grass beside her, explained in a moment that she was in perfect safety. Moreover, from the top of the hill, they had seen me rush upon the stag, and lay it dead at my feet. My skene-dhu, dripping with blood, explained all the rest.

‘Dearest Laura—and you are safe!’ exclaimed Fanny Clavering, flinging off her broad hat as she sprang from her pony, and hurried to embrace her friend; ‘oh heaven, my dear girl, I wish we were all safe again in London, or at Elton Hall! We have been little more than six months in these atrocious Highlands, and yet we have first had your papa—dear old stupid thing! nearly drowned; then we were all but burned alive in the shrubbery the other night; and to day you on the verge of being torn to pieces by a wild animal!’

‘Aw—aw—Miss Everingham—you would be wilful,’ yawned Snobleigh, ‘and would go—aw into that fwightful jungle, where we lost you—the wood of—of—’

‘Coil-chro.’

‘Aw—yes—those devilish ’Ighland names!’

‘I know of no better fun than to have a fine man of the Guards essaying to get his lazy tongue round an Argyleshire, or a Galway name. And so it was you, my brave fellow, who slew this noble stag?’ asked the impulsive Fanny, blushing, as she laid her hand on the shoulder of Callum, who was kneeling

on the grass, and feeling the dead animal with his hands.

‘I—madam?—No; it was slain by the chief—my master; and it is a deed that would long be remembered in Glen Ora, were there other inhabitants now than the red-foes and the moor-fowl.’

‘Aw—my dear fellow, get your hands washed, for weally that wed blood is atwocious, ’pon my soul it is.’

‘Stuff, Snobleigh,’ said Captain Clavering; ‘what the deuce does a little blood matter? You have done well and nobly, Mac Innon; but you look a little pale—you are not hurt, I hope?’

‘Not in the least.’

‘Why don’t *you* speak, Sir Horace?’ said Miss Clavering, impetuously; ‘have you not a tongue to thank him who saved your daughter’s life?’

‘I have a tongue, but not words, my dear Miss Clavering,’ said the cold and pompous baronet. ‘You have saved my Laura from a terrible death, sir,’ he continued, addressing me with a warmth of manner somewhat unusual in him; ‘stay among us, Mr. Mac Innon, and I shall leave nothing undone for your welfare—that is, if it is in my power, of course.’

‘Aw—of course,’ chorused the languid Snobleigh.

‘Do, Mr. Mac Innon,’ added Fanny Clavering, bending her bright and beautiful eyes upon me, while she laid her pretty hand upon my arm; ‘do, and all the past shall be forgotten.’

‘Your offer comes too late, Sir Horace,’ said I, in a broken voice, ‘though my heart is rent in two by this separation from my native country—with that separation every tie is broken. Restore the people—restore that now ruined hamlet and desolate glen to what it was a month ago; give me back my poor old mother from her cold grave on yonder promontory, that grave to which your severity or the cruelty of

your underlings drove her, and *then* speak of remaining here; but not till then.'

'Arms are the natural profession of a Highlander,' said Captain Clavering, putting a hand on my shoulder in his frank English way; 'could you, Sir Horace, not do something for him at the Horse Guards?—Devilish sorry that I have no interest in that quarter myself.'

'It would afford me the utmost gratification to do so,' replied the stiff and pompous baronet, in his coldest manner; '*but* really, the fact is, I do not feel myself at liberty to ask a favour from any of the present administration.'

'The deuce you don't?'

'Aw—of course,' hummed Snobleigh.

And there was an end of it; though I would have died rather than accepted the smallest favour at his hands. To be patronized by *him*! The idea was enough to call my mother's fiery spirit back to earth.

As a huntsman, Callum was now, by mere force of habit, proceeding to gralloch the stag with his sharpened skene; and as this work progressed, unfortunately for the legends of our glensmen, he found it to be—not two hundred years old—but a fine *warrantable stag* of at least six summers.

'Well, my friend, the fox-hunter,' said Clavering; 'could *you* not stay among us—I'll take the odds on it, Sir Horace could do something for you.'

'Likely enough,' said the baronet, mounting; 'you would make a first-rate gamekeeper.'

'Many thanks, sir,' replied Callum, touching his bonnet with a fierce and covert irony gleaming in his dark eyes; 'but the time has gone past, Englishman, for that too; we go, we go to return no more! You purchased this land, true; any other depopulating game speculator might have done so; but he who sold it to you—was it *his* to sell? It belonged to the people and not to him. The land was God's gift

to the Gael; it is theirs, and all the produce thereof is theirs.'

'This is a thief's maxim,' said Sir Horace, sharply.

'To you it may seem so; but we have a saying among us—*Breac na linne, slàt na coille, s'fiadh na fireach meirladh nach do gabh duine riumh nair as.*

'What the devil is all that in English? it sounds like the croaking of frogs in a Dutch canal.'

'It means, that a fish from the stream, a stag from the mountain, or a tree from the forest are no thefts, but the right of he who wants them.'

'Why sirrah, this is poaching or trespassing, as Snaggs would tell you, had he not disappeared so unaccountably. I must teach these Highland fellows, Clavering, to respect the sacred laws of property! I have as much right to the wood and water, and game, as to anything else. "If the sun goes down on my property," says the *Man made of Money*, "I have a clear title to that sunset; if the clouds, over my land, are remarkably fine, they are *my* clouds." A noble maxim! Then does not the same rule apply to the pheasants, plover, curlew, deer, and foxes—eh?'

'You are a stranger here,' retorted Callum, 'and consequently know no better. God—blessed be his name!—never sent a little mouth into the world without providing food for it. There was a time when, in these glens, we had food enough to spare; but, a chial! for the devil came in breeks and took it away from us.'

'This bores me,' said Sir Horace: 'Clavering, assist Laura and your sister to mount; we'll send some one for the stag. Many thanks, good fellow, for your cutting and carving it thus—but please to let it alone. Ah—a good evening and a safe voyage to you, Mr. Mac Innon,' and with a brief nod, Sir Horace walked his shooting pony leisurely up the slope.

Laura and Miss Clavering reluctantly followed him; but both bade me kindly—the former silently—

adieu. I knew that in the twilight she was weeping behind her veil, and my heart was deeply moved, for I might never behold her again. Snobleigh—the empty, vacant and insipid Snobleigh—bowed and cantered after them; but Clavering lingered still, and said,

‘I feel sincere regret, Mac Innon, to see a bold young fellow like you, flung upon this cold and faithless world—can I do anything for you!’

‘I thank you, sir—but know of nothing.’

‘We are now at war with Russia—you have thus before you a noble field for action.’

‘And after the treatment I have experienced in my own country, I should justly seek it in the Russian ranks. You are right, Captain Clavering—I thank you; war is the natural resource of the desperate and poor; but alas! I have neither interest nor money to enter the service.’

‘Duced awkward—and we have no volunteering in this war. But think over all I have said, for it is a devil of a thing to take to felling of trees and draining swamps in the Far West, leaving civilization far behind you, and having the Pacific and the Red men in your front, while your nearest chum dwells three hundred miles off—and there you will fight with the Indians, the earth and the elements, to feed a little herd of snivelling Yankees, who will grow up in hatred of the land their fathers came from. It won’t do, my dear fellow—think over it, and if I can do anything for you, drop me a line at Glen Ora House, or at the Western Club, Glasgow, where I shall be in a day or so, about the happiest piece of business in the world. Adieu!’

With these words we separated, and Callum and I were left on the dark hill-side; the last glow of sunset had faded away, and the mysterious white stag of Loch Ora was lying at our feet dead, motionless, and still as a drift of snow.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A LAST INTERVIEW.

TO-MORROW evening, the steamer from Loch Linnhe for Oban and Glasgow, would touch at Loch Ora, and with it, Callum and I were to leave our native district for ever. The bitter, crushing, and painful sinking of the heart that accompanied this conviction was increased by the knowledge that never again would I see the face or hear the voice of Laura. Grinding poverty on one hand, and wealth on the other, had reared a solid rampart between us; yet I still loved Laura, despite the hopelessness of that love, which made me feel more bitterly than ever that a poor gentleman is the most miserable of all God's creatures.

Callum, my fosterer, though to me, ever gentle as a woman and faithful as a dog, was alternately morose or silent, and appalled by our approaching departure; and as he lay that night on some freshly-pulled heather, in a corner of poor Father Raoul's humble hut, I heard him sobbing under the tattered plaid which enveloped his head and shoulders; for his gallant heart and strong resolution were failing him at last.

My whole thoughts were of Laura now, for my hopeless separation from her, conflicted with my regret on leaving my desolated home. The craving desire to see her once again became uncontrollable, and desiring Callum to wait for me, by a near and familiar path—never again to be trod by me—I hastened up the glen, which led directly to the new manor-house of Glen Ora.

It was a narrow road which led of old to the stronghold of our tribe, and there had been a time when none could have thought that a Mac Innon would

ever ascend it in such bitterness of soul as I then endured. The tower—the home of a race whose source even tradition failed to trace—was demolished now, and the huge square modern villa of the baronet crowned its site; but all unchanged with its shade of silver birch was the bramble-covered path by which for ages

‘The hunter of deer and the warrior trod
To his hills that encircle the sea.’

Everything spoke to me of home and farewell. The murmur of the dark pines that shaded the hills; the hiss of a little cascade, falling in foam down the old grey rocks, like the end of a silvery scarf; the sun lingering like a globe of fire above the dark shoulder of Ben Ora. The little cascade seemed to have its source in the clouds, and, like a silver shower, the light wind flung its spray abroad upon the turf and flowers.

A moment I lingered there, and thought it would be a boon to be dead and buried in peace on that green mountain slope, where the heather might wave and the deer bound over me; for the dread of dying in a far distant land is strong in the heart of every mountaineer.

But enough of such thoughts and themes.

Full of them, however, I reached the new birchen avenue which led to the elegant manor-house of Sir Horace Everingham, and without having conceived how I should achieve the desired interview with Laura, or what means to pursue.

I lurked among the trees and shrubbery, watching the windows for nearly half an hour, fearing to be seen, hopeless of seeing her alone if I saw her at all, and trembling with anxiety, for every moment was of priceless value to me. I saw the falling shadows lengthening to the eastward, and knew that when the sun sank below the shoulder of the Ben, the Highland steamer would be at the pier of the loch.

An exclamation of joy escaped me, as a drawing-room window which unfolded to the floor was opened, and she—Laura herself—stepped out into the gravel-walk of the garden, not a pistol-shot distant from where I was concealed.

She was attired in a very becoming evening costume; she had her broad hat slung by its ribbons over her left arm, and had an open volume in her right hand. She looked pale and thoughtful, but was neither sad, nor bearing a trace of tears. This disappointed me, as she must have known that this was the eve of my final departure; but the claim I had on her regard and memory was too slight—and among so many gay friends and accomplished admirers, and amid so much luxury, it might easily be effaced and forgotten.

My heart beat like lightning, as she approached and entered a summer-seat, which was shrouded by a little dome, and four sides of iron wire, in the fashion of a Turkish kiosk, and was covered completely with roses and honeysuckle. I quickly crept towards it, and—as my evil fortune would have it—had only time to esconce and conceal myself among the ample laurel-bushes close by, when the voice of the gay and laughing Fanny Clavering, who had been asleep, I presume, in the arbour, fell suddenly on my ear, as she at once resumed what appeared to be a former conversation. To all this I was compelled to listen. It may be the reverse of etiquette to repeat what passes in private, and still more so, aught we may chance to overhear; but there would be a fearful hiatus in many a veracious history, in mine in particular, without those opportune eaves-droppings; besides, I believe that no man in this world could resist the desire to listen, ‘with all the ears in his head,’ if he deemed himself the subject of conversation between two pretty women. Thus, as much that passed between these fair friends concerned myself, I

hearkened with an anxiety that was the more painful, as I dared not, for very shame, avow or discover myself.

The two girls were seated near each other. Laura had resigned her book, and was twirling the ribbons of her broad summer hat round her slender fingers. Fanny had her white hands thrust into the pockets of a very bewitching little black silk apron, and her beautiful features, her fine eyes, and nose *retroussé*, wore the most droll and arch expression in the world.

'Come now, Fanny, don't be silly,' said Laura.

'Is it possible that you have lived to the age of twenty without having one dear little affair of the heart?'

'Not one, Fanny—and *you*?—'

'Oh, don't speak of my heart, pray—it has been broken twenty times. But, don't you know, love, that an engagement of the heart is a most delightful thing?'

'Perhaps so—but mine is only formed for friendship.'

'Fiddlestick! one lover is worth a hundred friends.'

'Nay, Fanny; I think *one* friend worth a thousand lovers; and I never met with a man capable of inspiring in me more than the merest friendship.'

'And how about my brother Tom?'

'Nay, nay, Fanny; now don't look so archly.'

'Well, then—our young Highland friend?'

Laura was silent, and became very pale.

'Speak?'

'You are a dear droll!' said Laura, making an effort to laugh, after a pause; 'well—*he* is both handsome and winning.'

'But so innocent—so particularly verdant.'

'Yet that innocence of dissipated life charms me.'

'I am excessively amused! But you cannot—dare not, encourage this idea. Love *him*—oh, Laura, such a *mésalliance*! the imaginary chief of a beggarly

burned up tract in the West Highlands. The last of the Mohicans !

‘*Mésalliance* !’ reiterated Laura, with an air of pique ; ‘ what is our family, which dates from the Restoration, when compared to his, which, for aught that I know, dates from the days of Ossian.’

‘ Immensely superior, I should say—for the gentlemen of Ossian’s time knew deuced little about making up a book on the Oaks, or knowing the points of the winner of the Derby, as *I* do—or of Bank-stock, or shares or railway scrip, and so forth, as Sir Horace does.’

‘ But then, Fanny dear, think of what I owe him—that dreadful rescue of yesterday ? Oh, there is nothing I admire so much as bravery in a man !’

‘ But this is a boy.’

‘ Well—a brave boy—and are we much more than girls ?’

‘ Such a little sophist it is ! If you run on thus I shall end by loving that tall fellow who hunts the foxes. I own to be immensely delighted with him. Is he not a love of a man, with his magnificent black beard ?’

‘ You have spoken more of *him* than I have done of his master.’

‘ Perhaps I am in love with him,’ said Fanny, with a roguish expression in her beautiful eyes.

‘ Scarcely,’ replied Laura, with a little reserve ; ‘ for it is your style to yawn and fret to-day over all that enchanted you yesterday. You tire of everything.’

‘ And thus would very soon tire, I fear, of such a lover as your Allan Mac Innon. He is but a wild Highland boy—I should like a man with a lofty presence—a man of whom I should feel proud, even when I had tired of him, and ceased to love him.’

‘ Oh, Fanny ! I *am* proud of him, in my own quiet and unobtrusive little way. He is so bold, so hardy,

so active, and so manly!’ said poor Laura, blushing deeply at her own energy, while my heart beat with tumultuous joy; ‘his eyes, too—do they not tell the history of a sad and thoughtful life? He is like the Mac Ivor of Waverley.’

‘There it is! you have caught the tartan fever, which is nearly as bad as the scarlet one, and may be worse now, since the Line have lost their epaulettes. Well, I should like a lover of whom one would not be ashamed to make one’s husband.’

‘Husband—’

Laura was silent; and, trembling with joy, I forgot all about poor Callum Dhu, who was seated patiently with my baggage on the pier, awaiting the steamer which was now coming down the loch.

‘Young Mac Innon is so poor, so wild, so strange!’ resumed the painfully plain-spoken Fanny.

‘These only make me the more his friend.’

‘And we all know that “friendship in woman is kindred to love.” He is quite like a young robber.’

‘Well,’ replied Laura, taking up her lively friend’s rattling manner, ‘I always thought it would be divine to marry a bandit! When we travelled from Rome to Naples, I looked daily for a handsome young brigand in a sugar-loaf hat, velvet jacket, and those red bandages which no outlaw is ever without—a Maseroni—a Fra Diavolo—but, alas! none ever came, and we jogged as quietly along the Appian Way as if it had been Rotten Row or the Canterbury-road.’

‘But as we have had enough about Allan Mac Innon, now let us recur to our constant theme—my brother Tom and his old suit—or his friend, Snobleigh.’

Recur, thought I.

‘I could *learn* to love your brother, perhaps, Fanny, because he is gentlemanly, kind, and lovable; but, as for Snobleigh—the fop, the mouthing idler—who

would propose just as coolly as he would light a cigar, button his glove, or stroke a horse's knee, do not speak of such an atrocity as marriage with him—and yet he has proposed to me twice.'

'And been rejected?' asked Fanny, her dark eyes flashing with a mixture of fun and pique.

'Yes—rejected, yet still he loiters here, devoid alike of spirit and delicacy.'

'How did he receive your refusal?'

'Such was his provoking coolness, that I could have boxed his ears. Stroking his buff-coloured moustache, which, as you know, finds him a vast fund of employment, he adjusted his round collar and long-skirted surtout, and yawned out, "Vewy well, Miss Lawa—it don't mattaw—aw-aw—but, wemem-baw that, the—aw—choicest gifts of God and of the Gwenadiaw Gawds, are—aw-aw—at your feet."'

Fanny's loud and ringing laugh at her friend's description was interrupted by the bell to dress for dinner; on which she murmured something about her attire, and in her usual volatile manner, sprang away, leaving Laura to follow her as she chose.

All that I had overheard proved unmistakably the interest I had in Laura's heart—a discovery that proved the foundation of much joy and pride and future misery to me.

All that followed is dim and wavering now, as a dream of years long past.

She was about to leave the saloon, when I stood before her, trembling in heart and in every limb. She grew very pale on seeing me, and I pressed her white passive hands to my lips and to my breast, and in such language as the agony of the moment supplied, I thanked her for the interest she took in one so miserable as I—and I prayed her to remember me when gone, for never more would my voice fall on her ear; I prayed, too, that God might bless her, and while thus pouring out the long-treasured secret of

my heart, without daring once to touch her lips, though she stood beside me, pale and passive as a marble statue, I sprang away, as the voice of Clavering was heard in the shrubbery close by. I reached the avenue, and leaving the park and plantations far behind me, rushed like a deer down the glen to reach the steamer.

There was yet time to pause a moment!

I looked back to the old primeval woods which shaded the mansion-house of Glen Ora, and to the fire-scathed mountains that overhung it. Strange to say, I had now no bitterness in my heart, for Laura was their heiress, and I loved her more than all the world. I gave a parting glance at that beloved scenery now deepening in the summer gloaming. Glen Ora was dark and silent now—dark as if the shadow of death lay on it—and silent and voiceless as the grave, the last home of our people.

Sorrow and love were struggling in my heart, and sad, solemn, and terrible thoughts rose within me.

As each familiar object faded away and melted into night, then came to my heart the bitter conviction that I was a houseless wanderer, with the wide world all before me—that I was without country, friends, or home—but of the right mettle to become a brave and reckless soldier.

My country indeed!

I would have cursed her! What did I owe her? nothing. But she owed me a debt of blood—the blood of more than thirty of my own name and kindred, who had perished in her reckless wars—dying bravely sword in hand, and in the king's service—for in legions have the men of the clans gone forth to battle for Britain, and now ruin, treachery, extirpation and obloquy, with the garbage of the public press, are heaped upon the remnant who remain.

CHAPTER XXVII.

DUMBARTON.

CALLUM DHU, with my little baggage, had awaited me with some anxiety; but I joined him at the pier in time to reach the steamer which was to take us to the Clyde.

When I told him of all that had passed, his dark eyes flashed, and his swarthy cheek glowed, and slapping his bare knee, he exclaimed:—

‘Dioul! now or never is the time to make your fortune, like Donald Gair or Robin Oig. Marry the Englishman’s daughter, and Glen Ora—hill, wood, and water—shall all be ours again!’

But the monotonous flap-flap-flapping of the steamer’s screw was the only reply he heard, as she bore us away for ever.

We reached the noble Clyde in due time, and landed at Dumbarton, for there we ascertained the *Duchess* was to take on board our emigrants.

I have often thought of the truth of the poet’s maxim, that there is a culminating point in the life of every man, and woman too—a turn of ‘the tide,’ which decides their destiny, and by which their future is irrevocably fixed; and, as this chapter will show, the whole current of my after-life has been changed by the simple circumstance of this emigrant ship being at Dumbarton instead of Glasgow. She was not quite ready for sea—thus three weeks slipped away, during which I lived at a hotel, frittering away the little funds I possessed, while my poor emigrants (who were daily receiving fresh accessions from the expatriated Rosses and Mac Donels) occupied certain old storehouses and sheds upon the quays.

One day Callum and I were sitting at a sequestered part of the river, surveying the stupendous rock of Dumbarton, which is cleft in two, and rises like a mighty mitre of basalt from the channel of the Clyde, strong and formidable in aspect, defended by cannon and by venerable ramparts, from which the beautiful vale of the Leven, the dark mountains of Arrochar, and the vast expanse of the azure river are visible. The shadow of many ages lay upon its hoary walls, for it is the Balclutha of Ossian and of the Romans—the Dun Britton, whence came ‘the tall Galbraiths of the Red Tower,’ so famed in Celtic story. Now its summits were wreathed in mist; the shades of evening were closing on it, and the red gleam of bayonets appeared upon its walls, as the sentinels of a Highland regiment trod to and fro upon the same ramparts from which the soldiers of the Cæsars, in nearly the same costume, had, eighteen hundred years ago, kept this key of the Western Highlands and of the navigation of the Clyde.

As I gazed at the bayonets glittering ever and anon above the old grey bastions, the words of Clavering came again and again to my memory, and the longing to become a soldier, with a horror of hopeless banishment as an emigrant, grew strong within me. My father had once belonged to this very regiment—the famous fighting —th Highlanders. My resolution was taken in a moment. I would see their colonel—I would speak with him—tell my wishes and depressing circumstances, and frankly ask his advice. Callum loudly applauded this idea!

‘He’ll make a captain of you,’ said he, with a confidence that was certainly not based on a knowledge of the service. ‘Who can say nay?’ he continued, with kindling eyes; ‘a Mac Innon of Glen Ora could never be less than a captain—Mona, Mon Dioul—no! and I shall become a soldier too, and, with five and

twenty more of our lads, will follow you to the end of the world, and further !'

In ten minutes after this resolution was formed we were ascending the steep pathway of the castle rock, while Callum whistled lustily an interminable but most warlike pibroch. Entering by the gate which is at the foot of the fortress, and faces the south-east, we passed several strong ramparts, and ascended an abrupt flight of steps into the heart of the place, where the magazine stands, and the sword of Sir William Wallace is preserved. Here a few Highland soldiers who were on guard, and who sat smoking and lounging on a deal form in front of the guard-house, pointed out the quarters of their colonel, in search of whom I immediately repaired ; but was informed by an orderly that he was in the mess-room, into which he at once ushered me without much ceremony.

The apartment was large and plain ; the windows afforded a view of the mighty valley of the Clyde ; the furniture consisted of thirty hard-seated Windsor chairs, a long mahogany table, and side tables strewed with newspapers and dog-eared army-lists. Over the mantelpiece hung an engraved portrait of Sir Colin Campbell, General of the Highland Division, and a row of enormous stags' antlers and skulls.

A handsome, but elderly man, with grizzled hair, becoming slightly bald, and having an obstinate moustache that despised bandoline and defied all trimming, and having a face browned by every climate under heaven, was seated on one chair, while his spurred heels rested on another. He was immersed in the pages of the 'U. S. Gazette.' He wore green tartan trews and a red shell-jacket, with a sash over his left shoulder ; a plain Highland bonnet and a splendidly jewelled dirk lay beside him ; and close by was a decanter of peculiar mess port, a glass of which he set down with a glance of surprise as Callum and I.

after the preliminary *single knock* on the door, were ushered in by the mess-waiter.

This officer was Colonel Ronald Crawford, who distinguished himself so much in India, and of whom it was often said, that he was so brave and cool, that he would not have winked even if a cannon ball had shaved his whiskers. He bowed politely to me—looked inquisitively at Callum, who he no doubt supposed to be a recruit, and whose tattered mountain garb was somewhat remarkable. He stood dutifully, bonnet in hand, about a yard behind me, eying the colonel dubiously, as he might have eyed an ogre.

‘I believe I have the honour to address Colonel Crawford of the —th Highlanders,’ said I.

‘The same at your service,’ said the colonel, rising, planting his feet astride, and placing his back to the fire—a favourite professional attitude.

‘Mr. Allan Mac Innon,’ said I, introducing myself with timid anxiety.

The colonel bowed again, and said, blandly,—

‘In what can I serve you, Mr. Mac Innon?’

My story was briefly told, and he listened with considerable interest, for he was too brave in heart to hear it without emotion.

‘Your name is Mac Innon, and your father was, you mention, in the —th Highlanders. Did he serve once with the 1st Royal Scots?’

‘Yes, in the war against the Pindarees, and fought at the battle of Nagpore and the storming of Gawelghur.’

‘I knew him, my lad, I knew him well,’ said the old Colonel, pressing both my hands in his; ‘God bless me, but this *is* strange! And you are the son of old Allan Mac Innon of the Royals!—He saved my life at Nagpore—.’

‘Then *you* are the officer, to save whom he made such a desperate effort at the head of thirty men of

the Royals, and whom he found tied to the muzzle of a brass gun, which was loaded—'

'With round shot and grape, my boy! but he saved me, by cleaving with one blow of his sword the rascally Arab who was about to apply the match that would have blown me to shreds! This was just within the Durawazza gate, when poor Jack Bell of ours, with a company of the Royal Scots and a party of Sappers, stormed it. Bless my soul! and you are really the son of my old chum and comrade, Allan Mac Innon? Drink your wine, my lad, and tell me all this once again.'

In ten minutes we were quite old friends; another decanter of port was ordered up, Callum was consigned to the care of the mess-waiter, and then I made known my wishes to the colonel, who began alternately to smile and look a little perplexed.

'You wish a commission—we are now at war to be sure; but there are many difficulties. Have you any interest?'

'None—all who might have served me have died in the army.'

'You cannot purchase?'

'I have not quite twenty guineas in the world.'

'Bless my soul! Then there are the necessary studies—a curriculum in fact—an examination and cramming at Sandhurst. What languages do you know?'

'English, a little French, and Gaelic.'

The old colonel burst into a fit of laughter.

'Come—I like this! Did your father purchase?'

'No.'

'Then how did he join the Black Watch?'

'By bringing two hundred men to its ranks.'

'We are making the regiment up to two battalions—the full war establishment; if, among your emigrants you could procure as many volunteers as would entitle you to an ensigncy—'

‘How many are required?’

‘Five and twenty,’

‘I can bring you that very number!’ said I, rising and seizing my bonnet.

‘Nay, not so fast,’ said the colonel, laughing, and filling my glass again. ‘Will they all pass the doctor’s examination.’

‘They are the flower of the district—strong, hardy, and athletic men,’ I replied, as the wine mounted into my head; ‘men inured to a life of poverty and toil; men who with no other covering than their kilt and plaid have remained upon the frozen heather and in the open air for weeks together, to stalk the wild red deer; men who with a single bullet will kill a hawk or eagle in full flight, or bring the most furious stag to bay—ay and slay it too, by one stroke of a skene-dhu or a clubbed rifle!’

‘Bravo! this is the stuff to make soldiers of! Instead of five and twenty, I wish you had five hundred such, *cholaidir Re Cuchullin*—as strong as the Fingalian. You see, my lad, I don’t forget my Gaelic.’

‘The day will never come again, when five hundred such men will march from the Braes of Loch Ora, colonel.’

He invited me to dine that day at the mess, where the splendor of the plate, the richness of the Highland uniforms, the various wines, the number and delicacy of the dishes, with the kindness and frank good-fellowship of the officers, charmed and dazzled me; and as they were all passionately fond of sporting, shooting, and deer-stalking, topics in which I was quite at home, I conversed about them with an ease, energy, and confidence which—when I forgot the pink champagne—certainly surprised myself.

Anxious to have his battalion made up without delay, the colonel had already written to the Horse Guards about me: bounties were high, and men were scarce; my twenty-five volunteers were ready and

willing, and an answer was expected from the General Commanding-in-Chief within eight days.

The night was far advanced before I left the castle.

Full of new thoughts, new hopes, and new life, my whole horizon seemed to have become suddenly cloudless, bright, and sunny; Laura's beautiful eyes were before me, and amid the mellowing influences of the moonlight and the mess champagne, nothing seemed impossible for me to achieve, and I felt happy, confident, and glorious.

The moon shone with silver splendor on the broad expanse of the Clyde, and far across its bosom threw the shadow of Dumbarton's double peak. To me there seemed but one dark spot in the landscape—the large emigrant ship, which lay at anchor in the stream—the *Duchess*, which was to convey our poor and expatriated people to their new homes in the Land of the West.

I will hasten over *their* departure to America; the sailing of the vessel was hurried next day, and they were thrust on board pell-mell, like sheep. I will not attempt to describe the parting between them and the twenty-five who volunteered to share my fortune in the old world, rather than become the pioneers of civilization and the patriarchs of another race in the western hemisphere. Callum and Minnie parted for the time, with the usual promises of constancy, of remembrance, and of writing until they met again, for she would not leave her relations to become the wife of a soldier—and so we all separated.

Alisdair Mac Gouran and the older of the expatriated, were full of many misgivings; but aged people always are so; and the shrill cry of sorrow and farewell which ascended from that crowded deck as the fore-yard was filled, and when the anchor was apeak, went to my heart like a dagger. The elders of the tribe, whose tastes, habits, and thoughts were bounded by the narrow horizon of their native glen,

were naturally filled with consternation by the idea of the new and far-off land of their labours and eternal rest ; but I now felt a fresh hope—a new joy springing up within me, as the love of adventure and the consciousness of freedom, so dear to a young and buoyant heart, roused my energies and my enthusiasm, and I now longed for the hour when I should belt on my sword, with the world for my home, and the colours for my household gods.

I will refrain from detailing the cruelties and barbarities to which, in their outward voyage, the last of the clan were subjected ; how they were decimated by starvation and fever ; how the old perished daily and the young lost health and heart together ; and how the aged Mhari and the young and blooming Minnie died off the foggy Bank of Newfoundland. On board the *Duchess* a small allowance of meal with a liberal quantity of brackish water was their daily food ; but then they were amply furnished with anti-slavery tracts, Addresses to the Women of America, and shilling copies of Uncle Tom's Cabin.

Whether or not it is owing to the apathy or incapacity of the man—the solitary man—the supposed legal and diplomatic Briareus, to whom the government of Scotland is intrusted, or to the utter ignorance of that country betrayed by British legislators, that the sufferings of our Celts arise, I pretend not to say. The fault lies somewhere.

Ignorance of Scottish affairs and of Scottish wants and wishes, together with the criminal apathy of Scottish representatives and the overwhelming influence of centralization, are doubtless the cause of much of the misery and ruin of the Highland population ; and the day may come when Britain will find the breasts and bayonets of her foreign legions, or the effeminate rabble of her manufacturing cities, but a poor substitute for the stubborn clansmen of Sutherland, Ross-shire, and Breadalbane.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

MY REGIMENT.

'To be Ensigns in the 2nd battalion of the — Highlanders, Allan Mac Innon, *Gent.*, and John Belton, *Gent.*, vice Dowb, promoted to the Turkish Contingent.'

Such was the announcement which I read in a Gazette sent to my lodgings one morning, about a fortnight after my first interview with Colonel Crawford. I now ceased to be 'gent.' in any sense of the word, and found myself in one day a full-blown ensign, with a fortune of 5s. 3d. per diem, and a passport to go where glory invited me, in the shape of whistling-dicks and Minie-rifles.

Thus, thanks to the faith and love borne me by twenty-five peasant lads of Glen Ora, now all duly attested and accepted soldiers, I had surmounted the barriers of interest at the Horse Guards; the necessity of pounding 500*l.* with Cox and Co., the puzzling, cramming, and quizzing at Sandhurst, with a hundred minor annoyances.

Let the reader suppose my subscription to band-fund, mess-plate, and commission fees all paid—three trifles amounting to twenty-one guineas, by which one's first three months' pay is legally borrowed under the Royal authority; let the reader imagine my outfit procured—my uniform, camp-equipage, canteen, iron-bedstead, et cetera, provided—and all to be paid for by Providence, or the plunder of Sebastopol, if the aforesaid 5s. 3d. failed to do so—and behold me, then, an ensign in a 'crack regiment,' and like Don Juan—

'Made up by youth, by love, and by an army tailor.'

In less than a month I was reported fit for duty,

and joined my company, into which the colonel had kindly enrolled my twenty-five Mac Innons. I had applied myself with such assiduity to the mysteries of the goose-step, the right half-face, the left half-face, and the right-about three-quarters-face, &c., that I gained the respect of that dread man the adjutant, and the profound esteem of the various sergeants to whom I was handed over in succession to acquire the manual and platoon exercises, the use of the club and broadsword, and to each of whom, at parting, the 'tip' of two days' pay was necessary. I soon won, too, the entire confidence of our brave old colonel, who, in kindness and advice, acted to me more as a father than a friend.

Great was the change this month had achieved in my fortunes! In that brief time I had seen our dwellings levelled to the earth! the glen, which had been peopled for ages, laid desolate and bare; the muirs consumed by fire, and all the land reduced to a voiceless solitude. My mother was lying far away in her quiet grave—her old familiar face was gone for ever: I was separated from Laura, and was now a soldier, like my forefathers, with the wide world all before me.

Of John Belton, who was gazetted at the same time with myself, and who became one of my chief friends, I shall speak frequently anon. He was a handsome, lively, and light-hearted fellow, and we were a pair of inseparables; but with all the charms of the new life that had so suddenly opened before me, I was far from happy still.

After long thought, anxiety, and careful consideration, with a heart inspired by love and hope, I ventured to write a timid letter to Laura, expressing my admiration, my esteem, and undying regard for her, all of which were strengthened by the knowledge that an early and greater separation was at hand, as the regiment to which I had been appointed was

warring in the East, and I added, that in leaving her, more than probably for ever, all my hopes and prayers were for her happiness.

Cæsar, on the night before the great battle of Pharsalia, was not more full of thought than I, while penning this letter to little Laura Everingham.

I dared not ask her to write to me, yet I hoped she might do so; indeed, for some days, I was certain she would reply. I knew that she would write politely, kindly, timidly, and perhaps with some formality; but I longed to gaze upon the lines her pretty hand had traced. It would be a relic of her—a souvenir of buried hopes and futile aspirations, when other days would come.

But day after day passed—a week elapsed—then a fortnight, and yet no letter came; and daily, while every pulse quickened with anxiety, I watched the pipe-major (who acted as our regimental postman) distributing his letters en parade; but, alas! none ever came for me.

My courage fell—day succeeded day, and still no letter. Then hope began to die; my nights were dreamy or sleepless, and my days full of gnawing suspense. Could Laura be ill?—then Fanny would write. Had she dismissed me from her mind? or had Sir Horace intercepted the letter? Thus I wearied myself with conjectures. Should I write to her again? Pride said ‘no;’ yet that very pride which sprang from wounded self-esteem was rendered the more bitter by its struggle with much of honest tenderness, pure regard, and sincere regret that one I loved so well should treat me with such cutting coldness and neglect.

I endured six weeks of much chagrin and suspense after writing that unlucky letter from Dumbarton; but at last a crisis was put to my artificial affliction.

One day Captain Clavering made his appearance at mess, in mufti; he was the guest of Colonel Craw-

ford, and expressed so much real pleasure and satisfaction at meeting me again, that he quite won me by his frankness. He even went the length of offering me the use of his purse, saying that I might repay him at any time—whenever it suited me to do so.

‘I know deuced well, my dear fellow, what it is to be under orders for foreign service, having once had the misfortune to be in the Line,’ said he, ‘and to have only five shillings and threepence per diem, to find myself in messing, clothing, servant and servant’s livery, camp-equipage, and everything. Snobleigh of ours—languid as ever—has lost a devil of a bet on the Oaks, and has rejoined the Guards at Windsor. Fanny, my sister, is as Lola Montes-looking as ever. Sir Horace—you asked for Sir Horace—he is quite well and hearty; busy about his new shooting-box in Glen Ora; and Laura—oh Laura is more charming than ever, and full of anticipated happiness.’

As he said this, he stroked his black moustache, and gave me one of the most knowing little winks; and it seemed to convey so much, though I knew not what, that pique fettered my tongue, and a vague sentiment of jealousy filled my heart.

‘He is a fine fellow Clavering,’ said the colonel, in a low voice, to me;—‘glad to see you know him.’

‘Ah—yes—he is quite an old friend,’ I replied, while fixing my gaze on a diamond-and-pearl ring he wore on the engaged finger, and which I recognized to have been worn by Laura.

‘I knew his brother well—poor Bob Clavering, of the 5th—the Northumberland Fusileers,’ said Brevet-Major Duncan Catanagh, the captain of our Grenadiers, a dark-visaged, rough, and black-bearded soldier; ‘and I had the narrowest escape in the world on the day he was killed.’

‘How?’ asked several.

‘ We were both wounded in the action of Maheid-poor, in the Mahratta war, and, with six others, were being conveyed from the field next day in a waggon : the sun was blazing hot—ay, hot as fire ! Our wounds were undressed ; we were half dead of thirst, and the jolting of the vehicle increased our sufferings to such a degree that I left it, resolving to die quietly by the road side rather than endure such misery longer. The waggon was then being drawn along a road which wound close to the abrupt brow of a tremendous precipice, and in one minute after I stepped out, the horses became restive, plunged and reared—the waggon went backward, and toppled over the rocks into the valley, three hundred feet below, where the horses, wheels, and framework, with my five miserable companions, were dashed to pieces ! I thought little of my escape then—but it has often come painfully before me since. Tom Clavering came into a handsome fortune by that little *malheur*, and at once exchanged from the 5th to the Grenadier Guards.’

‘ And the Mahrattas ? ’ said Belton.

‘ Oh, they would soon have finished me,’ said Catanagh, ‘ but for the exertions of a cunning old Brahmin, who saved my life, and smuggled me to Murray Mac Gregor’s head-quarters, when he held Poonah with only the Scots Royals against all the thousands of Ras Holkar.’

‘ Poonah,’ said the old colonel, laughing, ‘ that was where you had such a long flirtation with a pretty widow, whose husband, a lieutenant of the 5th, had been blown from the mouth of a mortar by the Mahrattas—eh ? ’

‘ Not at all—but pass the wine,’ replied Catanagh, laughing and reddening a little ; ‘ besides, we speak of flirtation with an unmarried female—one’s cousin, for instance—but with a widow, it assumes a—a—’

‘ A deeper character,’ suggested the colonel.

‘ Yes—we then call it a *liaison*,’ said Clavering

who had retired to an open window and lighted a cigar.

'Clavering is in high spirits—'gad, the fellow's like champagne!' said Catanagh.

'For the best of reasons,' whispered the colonel, whose voice went through me like a galvanic shock; 'he is about to be married.'

'Indeed,' I rejoined, a desperate air of coolness struggling with the painful interest this communication excited within me; 'to whom may I ask?'

'A charming young girl—Miss Everingham—daughter and heiress of Sir Horace Everingham, the Conservative M.P., who bought an estate in the Highlands lately.'

The poor colonel smiled pleasantly and confidentially as he said this, all unconscious that he was planting a dagger in his listener's heart.

'By Jove, he will have something handsome with her,' said Ewan Mac Pherson, the captain of our Light Company; 'Elton Hall is a magnificent place, and then the Highland property—but when does the little affair come off?'

'When he returns from the Crimea,' said Belton.

'The deuce—from the Crimea!'

'Nay, pardon me,' said the colonel; 'he is to be married almost immediately, and is now *en route* to Edinburgh after some of the little necessary arrangements.'

'Of course—there will be the bride's *trousseau* to order at a fashionable *magazin des modes*—the usual case of jewels—the twelve morning and evening dresses—the four dozen of everything necessary for ladies fair. Thank heaven, my marching luggage never consisted of more than a portmanteau, an epaulette-box, and a boot-jack.'

'Perhaps so, Catanagh,' replied the bantering colonel; 'but little Laura Everingham, with her English acres and funded property, is a better prize

than our Poonah widow, with all her rupees and indigo; and drinking iced champagne at Elton Hall will be better than eating chutney and pickled monkey, with the thermometer at 104° in the shade—the punkah out of order, and not a breath of air to be had for love or for money. Pass the claret: gentlemen, fill your glasses—we will drink to my friend Captain Clavering, of the Grenadier Guards—happiness to him!’

The wine almost choked me; but mastering my emotion, I left the mess-room, and sought my quarters. There I tore off my red coat, for it seemed to stifle me. I threw myself upon my bed in an agony of mind difficult to portray—an agony such as we feel but once in a life-time; and I strove to be calm—to think—to reflect, and to realize all that the colonel had said so heedlessly, but yet so innocently, to torture me.

One fact stood palpably and painfully before me: Laura Everingham was lost to me for ever! It was, perhaps, a just punishment for the vanity and presumption—or the folly—with which I had permitted a fervent and enthusiastic heart to give full scope to a love which it fostered in defiance of reason and of hope. The tenor of the conversation I had overheard in the arbour occurred to me again and again. I endeavoured to analyze it. To me, there *now* seemed too much lightness of heart and of expression in Laura, when on the eve of a hopeless separation from one whom she knew to love her so well—one then so humbled, so crushed and ruined as I—but perhaps she could not have acted otherwise without exciting still more the suspicion and the ridicule of Fanny Clavering. Were her words to be considered as really indicative of her secret thoughts? Moreover, what claim had I, so poor in all this world’s gifts and gear, on one so rich in all the gifts of heaven and earth? None. Nor was she to blame for the

secret love I had nourished and fostered in my heart since the first moment of our acquaintance. Yet her silence, her pallor, her deep unspoken emotion when I left her, would seem to say that I was not without an interest in her heart. May she not, thought I, have wept for me, and prayed for me, on the midnight pillow, even as I, all lonely and unseen, had sighed and prayed for her?

No—no; the light had vanished at last, and Laura was for ever lost to me—a just punishment to one of the wildest fancies that ever warmed a romantic heart. The pearl ring, with a thousand ‘trifles light as air,’ came in all their bitter, blighting strength, to confirm the news of Clavering’s marriage, and, covering my face with my hands, I wept like a child. Until that burning hour I knew not the depth of my hopeless passion, or how much I had really loved Miss Everingham.

The night was a miserable one to me, but it passed away like others; and the sharp brass drum, and then the yelling war-pipe, as they rang in the early morning air, waking the deep echoes of ‘Balclutha’s walls of rock,’ announced that ‘to march’ was now the order; and first Jack Belton, and then Callum Dhu, burst breathlessly into my room.

‘What the deuce—why the champagne must have been strong last night,’ exclaimed Jack, on seeing me lying on my bed, and not *in* it; ‘come, my boy—bustle up—turn out—the route has come!’

‘*The route*—for where?’

‘The East,’ cried he, flinging his cap up to the ceiling.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE ROUTE—WE SAIL.

‘*The route*—the *route* has come!’ What a commotion that momentous announcement makes in the little world of a barrack, as it passes from mouth to mouth—from the commanding officer to the adjutant, and from that indefatigable vizier to the sergeant-major—from mouth to mouth, and room to room!

This important document, fresh under the seal of the Adjutant-General’s office at Edinburgh, stated in usual form, that ‘it was Her Majesty’s pleasure that one field officer, two captains, four subalterns, six sergeants, three pipers, and two hundred rank and file of the —th regiment of Highlanders be held in readiness to march at such a time, as may be judged expedient, from the castle of Dumbarton, and to embark on board such tonnage as may be provided for their reception, and conveyance to *Constantinople*.’

The field-officer was our rough and bearded Major Duncan Catanagh, K.H.; the captains were Mac Pherson and Logan; the subalterns, Lieutenants Rigg and Johnstone, with two ensigns—viz., Jack Belton and myself.

The *Vestal*, formerly a donkey-frigate of twenty-six guns, but now, cut, lengthened, and fitted with a screw-propeller, and transmogrified into a troopship, lay off Dumbarton, with her top-sails loose and blue-peter at the fore-mast head.

We embarked next day. I remember how much I was impressed by the service-like aspect of our chosen two hundred, who were to join our first battalion—all with their bonnets cased in oil-skins; their white gaiters on; their great-coats rolled on the top of their packs; their haversacks and wooden canteens slung above their accoutrements, as they paraded in the

grey light of the early morning, when the sun was yet below the hills, and when the shrill ‘gathering,’ woke the echoes of dark and shadowy Dumbarton.

On the roll being called, one of our men, Lance-corporal Donald Roy, was reported to be absent.

‘Absent,’ reiterated the adjutant; ‘devilish odd—were not all the men of this detachment confined to barracks immediately on the route arriving?’

‘Yes, sir—but Donald is not here.’

Under his moustache, the adjutant muttered something that sounded very much like an oath.

‘This looks ill,’ said he, reddening with anger; ‘a fellow bolts on the eve of embarking for foreign service! The sergeant of the main guard and the sentries at the gate must be accountable for this.’

‘Nay, I alone am answerable,’ said Major Catanagh; ‘Donald comes from my native glen on the west bank of Loch Lomond; and late on the night the route arrived, he came to me and said, “Major, *you* know me well—you have known me since we were boys, and can trust me. My mother died when we were fighting on the banks of the Indus, and she is buried in the auld kirkyard of Luss; get me leave for a night, that I may cross the hills to say one prayer at her grave before we go, and I swear by the God that hears me to be at Dumbarton gate before you march—ay before the pipes play *réveille*.”’

‘And you obtained leave for him from the colonel?’

‘Yes.’

‘*Réveille* was blown long since,’ said the adjutant, with an incredulous smile, ‘and Donald has not yet appeared. Sergeant Mac Ildhui, mark him *absent* in the Report.’

The kind major reddened in turn, for our adjutant was a Lowlander, and did not believe in Highlanders; but Catanagh was a Celt, and better knew the missing man.

‘I will answer for him,’ said he; ‘Donald will be

back in time, I warrant him—where are his musket, pack, and accoutrements.'

'They are carried by his comrades.'

The hour for marching drew near; already the boats of the *Vestal* awaited us; but there was no appearance of Donald Roy, so the 'next man for duty,' was ordered to prepare to take his place.

The women had been balloted for at the drum-head; the two fortunate wives who were to accompany us were clinging in joy to their husbands' necks. The unfortunates who had drawn *blanks* were filling the barrack square with noisy lamentations. Adieux had been said, and hands shaken. Then the little column broke into sections of threes, and with the whole band of the battalion in our front, playing 'Lochaber no more,' and accompanied by our comrades' cheering, we left the ancient castle of Dumbarton just as the sun rose, and marched towards the landing-place.

As we proceeded to the bank of the river, a soldier, pale and breathless, dashed into our ranks, raised his hand to his bonnet, and cried aloud,—

'Major Catanagh—I am here!'

'Donald Roy!' exclaimed the soldiers with satisfaction, for this man was a favourite with all, and moreover was a famous sword-player and tosser of the caber.

'I knew that you would return, Donald,' said the major, with an approving smile.

'I have travelled day and night, running like a deer, Major Catanagh,' replied the soldier in a rapid whisper; 'I have had twelve miles to go, and as many to return; but I am young and active, and the ardour of grief bore me up, for I was determined to see the grave of my mother before I left my native place, perhaps for ever; and may heaven bless you, major, for the trust you have put in me. I am poor—but I never deceived any one. Oh, major, I have

seen the woods of Cameron, the rocks of Ross-dhu, and the wilds of Rowardennan, places that you and I know well—but may never look upon again.'

'We shall, Donald—please God, we shall both see them again,' said Catanagh, with kindling eyes.

With kindly interest I looked on this pale and weary soldier, who spoke in my native Gaelic; but I had soon other thoughts in my heart, and in the ardour and excitement of embarking for foreign service and the seat of war, with the brattle of the drum and the blare of the brass band playing a stirring Scottish quick-step; the tread of marching feet, and the gleam of fixed bayonets round me, I was soon beyond the reach of tender or soft impressions.

The steam continued to roar at times through the safety-valve; the band continued to play, and our comrades to cheer, as our detachment went off in boat-loads to the *Vestal*, which was rapidly getting up all her horse-power. Her white canvas hung loose aloft, and her decks were crowded by groups of the sombre Rifles below; but until I stood upon her poop and looked round me, I could scarcely realise the truth of my position, or that all this new phase of life, so strange to me, was not a dream.

The sun came up in his glory from the morning sea; the blue waters rolled around us in light, and curled their crested waves before the soft west wind. The huge dark shadows of Balclutha's double Dun fell far along the azure bosom of the Clyde, when the steamer's anchor was apeak, and the propeller began to dash the water into foam astern, making a sweep of nearly twenty feet at each impetuous turn, and objects on the beach began to lessen, change or pass each other, and we stood in groups looking at the fading mountains few of us might ever see again.

Summer had passed away with all its bloom and verdure; no longer laden with rosy blossoms,

‘Fruitful Clydesdale’s apple bowers
Were mellowing in the moon;’

the peach and the nectarine had glowed there in clusters and been gathered, and now the woods of leafy green were being tinged by russet brown and golden yellow.

On leaving the mouth of the Clyde, we found the water rough; the wind blew keenly and chopped about; thus the *Vestal* pitched and lurched heavily off Ailsa Craig, amid the mist and spray. This somewhat damped the military pride of the youngsters, and as the motion increased when we entered the North Channel, the very idea of breakfast or dinner excited a qualmy horror within me; and the jokes of Catanagh, Mac Pherson, and other older soldiers, failed to rouse my spirit either to fun or anger—in short I was sick, miserably sick, and would gladly have exchanged my hopes of a marshal’s baton and a tomb in Westminster for a safe footing on the nearest point of land.

On, on we sped, and ere long a faint white line at the horizon marked where the chalky brows of the Land’s-end faded into the evening sea, and we bade ‘a long good night to old England.’

We had on board six companies of the Rifle Brigade—all jolly fellows; and on recovering our ‘sea legs,’ we found the hours pass delightfully.

The *Vestal* was commanded by John Crank, an old, fiery, passionate and red-faced naval lieutenant, who had served under Nelson as a midshipman, and lost his ‘starboard top-light,’ when boarding the *Holy Joe*, as he irreverently named the *San Josef*.

The proportion of tonnage for troops in a transport is two tons per soldier; but on board our old donkey *Vestal*, the Highlanders were stowed away with only eighteen inches per man for sleeping-room; and as the weather grew warm on our approaching the Mediterranean, they suffered great discomfort—and

the poor women were crammed away among the rank and file, unheeded and uncared for by all but their husbands.

I was subaltern of the watch, on the morning we anchored off Gibraltar, where we remained for four and twenty hours, waiting for despatches direct from London. As soon as they arrived, the mail was transferred on board the *Vestal*; the steam was again got up, and long before evening, the giant peak, the tremendous rock-built batteries of Gibel-al-tarie—the rock of the old Moorish wars—faded into the blue waters as we bore on towards that land of death and battle, suffering and disaster, where Britannia was exchanging her ancient oak leaves and laurels for the funeral cypress and the baleful yew.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE TROOP-SHIP.

AMONG the letters and papers which reached our detachment at Gibraltar, was a copy of the ‘Morning Post,’ which went ‘the round’ of the officers—*i. e.*—was perused by all in turn.

We were all seated jovially at the table, in the harbour of Gibraltar; the bright sun was glistening on the waves which ran in long and glassy ripples through the straits; the cabin-windows were open; the cloth had been removed, and the decanters of sherry and full-bodied old port were travelling round the well-polished mahogany on their patent silver waggons. We were idling over nuts and peaches, talking, laughing and making merry on the prospects of the war, when, judge of *my* emotions, on Major Catanagh, who had entrenched himself behind the

open pages of the 'Morning Post,' suddenly raising his head and his voice together—

'Poor Tom Clavering!' he exclaimed; 'he has come to an untimely end at last.'

'How?' asked several, pausing in their conversation; 'Clavering of the Guards—who dined with us at Dumbarton?'

'Brother of Bob Clavering of the 5th? Well?'

'He has come to an untimely end,' continued the major, and my heart felt a pang as the captain's frank and handsome face came before me; but I could neither analyse the major's expression of eye, or my own emotions, as he added,—

'He has gone the way we must all go.'

'Dead!' I exclaimed, as hope mingled with my regret.

'No—married.'

'Married!' echoed several voices.

'As you will hear by this most magniloquent paragraph.'

'Read it, major—all news from home are welcome,' said Jack Belton.

'Married yesterday by the Lord Bishop of Edinburgh.—'

'Who the deuce is he?' asked some one; 'we don't know such dignitaries in Scotland.'

'Never mind, my boy—the "Morning Post" does—Married yesterday, by the Lord Bishop of Edinburgh, Captain Thomas Clavering, second son of the late Sir Anthony Clavering, of Clavering-corbet and Belgrave-square, to Laura, the only and accomplished daughter of Sir Horace Everingham, Bart. and M.P., of Elton Hall, Yorkshire and Glen Ora. The bride was most elegantly attired in white glacé silk, covered with Brussels lace flounces, flowers and a magnificent Brussels lace veil entwined with white roses and orange blossom. She was attended by twelve charming bridesmaids richly arrayed—six in pink and six

in white, who unbound their bouquets and strewed the way with flowers before the wedded pair, from the porch of St. John's church to the steps of the carriage.'

'By Jove! there's a peal of bells for you!' said Belton.'

'Think of Tom Clavering having the way before him strewed with flowers.'

'After the ceremony, Sir Horace gave a splendid *déjeuner* at his residence in Edinburgh, and at four o'clock the beautiful bride and gallant bridegroom left town, *en route* for London, from whence it is said they will follow the Guards to the Crimea in the elegant yacht of Augustus Frederick Snobleigh, Esq., or in the *Fairy Bell*, the well-known yacht of Sir Horace.'

This pompous and inflated notice, which excited much merriment at the mess-table, fell heavily and sorely on me. Every word of it was like a death-knell—yet I loitered calmly and placidly, as old Duncan Catanagh read it with a comical smile in his grey Highland eye, and with a quizzical emphasis on certain portions of it. No one who saw me sitting there, so quietly and so pale (I could perceive my face in an opposite mirror), would have dreamed there was such a hell raging in my heart.

But alas! this world is full of strange fancies and misplaced affections.

Though I was fully prepared for this marriage, the notice of it, so plainly and palpably *in print*, was a source of great agony to me; but amid the noise and bustle of the transport, the constant change of scene in the Mediterranean, and the reckless gaiety of those around me—those brave and light hearts, who amid the mud and gore of the rifle-pits were to find 'glory or the grave,' I had fortunately little time left for reflection. Knowing my secret, and sympathising with me, honest Jack Belton, left

nothing unsaid or undone to draw me from myself; to wean me as it were from my own thoughts, and to fix my attention more on the events that lay before us than those which were past and irremediable; for Jack's maxim, like his favourite song, was ever,—

‘To be sad about trifles is trifling and folly,
For the true end of life is to live and be jolly.’

All day long, with our revolver pistols, we practised at bottles or old hats slung from the mainyard arm; and in this feat none but Callum Dhu could beat Jack Belton, who had been one of the most successful pupils in our new school of musketry at Hythe. In the evening we had the fine brass band of the Rifles, who gave us the best airs from *Il Travatore* and *La Traviata*; then we sang glees on the poop, or danced to the bagpipes on the main-deck, leaving nothing undone to beguile the tedium of a sea-voyage; for there is a tedium even in the beautiful Mediterranean; and daily we exchanged salutes and cheers with troop-ships and war-steamers, French, British, and Sardinian, returning with sick and wounded men from the land towards which we were hastening.

Many of these vessels were imperial transports, on their way to Marseilles; and they had generally in tow a sailing-vessel, also crowded by the miserable convalescents of Scutari and Sebastopol; and hourly, while they were within sight, we saw the ensign half hoisted, and the dead launched off to leeward—sans shroud or coffin or other covering than their blood-stained uniform, their Zouave cloak, or grey greatcoat, all tattered and torn by the mud of the rifle-pits and toil of the trenches.

After bidding adieu to the Cape de Gata, that long ridge of rocks which lie on the eastern limits of Almeria, and form the last point of Spain, we sighted Tavolaro, a promontory at the southern extremity of Sardinia. On that evening I had some trouble in

saving my irritable follower Callum Dhu from being put in irons, for beating a rifleman who had been making fun of his Celtic peculiarities. On, on, we sped, with the smoke from our funnel pouring a long and vapory pennant astern.

We landed the Rifles at Malta, and took on board ten pieces of battering-guns—forty-eight pounders—for the Crimea, and ere long saw a gorgeous sunset deepening on the green Sicilian hills. In due time we were among the countless isles of the Greek archipelago—the *Andælat Denhisa* (or sea of islands, as it is named by the Turks), with the stern and rocky shore of the *Morca* frowning on our lee from the deep azure sky of the Levant.

The *Ægean* was covered with foam, and as we ran through the narrow strait that divides the charming isle of *Scio* from the vast continent of Asia, the sides of our steamer, the shrouds, our rough coats—even our hair and moustaches, were encrusted with salt from the flying spray, as we sped on past *Milo*, *Hydra*, and other isles of a thousand old classic memories; and after passing and saluting the castles of the *Dardanelles*, bore up for *Gallipoli*, at thirteen knots an hour, with full steam, and every sail set that would draw fore and aft.

Let not my readers fear that I am about to afflict them with a history either of the war or the siege of *Sebastopol*, or even with the now-hackneyed description of *Constantinople*. Fortunately for myself, I never saw either the *Malakoff* or the *Redan*, though my regiment did, to its cost; and though quartered in its vicinity, duty or destiny prevented me from seeing much of the far-famed city of *Stamboul*. We have had enough and to spare of the East and Eastern War of late; thus I mean to confine myself entirely to my own adventures, which will prove more than enough to fill my volume, without the introduction of any extraneous matter.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE REEFS OF PALEGROSSA.

No French girl, waiting for her lover, was ever more impatient than I to see the enemy, yet it was my fate never to plough the waters of the Euxine.

In company with the *Mahmoudieh*, a small Osmanli steam-brig of ten guns, we had left astern the narrow channel of the Hellespont, and the lights of Gallipoli had sunk into haze and darkness on our larboard quarter, as we steamed, but slowly, into the sea of Marmora.

The night, at first, was calm, but intensely dark, yet on we glided—on, on—over the waste of waters, our almost noiseless speed forming a strange contrast to the silence and sleep of the hundreds on board, who were borne forward through the seething foam and whirling water, as the revolving screw urged on the sharp-prowed frigate—an even course before us, a long white wake of froth astern; no light visible, save a faint ray near the binnacle, or that red and dusky gleam which shoots at times upward from the engine-room, when the iron jaws of the hot furnace are unclosed for a moment, and a flash of fiery radiance falls on the mysterious intricacies of the clanking machinery, and on the dark and swarthy visages of the engineer and his mates.

So thought Belton and I, as we trod the deck together, cigar in mouth, while gliding over the darkened waters of the Propontis.

Our coal was becoming scarce, for after an hour the engines almost ceased, and every stitch of canvas she could carry was set upon the vessel; but this was continued only for a time, as before midnight a gale came on, and the sails were rapidly reduced, and

we lost sight of the *Mahmoudieh*, with her crescent and lantern glittering at her foremast-head.

Jack Belton was officer of the watch, and about fifty of our men were on deck in their forage-caps and greatcoats, ready to bear a hand whenever they were required, in working the ship and general deck duty.

As he scanned the horizon of the dark sea of Marmora, and saw a peculiar white streak at its utmost verge, Captain Crank swore a few nautical oaths, and bent his piercing solitary eye aloft on every yard and rope and sail, to see, as he said, 'if she drewed properly.'

'What headland is that, now rising like a dark cloud upon our larboard bow?' I inquired, with great suavity, as our skipper was not in a mood to be trifled with.

'Cape St. George—and a d—ned unpleasant place it may prove to *us*, if the wind shifts, and we find it on our lee,' he answered, in a voice not unlike a growl, as he turned his red and weather-beaten visage to windward. 'How's her head?' he snappishly asked the midshipman of the watch.

'East and by north, sir.'

'Keep her so, and if the wind veers round, call me;' and, with a general scowl round about him, he entered the poop.

As the night waxed older, the seamen, who generally have peculiar and intuitive instincts about the weather—mysterious forebodings which they cannot account for or explain, looked anxiously ahead, as the dark clouds deepened on our ocean path, and the hurrying scud tore the foam from the tops of the lifted billows. The crew seemed restless, and gathered together in whispering groups about the fore-castle and lee side of the main deck.

'I think we will have a rough night, sir,' said the middy of the watch, in a low voice, to old Crank, who had come again upon deck.

‘And a dangerous one, too,’ he answered, adding, to the chief mate, ‘let both watches be kept on deck, for I don’t think it worth their while to turn in now; double reef the foresail and main-top-sail—quick, Mr. Gasket! Send all the topgallant-yards on deck—handsomely a bit—bravo! Now make all fast, and keep a sharp look out there forward.’

With these words, and a last glance at the compass, in the light of which his red face glowed like a stormy moon, our gallant skipper again descended from the poop and entered his cabin, to consult the chart through the mellowing influence of a glass of stiff brandy grog.

At nine o’clock an order had been given to batten all the port-lids, and ship the dead-lights.

These warnings and precautions detained me long, and somewhat anxiously, on deck, till the bellowing wind and the bitter spray, which showered over the ship like rain, fairly drove me below; but knowing less, or caring less, about the actual risk we ran, after playing chess for an hour or two with Major Catnagh, and hearing some prosy old stories about the Mahrattah war and Bob Clavering of the 5th, I ‘turned in,’ and wearied by a long day spent in the keen sea-breeze, after a prayer that Laura might be happy though she had deserted me for ever, I was soon fast asleep and dreaming of Sebastopol.

From this comfortable state I was suddenly awakened by a frightful uproar on deck, the bellowing of the wind through the rigging; the creaking of the timbers; the grating and straining of the guns in their lashings; the jarring, swaying, and pitching of the ship, as she rose on one billow, and plunged surging deeply into the dark watery trough of another. The lamp in my cabin swung madly about in its brass slings; at last the crystal globe was dashed to pieces; the light went out, and I was in darkness.

I thought of that dreadful storm in the Euxine,

which in the preceding November had nearly destroyed an entire fleet of transports and store-ships, strewing the shores of the Crimea with shattered wrecks and unburied bodies; and with a new sensation of alarm in my heart, I sprang from bed and proceeded to dress; at that moment I heard the excited voice of Jack Belton in the great cabin.

‘Gentlemen! gentlemen!’ cried he, ‘turn out—breakers are ahead! Mac Innon—Mac Pherson—Major, on deck—on deck, for heaven’s sake; the ship will strike in ten minutes!’

The appalling announcement brought every officer from his cabin in such garments as he could grasp and don on the instant; and we hurried to the poop. It was only by clinging to the rail and stanchions that we could retain our footing on the lofty poop, over which the white foam was sweeping. The waist seemed full of water; the strong cordage bent or snapped, and streamed about like whipcord; the foresail, main-topsail, and gib strained and flapped like thunder, for the ship would not obey her helm; four men stood by the wheel, and a chaos of darkness, water, foam, noise, and uproar, were around me; and I had no distinct impression of anything, but that our large ship, borne by the stormy wind and furious current, with all her deck crowded by human beings, was drifting, at the rate of nine knots an hour, towards a line of foam ahead, that marked where the breakers curled on the beach. But what beach—whether it was the classic shore of Roumelia, of Asia Minor, the Isle of Marmora, or the rocks of Coudouri, we knew not, for the binnacle, with its compasses, had been swept away by a wave which made a clean breach over the ship about midnight, sweeping three men away, with the poor middy of the watch.

The black sky was moonless and starless.

I looked upon Major Catanagh, who stood near me shivering, half clad and clinging to a timber-head.

his grey hair matted to his face by the drifting spray. Old Duncan was brave as a lion; but he was a husband—he was a father, and from the wild black tumult of the waves that boiled around us—

‘ His eyes

Were with his heart, and that was far away,’

in a little cottage half buried among roses and woodbine, on the western bank of Loch Lomond, where, at that hour so terrible to him, his poor wife lay perhaps sleepless on her pillow, listening to the wind that soughed round the craigs of Ross Dhu, and thinking of *him*, with their little ones hushed in dreamless slumber around her. Poor Duncan’s softer soul was stirred within him. His face was pale; his eyes were stern and sad; and if his spirit quailed in that awful hour, it was *not* with fear, for he had faced death on many a field.

Those and those only who have been in such a place, where every wave swept some brave soul into eternity, and where every gust of wind bore the cry of despair and the knell of death, can tell what Catanagh felt; and I read his thoughts rightly, for he turned to me abruptly, and warmly pressing my hand, said,—

‘Thank heaven, Allan, that *you* have none left behind you to love or to regret—none to weep for you! no wife to leave to the starvation of a widow’s pension—no *puir wee* ones to cast upon a cold and faithless world!’

I thought more of Laura than of this thankfulness; and as my heart swelled with the bitter knowledge that my fate might never be regretted, all fear and anxiety died away within it. I became totally indifferent, and felt myself really the only unconcerned spectator present.

Callum Dhu having sprung to my side, threw his strong arm round me, as if to break the force of the waves which every instant flooded the deck; several

soldiers followed him, and came crowding on the poop, for as death seemed before us, discipline and etiquette seemed alike to be forgotten.

The rudder chains had given way, and the ship was driving alternately broadside and stern on, towards the line of breakers, above which we could discern the outline of a dark and rocky shore.

‘She will strike in ten minutes!’ cried one of the mates.

The men became excited, and tumultuous cries ascended from the waist.

‘(Lew up—cut away the masts—lower the boats!’

Then followed shouts, disputes and struggles for spars, booms, and hen-coops.

‘Silence fore and aft—silence!’ cried old Crank, through his trumpet; ‘boatswain, pipe away the barge and cutter—be ready to lower away the boats, man the pumps, and stand by to cut away the masts the moment she strikes!’

‘Be cool, Highlanders—be cool, and fall into your ranks, my lads!’ cried Major Catanagh, perceiving that the crowding of the soldiers upon the deck impeded the movements of the seamen; ‘fall in here across the main-deck: bugler sound the assembly—sound, my boy.’

Long and loudly blew the little bugle-boy the familiar barrack-yard call, and strangely and wildly, at that terrible moment, it rang upon the roaring wind, which seemed to tear the very notes off at the bugle mouth, and sweep them to leeward with the hissing foam.

‘Fall in, my lads—fall in, and keep in order. If the boats can save us, we shall be saved the more readily by being in order to leave the ship. If she splits below us, then we shall die in our ranks like British soldiers, and like our father’s sons—hoping everything from a gracious God and fearing nothing. Remember your discipline, my lads, and keep up

your hearts—mine has not sunk yet, though like many among you, I have a dear wife and bairns at home in Scotland. Close in, shoulder to shoulder, and remember the glorious example of Seton and his Highlanders in the *Birkenhead*!

A faint hurrah responded to this brief speech, and like a dark mass in their soaked great coats, the poor fellows immediately formed in their ranks, four deep across the deck in front of the poop, where they stood in silence and in order awaiting either death or deliverance with that calmness and fortitude for which no soldiers in Europe can surpass our own braves.

I took my place on the left flank, and Callum Dhu was close beside me, with a coil of rope in his hand, and a small hen-coop which he had torn from a part of the ship, and which he defended from all by his drawn bayonet; but *not* for his own use or safety. Amid all the terrors of that awful night, Callum's whole anxiety was for me. The crews of the boats stood by the davits and hoisting-tackles, ready to lower away on the order being given, though there was little hope of either cutter, dingy, or whale-boat living in such a sea. The well was sounded; and now we began to hear the clank of the pumps, while a group of men stood by the masts ready to cut away everything fore and aft; but the carpenter and his mates were saved that trouble, for just as the huge ship surged broadside on among the white breakers, she gave two fearful lurches—there was a shock that made her vibrate from her trucks to her keel, and snapping like a hazel twig, the strong mainmast, though built of Memel fir, and cramped with forty iron rings, went by the board with a crash like thunder.

The main-topmast of course, and the fore and mizen-topmasts, with all their debris of yards, ropes, blocks and chain-sheets, came clattering down in ruin and confusion among us, killing two men and wound-

ing others. The shrouds snapped like threads, and then all this wilderness of top-hamper was swept away to leeward, and dashed to shreds upon the rocky shore.

Father Neptune and old Æolus had proved alike inimical to us, and thus in a moment did our once-gallant old frigate become a hideous and hopeless wreck, dismasted, defaced, and bulged upon a coast unknown.

The night was as dark as if we were in the bowels of the earth; yet from the whiteness of the foam that covered all the waves which boiled over the ghastly reef, there came a species of reflected light that revealed the horrors of our situation. The wind still blew furiously in fierce and heavy gusts; drenching us with spray; yet there stood our little band in their ranks, orderly and calm, as if upon parade—brave, firm, and God-fearing men—expecting every instant that the ship would go to pieces!

The fall of the masts and top-hamper greatly eased the *Vestal*, and she gave no immediate indications of that general breaking up which we had all so much reason to dread.

‘Where are we—on what coast?’ was the question we asked of each other a hundred times.

‘Daylight will show,’ was the invariable answer, and watches were impatiently consulted, and the horizon scanned for the first indication of dawn. Some brandy was hoisted up from below; an allowance per man was served round, and, as old Crank said, ‘Never was a raw nip more welcome.’

As the wind lulled on the approach of morning, the sea went down; the spray ceased to deluge the deck, and we all sought our cabins to procure such warm and dry clothing as might have escaped the invasions made by the waves into our premises.

A faint streak that glittered along the far verge of the horizon, marked the quarter of the sky where

the sun would appear, and never was its gleam more welcome, for now the storm had completely lulled, and as the ship remained firmly bulged upon the rock, with her lower hold half filled with water, we felt ourselves comparatively safe. An order was given to lower away the boats; and having now fairly escaped the horrors of the shipwreck, we began to look calmly about us.

A flood of saffron light spread over the eastern quarter of the sky; then, radiating like the points of a mighty star, the sun's rays shot upward and played upon the dispersing clouds which turned to deep crimson, and then the sea beneath them seemed to roll in alternate waves of sapphires and rubies, till he rose in all his splendour, and then one long and mighty blaze of dazzling light flashed steadily from the horizon to the shore, filling with a sunny glory all the sea of Marmora.

Now we could perceive the land distant about a mile; the shore was green and fertile; to the eastward rose the towers of an old fortified town, the domes and tall slender minarets of which were glittering in the sun. A little lower down lay a promontory covered with ruins. To the westward was a cape, under the lee of which were a number of Levantine craft with long lateen-yards that tapered away aloft, and their striped or brown shoulder-of-mutton sails, creeping out from the creeks and inlets where they had found shelter during the squall of the past night.

The carpenter reported, that without powerful assistance, there was no possibility of getting the ship off, and as no British, French, or Sardinian steamer was in sight, Crank stamped about the deck in a high state of mental excitement and irritation, while fear of Greek pirates and Natolian robbers, whose armed boats are ever on the prowl in these seas, made Catanagh, at his suggestion, order our men to

accoutre and parade with their arms and ammunition on deck, where an inspection was made, and our two hundred Highlanders were found to be in complete fighting order.

‘What say you now, Captain?’ asked Catanagh; ‘do you know the coast?’

‘Only too well, Major—it is Roumelia, and we are in the gulf of Salonica.’

‘That town on the promontory—’

‘Is Heraclea, with the ruins of some old devilish Greek place close by.’

‘Then we are on classic ground?’

‘Damned deal too classic for my taste!’ grumbled Crank; ‘we are ashore, sir, on the Palegrosso rocks.’

‘Is there a Turkish garrison in Heraclea?’

‘Undoubtedly, for there is a population of about seven thousand—principally fishermen—and the town is fortified.’

‘All right—let me get my men ashore, and we shall march in. The officer commanding must find us quarters. I long to stretch my legs on dry land again.’

Old Crank proved right; we were really wrecked upon those dangerous rocks which lie about the two little isles of Venetica, in the Bay of Salonica, about ninety miles from the mouth of the Dardanelles, and fifty from Constantinople, by the coast road.

A careful inspection of the *Vestal* proved that our carpenter’s idea of getting her safely off, under any circumstances, was quite impracticable. She was firmly wedged and bulged between two masses of rock, and was so seriously injured that even were steam power procured sufficient to drag her into deep water, she would instantly sink. Thus all hope of preserving the shattered hull of our old donkey-frigate was abandoned; and as the sea was now calm, and she might be some weeks of going to pieces, we prepared to hoist up the battery guns, the ship’s carronades, the stores, &c., and make other arrange-

ments for disembarking by the boats with all due order and regularity.

Our men were paraded on deck, accoutred in heavy marching order, with their knapsacks, wooden canteens, greatcoats, and haversacks. The luggage, spare arm-chests, and squad-bags, were all brought up from below, and everything in the form of stores, clothing, and articles of value, were prepared for landing. Captain Crank, with Major Catanagh and an interpreter, were pulled ashore in the pinnace, with a well-armed crew, to make arrangements with the Turkish authorities for our reception and transmission to Constantinople.

With considerable interest—if not with some anxiety—we watched them and the pinnace disappear round a wooded promontory; and evening had almost deepened on the land and sea before they returned with intelligence that they had despatched tidings of our situation to the officer commanding at Scutari, and had made arrangements with Mir Alai Said, a Turkish colonel, who commanded in Heraclea, to afford us quarters in the barrack of that town.

We passed that night in the wreck. She was firm and motionless as the rocks on which she lay; but the occasional surging of the sea against her shattered sides, and the gurgling of the water, as it ebbed and flowed in the lower hold, together with the natural fear that some portion of her might give way in the night, kept us all anxious and wakeful; though Jack Belton was the life of our little party, and favoured us with his usual ditty—

‘ To be sad about trifles is trifling and folly,
Since the chief end of life is to live and be jolly.’

Though, like myself, he had only his pay, Jack was the most heedless of all heedless fellows. His father had been ruined, or nearly so, by a plea which had been before the Scottish Lords of Council and Session for the last fifty years; and which, in the hands of

an able advocate and sharp-practising agent, like our friend the late-lamented Snaggs, bade fair to go on for another half century.

We idled away the chilly hours, muffled in our cloaks, regimental plaids, and paletots or bernous, à la Bedouin, over cigars, wine, and brandy-and-water, singing songs, telling stories, and practising the Highland feat of sheathing and unsheathing the claymore with both hands turned outwards, and playing other pranks, till again the bright sun of Asia shone upon the sea of Marmora, and after tiffin of biscuit, brandy, and junk, we paraded, to disembark upon the old historic shore of Roumelia.

I went off in the first boat with Mac Pherson (the captain of our Light Company), Jack Belton, Callum Dhu, and about thirty privates. We pulled away clear of the wreck into blue water, and then steered towards the shore, where three Turkish officers, on horseback, were waiting to receive us. After pulling for more than a mile through a sea which shone like burnished gold, and the transparent waves of which enabled us to perceive, at a vast depth below, the rank luxuriance of its dark green weeds, spreading their broad and tremulous leaves over a bed of snow-white sand, we reached the point indicated by Captain Crank as our landing-place. It was a rough and barren part of the coast, where the rocks were piled over each other in confusion, with a coarse bulbous plant, like a crocus, which spread its crooked leaves between the gaping interstices of the stones. No bushes or trees were there; but there were vultures, storks, and cranes, that hovered over the ruins of an old Roman wall, and flapped their wings upon the prostrate columns of a Corinthian temple, that lay half-merged among the waters of the encroaching sea.

As our boat grounded, the three Turkish officers—each of whom wore the scarlet *fez* (which is named

from the city of Fez), with its gold military button, the tight blue surtout, and crooked sabre, which make up the invariable costume of all in the service of the Sultan—brought their horses near, and as we sprang ashore, accorded to us the usual military salute; and one—a lieutenant—in very tolerable French, bade us welcome to the land of the Osmanli.

Mir Alai Said and the Mulazim (*i. e.*, lieutenant) Ahmed were both handsome men, with keen Asiatic features, and dark eyes that glittered with somewhat of the cunning expression peculiar to all of Oriental blood; but the third, of whom the reader will hear more in future chapters, the Hadjee Hussein Ebn al Ajuz, was a Yuze Bashi, or captain of artillery, and wore the blue uniform, gold epaulettes, and laced belt and trousers of the corps of Bombardiers. He was a punchy, shaggy-browed, solemn, stately, and sulky-looking old Turk, with a heavy grizzled moustache; a skin of the hue of mahogany, and an eye that seemed to be for ever watching you, and you only. Besides, he spoke a little absurd broken English, which he picked up at Acre, during the war against Mehemet Ali.

While our men were scrambling ashore from the boats, as each in succession came in and grounded, we asked the Mir Alai what were the news from the seat of war?

‘We have fought a brave battle on the Ingour,’ replied the colonel, rather haughtily, as it is not the etiquette of the Turkish service for juniors to question a senior. ‘Omar Pasha, with 20,000 Osmanlis, crossed the river in Mingrelia, in the face of a desperate fire of cannon and musketry; and fighting, with the water up to their armpits, stormed the position from 16,000 Russians, whom they forced to retreat.’

‘And the Czar, whom God confound, has left the Crimea,’ added the fat Captain Hussein Ebn al Ajuz; ‘may the Prophet burn the Russian liars, who eat

blood and swine's-flesh, and take usury! May he transform their young men into apes, and their old ones into swine, as he did those who, of old, offered incense to idols!

'Amaum! Amaum!' muttered the other two, under their thick moustaches.

MacPherson, who had served long in India, retained his gravity; but Belton, on catching a twinkle of my eye, laughed aloud at these quaint expressions of hatred, which were uttered in a strong jargon of Turkish and queer French.

'And Kars—does it still hold out?'

'Mashallah! have you not heard?' they exclaimed.

'No—we have been at sea.'

'Kars is valueless as the cleft of a date-stone!' said the Mir Alai.

'Then it has fallen!' we exclaimed together.

'It capitulated through famine to that dog and son of a dog, Mouravieff. The garrison of the brave Ingleez Pasha marched out with the honours of war, and delivered themselves up to the Russians as prisoners; thus 8,000 true Believers are detained; but a number of militia-men have been liberated by Mouravieff, who found in the city one hundred and thirty pieces of cannon.'

'And Sebastopol?'

'Still holds out manfully and desperately,' said the Mir Alai; 'but what do I see?—women coming ashore—and, oh, Mohammed! without the vestige of a yashmack to cover their faces.'

'Your soldiers,' said the Yuze Bashi, are killed like Arnaouts, and all giant in stature as Og the son of Anak. Your Mir Alai says he has two hundred of them—how many wives have they?'

'Four,' said I.

'Four!' reiterated the Mir Alai; 'O, Mohammed! what do we hear?'

'Our government permitted only two women per company in the transport.'

'Four wives for two hundred men!' exclaimed the punchy old Yuze Bashi of the Bombardiers, turning up his round black eyes in wonderment, and gathering the most peculiar ideas from my words; 'one wife for fifty men! It is enough to make every hair in the beards of the seventy imaums stand on end with astonishment!'

'Hush,' whispered the Mir Alai, in a tone of rebuke; 'beware what you say, Hussein; they have come to fight with us against the Muscovites, and may the Prophet—he who knoweth all things—shed a ray of light upon the darkness of their souls!'

'Amaum!' mumbled the lieutenant, who, as in duty bound, applauded all that the Mir Alai said; 'but oh, Allah! only *two* wives per company!'

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE YUZE BASHI.

LEAVING a small party under Lieutenant Logan, of ours, to protect the landing of the baggage and stores, accompanied by our three Turkish acquaintances, we forded a stream, with pipes playing and bayonets fixed, and crossing the promontory, marched towards Heraclea, which lies at the bottom of a little bay, and on the land side is defended by walls, though somewhat old and rent; and in a short time we marched in, making its streets of old dilapidated and worm-eaten timber houses; its domed mosques, and tall white-painted minars; its ruined palace of Vespasian; its Greek café; its Jewish bazaar; its whirling windmills; its stony and slippery thorough-

fares and old ruins of the Grecian days, ring to the sharp rat-tat of the British brass drum and to the *skirl* of three great Scottish war-pipes, from the chanter and nine deep drones of which our pipers poured the stirring 'Haughs of Cromdale,' with such effect, that the big-breeched, long-bearded, stupid-looking old Turks, who sat smoking on carpets and plat-forms at the doors and in the street, with yataghans and pistols in their red-shawl girdles; the lively Greeks, in tarboosh, short jacket, and blue inexpressibles; the sharp-visaged Jews and solemn Armenians, all opened their round black eyes, and threw up their hands in wonder, as we wheeled up towards the fortress in sections of threes, with arms sloped, our tartans waving, and black feathers flaunting in the wind.

A fry of little Osmanli gamins, barelegged, though wearing short wide breeches and the red fez with its long tassel, scampered about us, gamboling, uttering shrill cries of wonder, and styling us Janissaries, Arnaouts, Albanians, Giaours, and anything but Britons; and thus escorted, we reached the spacious Coumbazadjilar-Kislaci, or barrack of the Bombardiers, where a battalion of Turkish infantry was under arms to receive us; and with ranks open, presented arms in a manner which would have done no discredit to any other European troops, their drums beating, and the officers saluting with the edge of their Damascus sabres *outwards*—as it is turned inward to none but the Sultan himself.

The officers of this battalion had done their best to provide us with a handsome collation—so handsome and luxurious indeed that, after our recent hardship, the very memory of it is enough to make one whistle; and apart from certain peculiarities, we found them very pleasant, quaint, and conversible fellows, though very few of them could boast of education sufficient to entitle them to add the envied appendage of *effendi*

to their names. Their language, like that of the better class of Osmanli, was a mixture of Persian and Turkish, while that of their soldiers, like the jargon of the peasantry and boatmen of the Bosphorus, was Turkish alone: but in this these Orientals resemble ourselves; for in Britain the language of the *educated* people is alike distinct from the Scottish tongue and the dialects of the old Saxon.

‘Mac Innon, here is to our noble selves!’ said Catanagh, in Gaelic. ‘How do you like the Roumelian wine?’

‘It seems thin and poor.’

‘Dioul! but it is more pleasant for you to be drinking it here, than be imbibing sherry-cobblers and cocktail among the Yankees.’

‘True,’ said I with a sigh, as I thought of the convicted men of Glen Ora.

At this entertainment, the sulky old Yuze Bashi, warmed by the forbidden juice of the grape (of which being animated by our example he partook rather freely, notwithstanding the anathemas of him whose sabre cleft the moon in twain—Mohammed ‘the Holy Camel Driver’), seemed to conceive a sudden favour for me, and in his strange jargon of French and Arabic, with a few hiccups between, gave me an account of himself and of the Sultan’s service.

He was named, it would appear, Hadjee Hussein Ebn al Ajuz (or the son of the old woman), as his mother had been a cast-off slave of Mehemet Ali, the Viceroy of Egypt; and his paternal parent was supposed to be a certain enterprising corporal of Mame-jukes, who died with a bowstring about his neck for borrowing the silver lamps of a mosque at Suez. Little Hussein became a soldier, and fought at the battles of Koniah and Homs, in the war against Mehemet Ali; and in these affairs had cut off various heads, and stowed away innumerable Egyptian ears in the mysterious depths of his red Oriental breeches,

all to his own great satisfaction and contentment—as a head was worth a piastre, and a pair of ears sold before Reschid Pasha's tent for ten paras.

At the rout of Koniah he had saved the *only* pair of Turkish colours which escaped the furious advance of the Egyptian infantry—viz., those of Scherif Bey's regiment—by stuffing them into his voluminous regimental breeches, wherein various bullets lodged harmlessly thereafter during the retreat; for this and other acts of devotion, he was rewarded by the government of Rodosdchig, a little fortress a few miles from Heraclea; and after making the pilgrimage, partly by steamer, to Mecca; after drinking of the Zemzem well, and of that which flows at Midian wherè Mousa watered the flocks at Jethro, and rolled from its mouth a stone which the united strength of Jethro's seven shepherds failed to move; after kissing the holy Kaaba, and flinging a few stones at an imaginary devil, he returned in a mingled state of beer and beatitude to his fortress. There, since 1842, he had spread his carpet, reposed in the lap of a charming odalisque, and smoked his chibouque in contentment and peace; and there—nathless his being a Hadjèè, and the builder of a little gilt mosque—he drank and swore like any enlightened Christian of the western world.

Fat, cunning as Lucifer, sensual as a sybarite, and intensely illiberal, he was a fair specimen of the old Turk of the worst kind; and if the curve be the line of beauty, then the shins of Hussein, like those of most Osmanlies, were perfection. His ears were set high on his head; his forehead was low and narrow; his eyebrows nearly met, and thus betokened a cruel and revengeful nature. He gave me, however, a little insight into the economy of military life in the sultan's service.

'Our regiments,' said he, 'all consist of four battalions, and each battalion is commanded by a colo

agassi (major), and has one standard. A colonel or lieutenant-colonel commands the whole, with one great standard—the banner of the prophet—upon whose name be glory! Each battalion has its squad of slaves, who carry water on the march and bear the wounded from the field of battle. So strict is the etiquette maintained in our service by officers, that they never dine with subordinates in rank; hence the jovial messes of Frangistan excite only our wonder; and to see a great Mir Alai, who commands four thousand bayonets, drinking wine with a poor little devil of an ensign, would astound the whole Turkish army. Even in the street a superior officer always walks half a pace before an inferior; thus I have seen five officers all walking along a street at once in *echelon*, and maintaining a conversation at the same time. None among us wear beards under the rank of general—with a few exceptions. A junior officer always rises and salutes a senior on the latter entering a room, and cannot seat himself again without his permission, or appear before him without his fez, belt, and sabre. Our Turkish privates receive about four shillings *Ingleez* per month; but our lord the Sultan provides for their food and clothing over and above their pay.'

I thanked the old fellow for this information, which did not impress me highly with the position of an officer under his Majesty Abdul-Medjid; and after a time Jack Belton and I, tired of the entertainment, and of hearing lamentations for the fall of Kars, and description of a palace of silver—solid silver—which the Sultan was to build in London when he visited the Queen of the *Ingleez*; so, carefully loading our revolvers, and placing them in our belts, we took our regimental swords and dirks, and set forth for a ramble in the dusk, regardless of the warnings of Catanagh and the Mir Alai Said, who told us that strangers were never safe from assassination and rob-

bery after sunset. However, we took with us Callum Dhu, who, in addition to his bayonet, carried a heavy cudgel cut in the wood of *Coilchro*; and a regular adventure of some kind—no matter what—was the very thing we required to enliven us a little, after our long sea-voyage, and our recent bibulous *déjeûné* with the Turkish officers.

When off duty, honest Callum was seldom a moment from my side. The Gael have a proverb, which says, ‘affectionate to a man is his friend, but a foster-brother is the life-blood of his heart;’ and faithful as one of my own blood could have been, was the gallant Mac Ian to me!

As we stumbled along the narrow and muddy streets, we soon remarked the total absence of everything that resembled a petticoat, for the Turkish females in their hideous wide pantaloons and ghostly yashmacks were unlike aught that was human, as they flitted among the few shops which the town contained. The sun had long since set, and the night was dark. There is no twilight in Turkey, where the sunshine and darkness succeed each other suddenly at certain seasons.

‘I miss nothing so much here as the petticoat, God bless it!’ said Belton, ‘for you must allow, Allan, that it is a very interesting and somewhat mysterious garment.’

‘Charmingly so! and the more its amplitude, the more its mystery,’ said I.

‘I don’t half like those abominable Turkish trousers on the women; but it is the very devil never to see their faces! We will get over that difficulty somehow—for to be sad about trifles——’

‘Hush, for heaven’s sake, don’t sing here like a wandering Arab,’ said I, interrupting the invariable song (that Jack gave us nightly with the third allowance of wine) as we found ourselves before an illuminated Khan.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE KHAN.

BEFORE the façade of this edifice, a row of illuminated lanterns of various gaudy colours hung on orange-trees, while through its open door and arches of trellis-work came the hum of voices, a warm glow of light that gushed into the pitchy obscurity without, and the perfume of roasting coffee, with the fragrant odour of stewing kabobs. The building was spacious, and contained every requisite comfort as some one says somewhere, 'but clean sheets and a Christian bed.'

Entering, we found a number of Turks, all well armed of course, seated on mats round a species of raised divan; they were smoking and were attended by long-haired Greek girls, who were tripping about with their beautiful feet bare and stockingless, supplying these heavy-brained but true Believers with coffee in diminutive cups, or tobacco bruised with apples for their long chibouques, paper for cigarettes, and kabobs on wooden skewers, with caviar, olives, and cheese.

As we entered, all raised their dark and glittering eyes to scan us, by the light of a huge gilt lantern that hung from a dome in the centre of the Khan.

'Salaam aleikum,' said we, touching our caps.

'With you be Allah,' muttered all present; and the keeper of the Khan, a lively Greek in wide blue breeches, a tight brown jacket, a white apron and glittering skull cap, hurried forward to attend us.

As an excuse to remain and to observe the company, rather than from any necessity for refreshment, we asked for coffee and a slight supper. In a few minutes we had the first, black and fragrant, with milk, hot cake, and a preserve of grapes boiled with

walnuts, all placed before us upon two little trays in a corner of the apartment, where a charming young Greek girl, with her black hair plaited over her delicate white ears, arrayed the mats and cushions for us; then cigars were brought, and seating ourselves, we proceeded to refresh and inspect the goodly company.

Little or no notice was taken of us by these lumbering and ponderous Orientals, for whom even the emotion of curiosity would be too exciting. Yet the large and crowded hall of this Roumelian khan presented one of the most striking scenes I have witnessed.

Therein seemed all the races of the Turkish empire at coffee and chibouques.

The old Effendi, grave, solemn, pretentious, and stupid; his turban white as snow, or green, to mark his descent from the Holy Prophet; his beard black as night; his nose fierce and aquiline; his eyes sparkling, and his heavy moustache curling over the amber mouth of his long chibouque; his scarlet nether garments and buff boots; his ample shawl, long caftan, and gilded dagger completing the picture. The noble Albanian, in his red jacket embroidered with blue cord; his ample white kilt (like ours, above the knee); his red-banded hose; his yataghan, musket, and brass-butted pistols. The sombre Armenian, with his long beard and flowing robes, his grave and respectful visage surmounted by an enormous kalpec of black felt. The handsome and lively Greek, unabashed by the presence of his Turkish tyrants, and all chatter, fun, and gaiety; closely shaved and bare-legged; with a blue turban, short trousers, and black shoes. The hardy Islesman in his shaggy capote; the modern Turkish artillery officer, in his tight surtout with gold fringe epaulettes; his little fez, with its brass plate; his red trousers strapped tightly under French glazed boots; his gold belt and keen Damascus sabre—

oriental in face, but decidedly occidental in dress, and almost in idea; for the corps of *Topchis* were all organised *à la Franque* by the Sultan Selim. There, too, was a fierce and scowling Tartar—dropped Heaven knows from where—but armed to the teeth, with dagger, pistols, bow and arrows, toasting dough-balls in the brazier. A moolah and a dervish in their grey felt caps that taper like an extinguisher: and lastly, there was a disgusting Stamboul Jew, crushed in aspect, cunning in eye, with contracted brow and blubber lip; avaricious in soul and unyielding in purpose. A few black slaves, hideous in face and scanty in attire, but very intent on *backsish*, may complete this sketch of a picturesque group—or if aught be wanting, let me mention the powerful form of Callum Dhu, in his belted plaid, green kilt, and white sporran, as he sat hobbing and nobbing with a dervish over a dish of mutton ham; though honest Callum knew as much of the language and ideas of the dervish as he did about the nature and habits of ‘the Dodo and its kindred.’

The conversation generally consisted of occasional and disjointed remarks, with long pauses between.

The war was less spoken of than the prices of tobacco, maize, rice, silk, cotton, and wheat, and other products of the land; but Jack and I could glean that they were not a little proud of the circumstance, that the little Turkish war-steamer, the *Mahmoudieh*, and a Hadriote brig, by steering in another direction, had escaped the storm which threw our vessel on the reefs of Palegrossa.

‘Each of these fellows is quite a bijou,’ said Jack Belton; ‘I would give the world to have them all at home and comfortably ensconced in a handsome caravan, and to become their Barnum throughout Britain.’

‘What are the news from Europe?’ asked the Turkish officer of *Topchis*, in French.

‘Very unimportant,’ replied Belton; ‘in the west, the eyes of all men are turned to the east, and nothing is heard of, thought of, or spoken of, but this protracted siege of Sebastopol—while diplomatists seem to be splitting straws at Paris and Vienna.’

‘Splitting straws?’ pondered the literal Turk. ‘Glory be to Allah! A strong employment for generals and viziers—have they no grooms to chop their straw?’

A sudden commotion in the street without, and the irregular tramp of men marching, attracted the attention of all the loiterers in the khan; and as several Turks left their pipes and mats, and with their hands on their weapons, hurried to the door, Belton and I sprang up to see what was the matter.

The gleam of arms and the blaze of torches lightened in the dark and muddy street, as a party of six Turkish marines, in their blue uniforms and red fez caps, with crossed belts and fixed bayonets, escorted a Greek prisoner towards the barrack of the Bombardiers. After saying a few words to his guard, the prisoner paused at the open window of the khan, which faced the street, and begged ‘a draught of cold water in the name of God.’

The keeper was about to give it, but paused; for the delinquent was his countryman, and the eyes of many armed Turks were fixed with a lowering expression on both.

During this brief pause, I scrutinized the prisoner.

He was a young man, as nearly as I could judge, about five-and-twenty: his features were no less remarkable for their manly beauty than singular in their character. His long hair, which hung in heavy locks from under his little blue Greek cap, were black as night; his eyes and his smart moustache were jet; but his features were wan, sickly, and as ghastly as those of a corpse. His attire was the

splendidly-embroidered blue jacket, white kilt, and bandaged hose of an Albanian officer—but all frayed, torn, and disfigured. His appearance was singularly striking, and that nothing might be wanting to complete it, and excite our sympathy, on his wrists were two massive steel fetters, which were joined by a heavy iron chain.

Again he pointed to his parched lips, and hoarsely begged a cup of water.

From the hand of a Turk who stood near us I snatched a cup of wine—that Thracian wine which Pliny commended in the happier days of Greece—and handed it to the poor Albanian. A glance of deep gratitude flashed from his dark expressive eyes, as, thirstily and joyfully, he drained the cup and returned it to me with a graceful bow. With a few words of apology, I handed it to the Turk, but that personage drew back with a scowl on his brow, and, with a hand on his poniard, tossed the cup away.

The Greek kissed both his fettered hands to me, and retired: the fixed bayonets flashed again around him, and the dark group disappeared; but his glance of thankfulness was still before me, and it sunk deep into my heart.

‘Bono!’ said an old Moolah, who was named Moustapha, in approval of what I had done; ‘’twas a good action, Frank, and thy better angel will write it ten times down in Heaven.’

‘Who is this Greek?’ I inquired, of the fat old Yuze Bashi Hussein, who at that moment entered the khan, shouting imperiously, ‘Hola, Boba!—Here woman, coffee!’—and the speed with which his wants were supplied, almost before he had seated his amplitude upon a carpet, showed that our captain of Bombardiers was not a person to be trifled with. He hated Greeks, but his animosity was confined only to the males of that race. Though he scowled at the keeper of the khan, he leered at his wife who

attended us. She was a pretty woman of Scio, who wore the grotesque costume of that island—a braided red jacket, with a short padded green skirt. On her head was a small cap, from which hung a veil on the sides of her face and gracefully down her back; a circlet of Paphian diamonds, or rock crystals, from Baffo, glittered round her pretty neck, on which the huge eyes of the Yuze Bashi gloated from time to time. But to resume—‘Who is this Greek?’ I asked.

‘The worst of traitors:’ grumbled Hussein. ‘Every one who comes into this world is touched by the devil, who attends at his birth *unseen*; but Inshallah! Shaitaun must have taken a rough hold of our Greek! He was an officer—a mulazim in the regiment of Albanians who garrisoned this place before we came here.’

‘An officer!’ I reiterated, in astonishment.

‘And chained thus!’ added Belton, in the same tone.

‘Now, by the seventh paradise, but you astonish me!’ said the Captain Hussein, opening his great oriental eyes. ‘Do you forget that the man is only a Greek, and that the Greeks, like the Russian, are all beasts—as Zerdusht the Prophet was, who married his grandmother, and who will have a bridle of fire in his jaws at the last day.’

‘His crime—’

‘Was desertion. He was stationed at the battery near the mouth of the harbour, and fled one night in an open boat, taking with him four Albanian soldiers. They rowed across the Sea of Marmora to the isle of that name; and after lurking for a time among its marble quarries, feeding on nuts like so many squirrels, they sailed over to Natolia, where they were taken in the Sangiac of Bigah, and made prisoners. The four Albanian soldiers were shot on the instant; but he has been sent here, on board the *Mahmoudieh*—

yonder war-steamer now at anchor in the bay—and to-morrow, before the sun is at its height, he shall be shot to death in the Valley of the Little Mosque.’

‘After all he has endured?’

‘Poor fellow!’

‘Mashallah! Human life is only a deceitful enjoyment,’ replied Hussein, who was an inveterate quoter of the Koran; ‘but may I never see Paradise if his story is not a strange one; I shall tell it to you—’tis a tale, like any other, and I heard it all, being one of the court-martial at Bigah which sentenced him to die.’

After draining his little coffee-cup, refilling the capacious bowl of his pipe, and taking a few prodigious whiffs, the Yuze Bashi related the following story, which—with the reader’s permission—I will rehearse in my own words; and while he spoke, the noble figure, stately presence, pale beauty, and splendid eyes of the manly Albanian Greek, seemed ever and painfully to be before me.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

STORY OF THE GREEK LIEUTENANT.

SIXTEEN years ago, when the Allied Powers united to assist the Sultan in his conflict with old Mehemet Ali, then pasha of Egypt, and nominally his vassal, the insurgent garrison of Acre was successfully bombarded, as all the world knows, by the British fleet, under the flag of Commodore Sir Charles Napier, who on that occasion distinguished himself with his usual skill, bravery, and intrepidity. The fortress was taken in a few hours; but the destruction and slaughter were fearfully augmented by the explosion

of a magazine of powder and live bombs, by which the venerable ramparts of St. John were reduced to a pile of blackened ruins. The roar of the exploding powder was appalling; from the low headland of Acre there ascended into the pure blue Syrian sky a mighty column of smoke and dust. The lonely Kishon was startled in its stony bed; every mosque, khan, and bazaar in the city rocked to its foundation, while the whole waters of the bay were agitated by the concussion and rolled in foamy ripples on the rocks of Cape Carmel.

In that explosion one thousand five hundred brave soldiers who had escaped the dangers and withstood the horrors of the bombardment were in a moment swept into eternity.

Of the many who perished, none was more universally regretted by the Egyptian garrison, and even by the British commander, than Demetrius Vidimo, a Greek captain, who served the Pasha, in mere hatred of the Sultan and of the Turks, who were the tyrants of his people—a hatred in which he was sustained by his wife, who was the daughter of a Sciote patriot of high rank. Demetrius had participated in all the horrors of the Greek struggle for independence, when the men of Missolonghi, after a year's siege of hardship unparalled, and after defying all the united power of Turkey and of Egypt—after having a hundred thousand bombs and balls shot among them, buried themselves in the ruins of the city. He had seen the pyramid of Grecian skulls that rose near the grave of Bozzaris; he had seen the horrors of the massacre of Scio, when fifty thousand frantic Turks drenched the loveliest of the Ægean Isles in blood, slaying sixty thousand Sciotes in its streets, and carrying thirty thousand into hopeless slavery. He had seen the manly boys and beautiful girls of Greece sold at a dollar a-head in the streets of Smyrna. He had seen their mothers ripped open by the Turkish

sabre and the handjjar, and the children torn reeking from the womb and dashed against the walls of Athens, for the wildest beasts of Africa or India were mild as tender lambs when compared to the merciless, brutal, and unglutted soldiery of Mahmoud the Second. He had seen the slave-market of Stamboul crowded with Grecian captives—brave men struggling and raving in their futile vengeance against the Osmanlies; and women—the pale virgin and the weeping mother—shrinking in the agonies of separation from all they loved, and in horror of their lewd and sensual purchasers, who bought them from the troops for the value of twelve cartridges, a pipe-stick, or a piastre, and dragged them away to slavery, and worse than slavery, in their harems, dens, and anderuns at Stamboul.

He had seen all these things, and the soul of Demetrius was fired by a thirst for undying vengeance upon the oppressors of his people.

He was an Albanian, and chief of one of the eight tribes of the Scutari mountains. Hardy, brave, reckless to a fault, and fired alike by enthusiasm and revenge, he had distinguished himself on a thousand occasions against the Turks; and at the previous storming of Acre—eight years before—when Ibrahim Pasha, at the head of forty thousand Egyptians and Arabs, besieged it for six months, the Grecian Captain Vidimo in every assault was conspicuous, both by his bravery and his picturesque Albanian costume; for wherever death was to be found or danger sought and glory won, there towered the figure of Vidimo, in his skull-cap, with his long hair flowing under it; his fleecy capote flung loosely over his shoulder; his white kilt and scarlet buskins, leading on the van of battle, and handling in rapid succession the long musket, the crooked sabre, deadly yataghan and pistols, which are the native weapons of the Albanian mountaineer.

But he perished in the explosion at Acre, and so there was an end of him, greatly to the regret of his comrades, and very much to the grief of the Yuze Bashi Hussein, who had set his whole heart upon taking the valiant Greek dead or alive, and laying his head at the feet of Mahmoud the Second, to claim the promised reward.

The Turks were furious! not even his body was to be found, though the Sultan had offered a princely sum for it; and amid all the heads hewn off after the bombardment, there was not one found that would pass muster as having belonged to Vidimo, whose face was well known by a peculiar sabre cut which he received at the defence of Missolonghi in 1826.

After the capture, Ali Pasha, and Hussein Ebn al Ajuz, with other officers of the corps of Bombardiers, enjoyed to their hearts' content the pleasure of slicing off the woolly heads of the dark Egyptians, or stuffing their pockets with tawny ears, and with something better still—the various good things to be picked up in the bazaars, the great khan, the Franciscan monastery, the Greek church, the Armenian synagogue, and other places where the unbelieving dogs of Jews and Christians presumed to worship in any other fashion than that prescribed by the holy camel-driver.

During his minute researches in a certain flat-roofed mansion near the Castle of Iron, the enterprising Hussein and several of his soldiers discovered a female of great beauty, with two children, a boy and a girl, concealed in an alcove; and while the poor little ones with terror in their wild black eyes, screamed and clung to the skirt of their pale mother, the soldiers of Hussein, with brandished weapons, and fierce Turkish imprecations, dragged them forth. The woman was too handsome to be sacrificed; so Hussein, who had a special eye to female loveliness, saved her at once, by sabring one of his Majesty's

soldiers and pistolling another, to cool the ardour of the rest; but now, a dozen or more of Turkish officers, flushed alike by blood, which is enjoined by the Koran, and by wine, which is forbidden by it, crowded into the apartment.

The beauty of the captive inflamed them all, and a furious contention ensued, as to who should possess her.

She offered a thousand Xeriffs as the ransom of her honour and her children's lives; but the princely guerdon was received and rent from her, with shouts of derision.

Then Ali Pasha asserting his senior rank, seized her rudely.

'Hold!' she exclaimed, in a piercing voice and with a nobility of gesture which made even *him* draw back; 'I am a Christian woman—the daughter of a Sciote noble, and the widow of him who died to-day, Demetrius Vidimo, and these are his children, Constantine and Iola—we shall die together!' and with these words, she took from her bosom a coral cross and tied it round the neck of her little boy, believing him to be in more imminent danger than her daughter.

Again the Turks uttered a fierce derisive shout; but stood irresolute, when confronted by this Greek woman, whose aspect awed them.

She was clad in black, as being indicative of her fallen fortune; a snow-white kerchief covered her head, and gave a Madonna-like expression to her deep, black, thoughtful eyes, and soft but marble features; for she possessed, in its greatest purity, all the classic beauty of the ancient Greek women—a clear complexion, and long thick tresses, dark as the northern night. She was lovely, feminine, and sad in her expression, for in her time she had seen those things which were more than enough to banish smiles for ever from her face; yet, unblanched by past

sorrow or by present danger, her lips were—strange to say—alluringly rosy, as her teeth were dazzlingly white.

Her form was tall and full, and maternity had given a charming roundness to the slenderness of figure which usually falls to the lot of Greek women.

Inflamed by the desire of possessing a captive so fair, every Turk stood by with pistol and sabre in hand, resolved to die rather than yield her to another. The stern altercation was fierce and noisy; and there amid that terrible group, pale, and, like Niobe, all in tears, with her younglings clinging to her skirts, the widowed mother stood, trembling in her soul, for she knew that such mercy as tigers accord would be the mercy given to her.

‘Since all cannot possess—by everything that is holy! let us all destroy her!’ cried Hussein, levelling a pistol.

‘Allah—Allah! Amaum! Amaum!’ cried Ali Pasha, and the crowd of Turks. A confused discharge of pistols took place, and pierced by more than twenty balls, the mother fell dead with her blood spouting over her children, and so ended the dispute; for the sun set at that moment, and they all hastened out, to kneel and say the *Salât al Moghreb*, or evening prayer, so Hussein was left in possession alike of the dead body, of the children, and the premises.

After rifling the corpse of its rings and jewels, he took away the orphans to make slaves of them.

Perceiving that the girl, Iola, then in her sixth year, promised to be beautiful, he kept her; the boy, Constantine, he gave to Ali Pasha, colonel of the Bombardiers, who made a soldier of him, and in time he became a lieutenant of Albanians in the service of the Sultan—but he never forgot the cause for which his father fought—vengeance for Greece, or the death which his mother died; and thus, seeking the first opportunity of leaving a service so hateful as that of

Abdul Medjid, he had deserted from Heraclea; but was retaken, tried and sent back by the *Muhmoudieh* steam-ship, and on the morrow was to die. The cry of the exterminating angel would be heard, and an Unbeliever would perish like a withered bud, or like a palm-tree struck by lightning.

I cannot express the aversion we felt for the old Yuze Bashi, who with singular coolness related the part he had borne in this barbarous episode of the Egyptian revolt; and which, with occasional whiffs of his chibouque, he related as quietly as one might do the account of a little shooting excursion, or the result of a pic-nic party, and nothing more.

‘And Iola—the daughter,’ I asked; ‘what became of her?’

‘That I cannot tell you,’ said he; ‘she is never named to me now.’

‘Does she know of the fate that hangs over her brother?’

‘No!’

‘She is dead, then?’

‘To him—and to the world, at least.’

‘Which means that she is—’

‘Married—exactly.’

‘So inquiries might only be unpleasant, if not dangerous?’

‘Yes.’

‘But when her brother is to die?’—began Belton.

‘She shall never know of it,’ replied Hussein. ‘What useful end would be served by conveying the information to her. She would weep, and the tears of women are a great annoyance now, since we cannot apply the bastinado without permission from a Kadi or Moolah. Bah! this Constantine Vidimo is only a Greek, and one ball will kill him: in a moment all will be over.’

‘Only a Greek!’ reiterated Belton, who had been

poring over the *Corsair* on our outward voyage; 'are not the Greeks human beings?'

'Scarcely—know you not, O Frank! that the Lord of the world hath sealed up their hearts and their hearing, and veiled their sight by a dimness.'

Tired of the Yuze Bashi and his barbarous ideas, we rose to bid him farewell and leave the khan; but he, having a wholesome terror of Ghoules, Guebres, and Genii in the dark, resolved on accompanying us to our quarters; for he too had rooms in the Coumbazadjilar-Kislaci. Thus we found the impossibility of shaking him off, and as we stumbled on, arm-in-arm with this epauletted assassin, followed step for step by Callum Dhu, through the dark, muddy, and unpaved streets of Heraclea, he told us various other pretty little episodes of himself and Ali Pasha.

The name of the latter must be familiar to the reader, as being the Turkish General of Brigade whose infamous abduction and murder of a young and beautiful Greek girl in the suburbs of Varna lately roused the indignation of the French commandant, by whose humane exertions, for the FIRST time in Oriental history, an Osmanli was tried for the murder of a Christian; and consequently Ali Pasha, the Brigadier; Lieutenant Mohammed Aga, his aide-de-camp; Hussein Aga, his steward; and Corporal Moustapha, appeared before a tribunal, which, of course, acquitted them; for every hair in the beard of a true Believer is worth all the benighted souls in Christendom.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE EXECUTION.

WITH the melancholy story of Constantine Vidimo in my mind, the reader may imagine with what emo-

tion I heard the Turkish drums beating in the barrack-yard for the punishment parade next morning, and our three pipers playing the *gathering*, for our little detachment, as a portion of the Allied troops, had to attend the painful scene.

Callum Dhu, now a smart and active soldier, appeared punctually to accoutre me with my pipe-clayed belt, sword, &c., and while the sun was yet below the sea, I issued into the shady square of the Coumbazadjilar-Kislaci, where our sergeants were calling the roll, and where the battalion of the Mir Alai Said, with short blue tunics, scarlet trousers, and tarbooshes, were falling in by companies, while a few *topchis*, or gunners, were being slowly and laboriously paraded and mustered by the ponderous Yuze Bashi Hussein.

The parade was soon formed, and the two commanding officers, Mir Alai Said and Major Catanagh, mutually complimented each other on the appearance of their men; and, in truth, this Turkish battalion, in efficiency, order, and discipline, would have done no discredit to any army in Europe. Their faces were dark and fierce, keen and Asiatic; their words of command, like their names, sounded wild and barbaric, as *ours* must have been to them; but, with a few exceptions, every manœuvre and tactic were modelled after our own.

While expressing astonishment and even merriment at the large plumed bonnets, hairy sporrans, and bare knees of our men, the Mir Alai was delighted by their athletic figures. The jewelled dinks, claw-pistols, and basket-hilted claymores of the officers excited his interest, and he vowed by the beard of the Prophet that he had never before seen weapons of such a fashion or of finer workmanship.

‘Stout fellows all,’ said he, in strange English, as he patted the shoulder of Callum, who was a flank

file; 'their hands will soon be hardened by carrying the brass-butted musket.'

'If they do not become food for powder and the Russian worms, colonel,' replied Catanagh.

The sun rose above the sea of Marmora, and at that instant the shrill wild voice of the muezzin from the lofty minaret of an adjacent mosque pierced the silence and purity of the morning with the summons to early prayer.

Then the Turkish battalion, which had been standing at ease, with ordered arms, and formed in open columns of companies at quarter distance, bent their heads in prayer, and many produced their beads of cedar-wood, and commenced their orisons with a fervour that impressed us with no small respect for these poor Moslem soldiers; but after a time the sharp drum beat a roll, the whole battalion started to 'attention'—the bayonets were fixed—the arms 'shouldered,' and as the *right* was assigned to us, the whole presented arms, with drums beating, and their single colour flying, as we marched out to the place of execution, with our pipes playing. The Osmanlies followed, with their brass band, cymbals, bells, tambourines, and triangles, performing something that was meant for a march; but its measure was more wild and barbaric than pleasing.

The morning was brilliant; on our left the sea of Marmora shone like an ocean of glass, and the rakish little Greek caiques were shooting out upon its bosom from the shady creeks and sunny inlets, where they had been anchored overnight.

Marching out by an ancient gate, which was encrusted by carving and old inscriptions, and covered by ivy and acanthus-leaves, we traversed a causeway coeval perhaps with the days of Zeuxis and the palace of Vespasian, and reached a little hollow, which was surrounded by groves of the olive, the emblem of peace—the tree which Minerva gave to Greece, and

which, as the poets say, was grasped by Latona in her maternal throes.

It was a lonely place, and no sound was heard there but the coo of the wild pigeon or the flapping of a stork's wing, as he sat on a prostrate column, the rich Corinthian capital of which was almost buried among luxuriant creepers, weeds, and wild flowers. In this valley stood a little gilded mosque, having a shining dome, and two taper minarets, like gigantic candlesticks, the tops of which, to complete the resemblance, seemed to be lighted; but this was merely the sun's rays tipping with fire their bulbous-shaped roofs of polished brass. Around towered a group of solemn cypresses, which cast their shadows on the marble slabs, the green mounds, the turbaned headstones, and gilded sarcophagi that marked where many a true Believer lay.

A little apart from these, a new grave freshly dug was yawning darkly among the green grass and dewy morning flowers.

Beside it knelt the Greek officer, and near him were twelve Turkish soldiers, with their bayonets fixed.

As we halted in the valley, and formed three sides of a hollow square, a bell jangled in the mosque, and the Hafiz Moustapha, and moolah or priest, wearing long robes and a turban of green cloth, came slowly forth, bearing the Koran in his hand; and now a chill fell on all our hearts, for to us this scene and all these preparations were solemn, strange, and new.

I gazed with deep interest at the poor young Greek, who was still upon his knees, and who seemed to have given up all his soul to God in prayer and outpouring of the heart—and as I surveyed his face, so pure and cold, so noble and severe in its classic beauty, all the episodes of his dark and terrible story came before me; and at that time I felt an abhor-

rence of all Osmanli in general, and our bulbous-shaped Yuze Bashi in particular. Of all who were present his visage expressed the least concern, for to him the shooting of a Greek was infinitely of less moment than the shooting of a crow.

The poor Albanian!

On rising from his orisons, he looked calmly about him; but nowhere save in our own ranks did he meet with eyes of sympathy. Perhaps we had somewhat of a fellow-feeling for a bare-kneed soldier whose garb so nearly resembled our own, for the white camise of the mountaineer of *Albania* and the tartan kilt of the mountaineer of *Albany* are as nearly identical as the old tradition of that mutual descent from one stock would make us, a tradition strangely corroborated by the old classic names of Hector, Æneas, Helen, and Constantine being still preserved among the Highland clans. But enough of this legendary fustian.

Constantine Vidimo was drawing nearer our ranks, when again the bell rang in the mosque; and shrinking back to the side of the newly-dug grave, he folded his arms and gazed fiercely at the Turks.

The spiritual consolation of a Greek priest of his own religion was denied him in this terrible hour, the bitterness of which the old wretch named Moolah Moustapha left nothing unsaid to enhance, for he was an ancient Mohammedan, who could remember the 'good old times' when the true Bel'ever had the power of forcing every Christian dog, however high in rank, to sweep the muddy streets of Stamboul before him at his caprice and whim.

With his hands crossed on the Koran, which he pressed to his breast; with his long white beard spreading over it, and his long green robe falling in heavy folds from his shoulders to the grass, he faced the Turkish troops, and strung together a number of disjointed quotations from the Koran, which, as

Belton whispered, were mere incentives to bloodshed and bigotry.

‘Oh, true Believers! wage war against such of the Infidels as are near you—let them find no security in you, and know that God is only with those who fear him. Should the divine vengeance fall upon you either by day or by night, believe that the wicked have hastened it upon you. The Believer dieth happy, a possessor of Eden, through which flows rivers of wine and sherbet; he is adorned with bracelets of fine gold, and he is clothed in silken garments of fine green cloth; glory surrounds him; he sleeps in a couch of pearl, with his head pillowed on the soft bosom of a black-eyed girl, and his reward is to dwell for ever in the abode of delight; but *thou*, oh Greek! after appearing at the last day, chained to the geni who seduced thee, shall broil for ever in the dark caves of everlasting fire—a poor bubble, swept down the burning torrents of the River of Woe!’

To all this I could perceive that the Turkish soldiers listened with considerable impatience; for there is, I believe, a natural antipathy springing up between the military and the religious of the Ottoman empire. Being rough, and not ungenerous, the Turkish soldier despises the moolahs, muftis, imaums, dervishes, calanders, and fakirs, for their cunning, avarice, hypocrisy, and secret immorality; while they, in turn, rail at and preach against the soldiers for wearing tight pantaloons, relinquishing the turban for the fez, learning to drink raki, and generally for following a little too closely the customs of Europe.

‘Have a righteous fear of Mohammed, oh, Believers!’ resumed the Hafiz Moustapha, ‘and you will die in the faith, and find the Koran the only sure cord to heaven; but,’ he added, turning his face to us, for this moolah had been a soldier—a *corporal of Grenadiers*—in his youth, as the reader shall learn

more at length; 'but may the holy Prophet, who sees all that night veils and day enlightens—who knoweth and heareth all things, bless these infidels, who have come to fight for the land of Islam!'

'Amaum! amaum!' muttered the Mir Alai Said, as he waved his sabre impatiently to the mulazim commanding the party of twelve soldiers, whose muskets were to despatch the prisoner, and a chaoush (sergeant) who stood on their flank, armed with a pistol, carefully examining its lock and priming.

An onboshi (corporal) approached with a handkerchief to bind up the eyes of the Greek lieutenant; but scorning alike to kneel or be blindfolded, he stood boldly confronting the firing party at the distance of thirty yards, fearlessly and firm. He drew a cross from his breast—the coral cross of Hussein's savage story—the cross his mother had tied around his neck at Acre, and after kissing it, he held it up in our view, and said in somewhat broken English—

'It is the emblem of your faith—the religion in which I die. Let not these Turkish swine defile it when I am gone. Who among you Christian men will take it from my hand, and keep it as the last gift of a wretch who never knew what it was to be happy?'

'I will!' exclaimed I, starting forward.

He grasped my hand, and his beautiful dark eyes flashed with dusky fire, as he waved his right arm with pride, and exclaimed—

'Now, dogs—I am ready for you!'

His aspect and bearing were splendid.

Stern and unyielding as the Prometheus of Æschylus, braving the fury of his tyrants, and scorning to sue for mercy or stoop his haughty head, the noble Greek stood before the levelled muskets that were to destroy him.

'*Nishan ale!*' (ready—present) cried the Turkish commander of the platoon.

‘*Atesh!*’ (fire)

Flame flashed from the twelve iron tubes; twelve bullets whistled shrilly past us, and the reports rang like thunder in the narrow valley, scaring the stork from the ruined column, and the wild pigeons from the olive-grove. The smoke curled upward in the pure atmosphere, and the poor Greek officer lay prone on the grass, breathing heavily, with blood pouring in streams from his throat and bosom. Three balls had pierced him, yet he was not dead.

Now something like a groan ran along our ranks, for at that moment the chaoush with the pistol approached the dying man, placed the muzzle to his ear, and coolly and deliberately blew out his brains!

So ended this scene of blood.

* * * *

Our bagpipes yelled again, and the Turkish drums and flutes rang merrily in that valley of olives, as we wheeled from hollow square into open column, and breaking into sections, marched back to the barracks; but my heart felt sick and sore, and oblivious of the martial display, I thought only of the coral cross which I had taken from the dead man's hand, and of the barbarous mode in which I had seen his mutilated and coffinless remains thrust into the grave, and hastily earthed up, by the water-carriers, or Nubian slaves, of the Mir Alai Said's regiment.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

IN 'ORDERS,' FOR DUTY.

AFTER this event, for some days I avoided the Yuze Bashi Hussein, for whom I had conceived a horror in consequence of the tragic story of Constantine Vidimo, whose fate made a deep impression on the

whole of our little mess, but on none more than myself—for I had, as related, addressed him twice, and it was to me that his relaxing hand had slowly yielded up the coral cross, which I resolved to preserve as a *souvenir* of our service in the East. We ceased to invite the Yuze Bashi to mess, where his bulbous figure, preposterous and goat-like beard, diminutive scarlet fez, frogged surtout, long crooked sabre, and comically ferocious visage, were an endless source of amusement, wit, and caricature; but judge of my annoyance when I found that, in consequence of this modern Bashaw having conceived a vehement fancy or friendship for me, I was to be separated from the jovial society of my brother-officers, and to be detached—on his especial application—with one sergeant, one piper, and thirty rank and file, to the castle of Rodoschig, his military government or commandery, which lay about thirty miles distant.

‘For what purpose is this detachment detailed?’ I asked rather angrily at mess, on the day I read the announcement in orders, as being the will and pleasure of our Brevet-Major commanding.

‘To strengthen the stout captain’s little garrison of Topchis.’

‘But why?’

‘They are in danger of an attack from certain armed and insurrectionary Greeks, whom the secret agency of some Russian priests are omitting no means of inflaming and exciting to discontent against the authority of the Sultan and his Pashas.’

‘Why are Turks not sent—the Mir Alai has eight hundred of them here in garrison?’

‘He does us the honour to believe that red-coats will more completely awe the malcontent Greeks.’

‘In this service I may get a slash from a yataghan, or a ball from a brass-barrelled pistol sans credit and honour.’

‘Not at all,’ said Belton; ‘either will be quite as

honourable as a shot from the Rifle Pits, or a splinter from a Whistling Dick out of the Redan.'

'Which, by-the-by, none of us are likely to see,' grumbled Catanagh, draining a long glass of Kirkklissa wine, with an angry sigh.

By this time our Major had communicated with the British military authorities at Constantinople, detailing the loss of the *Vestal*, and that he had obtained quarters for his men in the Bombardiers' Barracks at Heraclea, or *Erekli*, as the Turks name it; and, by a messenger, he was instructed to remain in his present cantonnement until further orders, as there was every prospect now of hostilities ceasing, and our presence would not be required with Sir Colin Campbell and the Highland Brigade.

At this time, January 3rd, 1856, we had fifty-eight thousand British soldiers in the Crimea; a Council of War, composed of British and French general officers, had assembled in Paris, and Russia had accepted the Austrian propositions as a basis for the negotiation of a peace. The despatch to the Major concluded by stating, that the French had blown up Fort St. Nicolas at Sebastopol, where our miners were busy destroying the magnificent docks. With this long document going the round of the mess-table, we gulped down our disappointment and the Roumelian wine together, on the evening before I marched with this devil of a Yuze Bashi to his castle of Rodosdchig; and our enthusiastic hopes of a protracted war—a war that from the mouth of the Danube would roll like a flame over Hungary, Poland, and Italy—our hopes of rapid promotion, of French medals and crosses of the Legion of Honour, dwindled down into tame and vapid surmises as to the disbanding of second battalions, and the parsimonious reduction of additional captains, lieutenants, and ensigns.

'So we shall be here till further orders,' observed the Major, in conclusion.

'Abominable ill luck!' said Jack Belton.

'Instead of being at Sebastopol, in at the death and the glory of the affair,' chimed the captain of our Light Bobs, 'we shall be learning to smoke opium and sit crosslegged, to relish pillau, eat hash, and pepperpot with our fingers.'

'And to rub up our *Alpha, Beta, Gamma, Delta*, and so forth, to make love to the charming Haidees of Roumelia—but, waiter, see who knocks at the door!' added the Major, as a rat-tat rang on the painted door of the long room which was fitted up for our temporary mess, and the walls of which were painted in arabesques with pious quotations from the Koran.

The Highlander in his kilt, who acted as one of our mess-waiters, opened the door and ushered in our acquaintance, the fat Yuze Bashi, who, having a lively recollection of the bright, amber-coloured sherry, and full-bodied old port, which we had saved from the bulged hull of Her Majesty's steam-transport *Vestal*, visited us as often as propriety would allow; for he was a cunning old dog, who willingly gave up his chance of the slender houris in Heaven for a cup of good wine and the plump and substantial houris of earth.

Carrying his pipe and, of course, his paunch before him, he entered with a prodigious salaam and bowed to us all; then he ogled the decanter, and sat down near Catanagh, who was too polite and too much of a soldier not to accord him a welcome.

We spoke of European politics, of which the obtuse brain of the Yuze Bashi, Hadjee Hussein Ebn al Ojuz, knew as much as he did about electricity, the longitude, the 'philosophy of the infinite,' a good pun, or anything else, which is incomprehensible to an Oriental mind.

Belton spoke of the Greek girls, and then the old fellow became lively, and looked roguishly out at the corners of his sly black eyes.

'Inshallah!' said he; 'I do love pretty girls with all the zeal of a true Believer. Mohammed! yes—I have played some strange pranks in my time among the fair-haired Tcherkesses, and the black-eyed Cockonas of Bucharest—the City of Delights—as its name imports. Yes, and there are some pretty ones in Egypt too, who have good reason to remember the Hadjee Hussein. But my heart has long been fixed upon obtaining a Russian. They are large, those Muscovites, and plump and fair-skinned, round and white as eggs; and, please God, I shall perhaps have a couple of them yet.'

'Scarcely,' said Belton, 'for we are on the eve of a peace; so, Captain, your chances are small.'

His eyes flashed fire at the idea of a peace.

'Good can never come of it!' said he; 'we shall have all these battles to fight over again; all these fortresses to take and to defend; and the Muscovite swine may yet wallow upon the shores of the Golden Horn, if Britain and France are false to us, and we are false to ourselves! Yet Heaven, they say, was with us in this war.'

'They—who?'

'Mashallah! by "they," one means that mysterious personage on whom one fathers everything that lacks a better authority.'

'Bono!' said the major; 'well, captain—they say—'

'That at Silistria ten thousand angels, in green dresses, were visible to all the Faithful, fighting against the God-abandoned Russians. The Hafiz Moustapha counted their ten green banners with a thousand under each. Even the English newspapers repeated that.'

'I remember to have read it,' said I.

'Yes,' resumed Hussein, gathering confidence on my corroboration; 'ten thousand, like those who fought for Islamism, in the war of the Ditch, and at the battle of Bedr, against the Koreish; but instead

of iron maces, which shot forth fire at every stroke, our Silistrian angels appeared as well-appointed infantry.'

'By the breeches of the Prophet!' muttered the Major, in an under tone; 'only think of ten thousand well-appointed angels, in heavy marching order—all with sixty rounds of ball-cartridge at their blessed backs!'

'But if it pleases our lord the Sultan, who is God's shadow upon earth, to make peace with these groveling Russian curs—if he thinks that hell is sufficiently full of them—why should I, who am unworthy to kiss his slippers, dare to advise?'

'Of course—so fill your glass, Captain Hussein, and pass the bottles.'

'Abdul Medjid,' continued our fat guest, who began to wax guttural, slow, and prosy, as the fumes of the wine mounted into his oriental cranium—'Abdul Medjid, though he rejoiceth in the titles of Lord of the Black and White Seas; Master of Europe, Asia, and Africa; Lord of Bagdad, Damascus, Belgrade, and Agra; the Odour of Paradise—the Ke-ke-keeper of the Holy Cities of Jerusalem, Mecca, and Medina—is—is—'

'Is devilishly in want of the "ready," I believe,' said Belton, rather abruptly, closing a sentence the end of which Hussein had lost.

After making various ineffectual efforts to resume where he had left off so suddenly, and to regain the thread of his subject, which Jack's abrupt interruption had somewhat entangled, Hussein dropped his bearded chin upon his breast, and after a snort or two, let his chibouque fall, as he dropped into a deep sleep, overcome by the wine, of which he had partaken too freely, and the strength of which was too potent for him.

'Now,' said Catanagh, 'here is a good specimen of the modern Turk, who has retained all the vices, and

none of the virtues, of his ancestors. Selfish, sensual, ignorant, and brutal, he is a Mohammedan only in those things which minister to his luxury. But the old world is changing fast, and *here* the new has not much to recommend it. Ancient things are passing away, and in the slaves who crouch beneath the Turkish yoke we look in vain for the sons of those who fought at Marathon, and who died at Thermopylæ. Green be the grass and bright the flowers that there grow, say I! Omnibuses have rattled through the gate of the Ilissus; a matter-of-fact Scotsman has ploughed up the plains of Marathon, and gas-lamps have shed their light upon the Acropolis. The 'Maid of Athens' (as Stephen tells us in his book) has become plain Mrs. George Black, the wife of King Otho's Scotch superintendent of police, and the buxom mother of various little Blacks—so much for romance and for the land of Homer in the age of steam! Turks are practising the polka and, *deux-temps*! coals have been found in Mount Calvary, and Albert Smith has stuck 'Punch's' posters on the Pyramid; the Highland bagpipe, that fifty years ago rang in the streets of Bagdad and Grand Cairo, has now sent up its yell at the Golden Horn, and the mosque of St. Sophia has echoed to the rattle of the *British Grenadiers*. We have come to the end of all things, and may light our pipes with Æschylus and Herodotus.

'Xerxes the great did die,
And so must you and I.'

Try these cheroots, Mac Innon, and please pass the wine, Jack; we must drink to Allan—a pleasant march to Rodosdchig, and may we soon have him safe back again, to be under my illustrious command, if not quite under this auspicious mahogany!

CHAPTER XXXVII.

I MARCH TO RODOSDCHIG.

WITH a sergeant and thirty rank and file—one of whom was Callum Dhu, and with a piper playing at their head, I marched out of Heraclea, and by an old paved path of the Sultan Solyman, took the coast road to Rodosdchig. My men were in heavy marching order; their feather-bonnets cased in oilskins; their great-coats rolled; their wooden canteens, haversacks, and white gaiters on. We were accompanied by the portly Yuze Bashi; but as the day proved to be Friday, which is set apart by the Mohammedans for prayer and worship, he made it an excuse for being lazy, and instead of riding beside me on horseback, which, as a soldier, he ought to have done, he marched like a prince of Bourbon, *i. e.*, travelled in his snug araba or Turkish carriage, where he sat, trussed up among soft cushions, and given up to dozing over his pipe and the Prophet.

Jack Belton accompanied me for three or four miles westward of the town, as far as an old Roman bridge, which crosses a river with a name that no jaws save those of a Believer were ever meant to compass; and there bidding me warmly adieu, he galloped back to breakfast and to morning parade.

We passed the head of the olive valley, where the poor Greek officer had been so barbarously executed; and all the terrible scene of that morning came fresh upon my memory. In the distance lay the sea and the grey rocks of Palegrossa, whereon was the rent and gaping hull of the *Vestal*.

The atmosphere soon became oppressively hot—singularly so for that season of the year, and consequently I seldom saw the round visage, or heard the guttural voice of the Yuze Bashi, save when he

stormed at a passing carrier, whose string of laden mules raised a dust on the highway; or when he swore at the terrified Boba of some wayside khan, who was long in supplying him with sherbet or iced water, for which supplies, by the way, he seldom seemed to pay, save in threats and maledictions.

At one of these temporary halts near a khan, a poor old Jew, wearing the blue turban and blue boots enforced on those of his religion, approached with great timidity, and with a humility which to me—the son of a free soil—was painful and oppressive, offered some cigars and tobacco for sale.

‘Do not buy of him,’ said Hussein, pulling sharply back the curtains of his araba; ‘he is a Jew, and will cheat you—they are all cheats, believing that, at most, they shall only endure for eleven months the fires of hell—for such is their accursed creed. Oho! is this you, Isaac Ebn Abraha, who keeps the little booth in the new Frank street of Stamboul?’

‘The same, at the service of my lord,’ replied the old Israelite, bending his white head.

‘The gold of the English and French has been rattling into your coffers like hailstones, I have been told, Isaac?’

The Jew shook his head in dissent, and bent it lower, to conceal his cunning eyes.

‘Oho! I lie, then, do I?’ exclaimed this Turkish bully; ‘had other than you done this, I had smote him on the mouth with the heel of my slipper! Begone,’ he added, spitting full in the cigar vender’s face.

I remonstrated, as a fierce gleam shot from the hollow eyes of the old Jew, and he slunk away.

‘Bah!’ said the Yuze Bashi; ‘we tolerate the existence of Jews, Armenians, and Greeks, because, if we destroyed them, what would the true Believers do for slaves?’

‘We meet few of them hereabout, at all events,

said I; 'the whole country seems to become more waste and barren as we advance.'

'True,' replied the puffing Osmanli, with a fierce flashing in his dark eye, and a sardonic grin under his grey moustache; '*where the Sultan's horse has trod there grows no grass.*'

And, with this fatally true Turkish proverb, he sank back among his downy cushions, and left me to march on in silence or commune with Callum Dhu.

After passing Carga on our left, and Turemeli on our right, after crossing one or two streams, and pursuing a road from which, upon our right flank, we had bright glimpses of the blue sea of Marmora; after passing many of those green tumuli, or old warrior-graves, which stud all the land of Roumelia; after seeing only flights of vultures, cranes, and storks, or an occasional string of laden mules, progressing towards Stamboul, a march of twenty miles found us in a beautiful little valley, watered by a stream which flowed from a fountain in the basement of a gilded mosque, and surrounded by beautiful groves of pale green olive-trees, the orange, and the mimosa, with the crisped foliage of the dwarf oak, the broad and luxuriant leaves of the wild vine, and the graceful acacia, which Mohammed—in his 56th chapter—promises shall bloom again in Paradise.

This was not far from Karacalderin, a small town on the right flank of the coast road.

The grass was green and soft as velvet; a thousand wild flowers studded its verdure, and loaded with perfume the southern breeze that breathed up the valley from the sea of Marmora, and proved to us all delightful as a cold bath after our hot day's march.

Evening was approaching now; the giant poplars and cypresses that surrounded the little mosque, which marked where some dead Santon lay, were throwing their lengthening shadows far across the valley; and on my announcing that I would hal-

here for the night, my soldiers gladly threw off their knapsacks and piled their arms; Callum lighted a large fire, with all the adroitness of a Highland huntsman, and with some jest about there 'being little chance of firing the heather *here*,' heaped on the branches of the dwarf oaks, which we hewed remorselessly down by our bill-hooks.

The Yuze Bashi, though he grumbled savagely under his beard at the annoyance of having to halt (as he feared to proceed alone through a district full of armed and unscrupulous Greek peasantry), was compelled to make the best of our delightful little bivouac, and while my men made a meal of the cold meat which had been brought in their haversacks, he shared with me a cold pillaff of fowl and rice, and a jolly magnum bonum of Kirkklissa wine.

Discovering another in the recesses of the araba, I abstracted it *sans ceremonie*, and despite all Hussein's angry remonstrances, handed it to my soldiers, and as it proved to be well dashed with brandy, they passed it from man to man until each had his share, and then they all began to talk, sing, and be merry.

'Bless their hearts!' says Charles Lever, 'a little fun goes a long way in the army;' and any man who has ever spent an hour in the company of soldiers will find it so.

They were all happy as crickets round that bivouac fire, for actual service softens cold etiquette, and relaxes the iron band of discipline without impairing it, especially among Scots and Irishmen; and while the blaze of the ruddy flame shot upward, and tipped the olive-trees with light as fresh fuel was heaped upon it, while the orient sunset died away and deepened into azure night, on the calm Grecian sea and lovely classic shore, we sat in that romantic valley clad in the same martial garb our hardy sires had worn in the days of Remus and Romulus, telling old stories of our native land, or singing those songs, which, when

we were so far away from it, made the hearts within us melt to tenderness, or swell with pride and fire.

While the old, gross, and sensual Yuze Bashi lay half hidden among the down cushions of his araba and dozed away over his narguillah of rose-water, I sang a mess-room stave or two to amuse my men; and by doing so won their hearts still more, I am assured, than even my previous and studied kindness to them had done. Then I called on Callum Dhu for *his* quota of amusement, and at once his fine bold manly voice made the valley ring, as he gave us that fiery song in which his warlike ancestor, Ian Lom Mac Donel, the Bard of Keppoch, has embalmed the victory of the great Montrose at Inverlochy.

He sang it in his native Gaelic, and as he poured it forth his swarthy cheek was seen to glow and his eyes to flash—ay, even the muscles of his bare legs, on which fell the glow of the wavering watch-fire, seemed to quiver and be strung anew with energy as all the fire of Ian Lom filled the heart of his descendant—for through (my nurse) his mother, Callum came of Ian's race.

The song cannot be known to my English readers; but as it is in that bold ballad style they love so well, I may be pardoned in quoting two verses of it from a little historical work that may never cross the Tweed;* and as he sang, the voices of his thirty comrades united with singular force and harmony in the chorus:—

‘Heard ye not! heard ye not!
How that whirlwind the Gael,—
Through Lochaber swept down
From Lochness to Loch Eil?—
And the Campbells to meet them
In battle array,
Came on like the billow—
And broke like its spray!

Long, long shall our war song exult in that day!

* See Turner's Collection.

‘ Through the Braes of Lochaber
 A desert were made,
 And Glen Roy should be lost
 To the plough and the spade ;
 Though the bones of my kindred,
 Unhonoured, unurned,
 Marked the desolate path
 Where the Campbells have burned.—
Be it so! from that foray they never returned!’ &c.

So intent were we on the song—so much had it absorbed our faculties and fixed our hearts and eyes, that we had not heard the challenge of Donald Roy, who was stationed as a sentinel near the road ; nor until its conclusion did we perceive that a stranger had joined us, and was standing propped upon a long and knotty staff, surveying us with eyes of wonder, and with an interest that was not unfriendly, for a smile lighted all his features as I rose to greet him, on recognising the wandering Moolah Moustapha, whom I had met at the Khan in Heraclea, and who had officiated on the morning when the Greek Lieutenant, Constantine Vidimo, was shot.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE VISION OF CORPORAL MOUSTAPHA.

HE accorded to us the usual greeting, and contrary to the use and wont of ignorant Dervishes and Moolahs, who dislike soldiers in general and infidels in particular, he seated himself by our fire and partook at once of some bread and meat which were offered him by Callum, but shook his averted head when the leathern flasks of wine and potent raki were held towards him by Sergeant Mac Ildhui.

‘ Nay, nay,’ said he, ‘ wine and gaming are alike

forbidden by the Koran—yet there was a time when I was daily and nightly addicted to both.’

‘And when did you reform, reverend Moolah?’ I asked.

‘When I ceased to be a soldier,’ he answered with a quiet smile.

‘A soldier!’ I reiterated; ‘have *you* then been one of ourselves?’

‘Yes, Aga, and one who could handle *this* with the best man among you,’ he replied, snatching up a musket and fixing and unfixing the bayonet with an adroitness that none but a practised soldier can achieve. This old man was spare and brawny, quick of speech and sharp in eye. ‘Yes—I was a soldier of Scherif Bey’s regiment, and fought at the battles of Homi, of Athens, and of Koniah.’

‘Yes, by the beard of the Prophet,’ exclaimed the Yuze Bashi, waking up suddenly; ‘and you it was, O most worthy Moustapha! who assisted me to save the colours of the Scherif, by stuffing them into my regimental breeches. Mashallah! ’twas well, it was not the standard of Islam, for where were the mortal breeches which would have held *that*?’

‘True, O gallant Yuze Bashi; and the same battle of Koniah which made thy fortune on earth, while it marred mine here, made it, I trust, in Paradise.’

‘You were left on the field?’ said Hussein.

‘Pierced by a ball.’

‘May dogs defile the grave of him who shot it!’

‘Nay, nay, Hadjee Hussein, that bullet brought light and repentance to me; for until that day so fatal to the fortune of our lord the Sultan in Egypt, I was a very wretch—an apostate—a scoffer—an unbeliever in the prophet—yea, a veritable Janissary!’

‘But a brave soldier, Hafiz Moustapha.’

‘My lord is pleased to be merry.’

‘By the night and all that it enfolds in its shades, I am *not*, Moustapha! I speak but the truth of you,

Hafiz. You were ever a brave soldier as any in the ranks of Islam—as any in the army of Mahmoud II., though somewhat of a visionary.’

The old Moolah crossed his hands upon his breast, and bowed down his bearded face in reply.

‘And did you see much of war and battles in those days, reverend Moolah?’ I asked.

‘Enough and to spare.’

‘Mashallah!’ exclaimed Hussein, ‘I have seen him carrying six Egyptian heads at once by the top knot, a handful of them all grasped like a cluster of gourds, and I have seen him with four-and-twenty ears all strung like herrings on his ramrod, when Egyptian ears sold as high as ten paras each. Beard of Khalid! I have sent a bushel of them more than once to the tent of Reschid Pasha. Moustapha went hand in hand with the wild Koords in roasting and impaling our prisoners—for what are Egyptians but curs like the Greeks?’

‘Curs of a darker hue.’

‘True, oh reverend Moolah—though it is said, if thou wishest to please the eye, take a Circassian maid; but if for pleasure and voluptuousness, try an Egyptian one.’

‘And did you tire of slaughter or of soldiering?’ I asked, not being naturalist enough to ponder long over the last remark—a proverbial one in the East.

‘Of neither, though I saw enough of both while under Scherif Bey; but in my youth I was good and pious, and knowing all the Koran and Bible by heart, was styled *Hafiz*, which meaneth *Bible-reader*. I became a soldier, and fell into evil ways. I had a vision—a vision, O Frank! such as seldom opens up to mortal eyes,’ he continued, pointing upward, while his eyes flashed with a red unearthly glare, and his whole face flushed from his brow to his long white beard; ‘and from that hour I was a changed man. I ceased to regard the things of this life, or be solicitous of aught

on earth—where I should find food in the morning or rest at night—looking forward only to death as the gate through which I should pass to Paradise. I was once avaricious as a Jew, but now my heart is expanded; all that the sun enlightens would I give in charity, had it been mine. I, who had been often red to the elbows in the blood of slaughtered Greeks and dark Egyptians, now shrank from blood as from a flaming fire; I who had no more conscience than a Bedouin of the desert, and less remorse than an African savage, now see my sins of omission and commission—all my deeds of sorrow and cruelty, performed in the days of my ignorance and trouble, rising like a stupendous column in the very path that leads direct to the place of our abode—to the garden of pleasure—the paradise of the blessed. After the battle of Koniah I was a changed man, yea changed as if *the black drop of original sin had been wrung out of my heart.*

‘Tell the Frankish officer the story, O Hafiz—my old brother soldier; for though you were but an onbashi and I a captain, I look back with pride to the days when we unsheathed our swords in the same field beneath the green banner of Reschid Pasha,’ said Hussein.

‘The Frank may but mock me as the Ingleez do all strangers,’ said the old Moolah, with a species of growl in his tone, as he glanced uneasily at my soldiers, most of whom had already dropped asleep.

I laid a hand on my breast, and expressed a hope that he would not think so meanly of me.

‘No, no, I shall answer for him,’ said the Yuze Bashi; ‘it ill becometh a young soldier to mock the white beard of an old one. Moreover, what sayeth the Koran? “O Unbelievers, I will not worship that which ye worship, nor will ye worship that which I worship. Ye have your religion, and I have my religion,” and there is an end of it, say I, Hadjee

Hussein. 'Tis a story as well as another, and I delight in stories—they always set me to sleep.'

'I will tell you in a few words,' replied the old Moolah, adjusting his high conical cap of grey felt, and disposing his mighty beard over the breast of his robe; 'but I presume that you, O valiant Yuze Bashi, have heard it before?'

'By the spout of the holy Kaaba, most reverend Ifafiz; and by the holy camel's blessed hump I never did!' said the irritable Yuze Bashi, giving the coils of his arguillah a kick, and smoking away at the amber mouth-piece.

'It made noise enough in the camp of the Sultan's troops.'

'Then I hope it may make a noise here too, for the place is quiet enough,' retorted Hussein, who was in a furious pet at all this unnecessary delay.

'You must know, O Frank!' began the Moolah, 'that I was a corporal in the third Orta or battalion of Scherif Bey's regiment, in the army of the Grand Vizier, Reschid Pasha, and warred against the revolted Egyptians of Mehemet Ali; and was wounded by a bayonet at Homs in the Pashalick of Damascus, where we fought a desperate battle on the right bank of the Orontes; I lost the tip of my right ear at the battle of Athens when fighting against the Grecks, and had a mouthful of teeth driven down my throat by a half-spent Russian bullet at Navarino; but all these wounds were as nothing when compared to one I received at the fatal defeat of Koniah in Asia Minor, where in the winter of 1247, by the reckoning of the Hejira, Ibrahim Pasha, defeated Reschid and cast everlasting disgrace on the banners of the Sultan.'

'All his reverses in the Russian wars had failed to teach generalship to Reschid Pasha, who, with the fugitives of Homs, had halted at the thrice-blessed city of Koniah, where a snow-covered plain of sixty miles in extent gave ample room for the Osmanlies,

forty-five thousand in number, to fight the fifteen thousand Egyptian curs at Ibrahim. Brave to a fault—for he was the son of a Koordish chief and a Georgian slave—old Reschid led the charge of Horse, which, by its failure, lost the battle. Vain was the fury of the Koordish Cavalry, and vain the fiery valour of the bare-kneed Albanian Guard! The battle was lost by us, and the banner of the Sultan was trod to the dust by the steeds of the desert. All our cannon were taken. O day of calamities!—and all our standards!’

‘Except *one*,’ urged Hussein, parenthetically.

‘Yes, most valiant Yuze Bashi—except one, after assisting you to save which, a musket-shot pierced my breast, and, half-choked in my blood, I sank powerless on the field; and on becoming faint, remember no more of that unfortunate battle, though its roar was so great that one might have supposed all hell was being dragged by chains to judgment, as the Prophet says, it shall be, on the great and inevitable day.

‘When consciousness returned, the sun was setting beyond the snow-covered mountains, and faint and blue their spotless cones rose like the waves of a frozen sea around the distant walls of Koniah. On the gilded domes of its twelve great mosques, and the hundred minars of its lesser shrines, fell the last rays of that sinking sun; and full of thoughts of awe and death, I turned me, in penitence and grief, from the horrors of that lost battle-field, and bent my head in prayer as the shrill cries of the muezzins reached me from the tall steeples of the Sultan Selim and of Sheik Ibrahim; and as I prayed, the dying sunset faded on the snow-capped hills and gilded domes; the minarets grew dark and cold, and ghastly mountain-piles turned to purple tints as the night set in, deep, calm, and beautiful. The stars were sparkling above the silent city and that dreadful battle-plain.

A painful and burning thirst oppressed me; and while crawling towards a spring that bubbled near me in the moonlight, I again became unconscious.

‘Glory be to Allah and to his Prophet! Amid that unconsciousness or stupor which oppressed me there came at times a sense of pain in my smarting wound, and of thirst in my parched throat, while the gurgle of the fresh, cool fountain sung drowsily in my ear, like the murmur of a distant multitude.

‘Recollection came again, and I saw the fountain sparkling in the moonlight, which tipped with silver the blue and white water-lilies, and every floweret, leaf, and shrub, for all was bright and clear as in the brightest and clearest noon.

‘While gazing at the glittering water with longing eyes, lo! I suddenly beheld before me the beautiful figure of a woman—a nymph lovely beyond all earthly loveliness. Dazzling as Ayesha, the best-beloved wife of Mohammed, and fair as the rose of Cashmere, her exquisite form was discernible through the only garment she wore, a slight cymar of green—the colour sacred to the Prophet—and her smooth round limbs were white as the driven snow. Her slender neck, her curved shoulders, and tapered arms, were modelled in the most charming symmetry; a faint blush was on her soft cheek, and the expression of her large dark eyes was such as I dare not trust myself to describe, for they possessed a lustre and a winning sweetness which confused, fascinated, and bewildered me. Long and black as winter night, her glossy tresses fell upon her white shoulders, and half shrouded her swelling bosom.

‘The air around her was filled with delicious perfume. She spoke to me; but for a time I knew not what she said; for with her voice there seemed to come a stream of gentle music from a distance; and by its melody I was filled with a rapture such as never fired my soul, or swept my nerves before.

‘ Her sparkling eyes were full of conscious power ; her radiant smile was full of conscious loveliness, tempered by all the pride of purity and innocence ; for know, O Frank ! that she who stood before me was one of the Hûr al Oyn—the black-eyed girls of Paradise—the ever-blooming brides of the faithful, though I knew it not then ; but imagined—sinner that I was !—that some Naide of old, or some lascivious goddess of the lying Greeks had come to earth again.

“ “ Moustapha,” said the maiden, “ thou shalt not be one of those who will perish in this world and pass away with it on that day when the mighty hills shall roll like smoke before the dreadful wind that is to blow from the east.”

“ “ How, O beautiful one ? ” I asked, while trembling with a more than mortal joy.

“ “ Because, know, Hafiz Moustapha, that the blessed finger of the Prophet is on thee.”

“ “ Upon me—a mite—an atom ! ”

“ “ He remembereth the leaves of the forest, O Hafiz ! and the grains of sand on the sea-shore. He is the father of all wisdom.”

“ “ I am but a poor corporal of foot,” said I, remembering the rattan of our adjutant, which I had felt more often than the finger of the Prophet.

“ “ A weak mortal, assuredly—but a true Believer.”

“ “ Bechesm ! Upon thy beautiful eyes be it, that I am.”

‘ A fire seemed to rage within me, and I strove to reach and embrace her ; but in vain, for lo ! there suddenly rose around her a hedge of thorns and brambles—the fuel of hell—that pricked and tore my heated flesh.

‘ The maiden smiled with all her alluring sweetness of lips and eyes, and almost laughed as she held up a beautiful hand to deprecate my folly ; while the wound in my breast caused me almost to swoon with a sudden pang of agony.

“What is your name?” I asked.

“Noura.”

“Which meaneth—?”

“*Light.*”

“And why without garments?”

“Because garments are a sign of the disobedience of our first parents, and in our blessed abode that disobedience is forgotten. Al Araf separates us from those by whom it is remembered with sorrow, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth. Think, O Hafiz Maustapha, think of what is before thee! Thou hast neglected alms, and scoffed at prayer; blinded by vice, thou hast forgotten all about punishment hereafter; and intoxicated by the grosser pleasures of earth, thou hast dared to doubt those which were to come, yet vaunted thyself a true Mussulman—being a liar and a hypocrite, even as Abdallah Elen Obba was a liar and a hypocrite before thee.”

‘At these words a deadly terror fell upon my soul, for the eyes of the maiden gleamed with a lurid light as she spoke. I wept and said—

“What shall I do, O lovely one, to merit Paradise?”

“Fear the Holy Prophet—keep his laws—and love me.”

“Love you!” I said, and stretched my arms in ecstasy towards her; but, with a cry of astonishment and despair, as her figure melted away and I saw only the cold fountain plashing in the pale moonlight. Then there descended upon me a darkness and a horror, amid which I felt a soft hand grasping mine with a touch that thrilled me, and the voice of Noura whispered in my ear—

“Come, Moustapha, come! Ascend to Paradise, where two-and-seventy such as I await thee with smiles and with impatience.”

‘Now by all the devils that shaved the Queen of Saba!’ shouted the irreverend Yuze Bashi; ‘think

of that! two-and-seventy wives all to be had for mere belief, which costs nothing, when I have paid a thousand xerifs, and not an asper less, for one Circassian, in my lifetime.'

'Peace!' exclaimed the moolah, with a brow and tone of severity; 'peace, Hussein Ebn al Ajuz; or, by the souls of the seven lawgivers, I shall cease. Allah is indeed most merciful that he does not smite thee deaf, and dumb, and blind.

'In a moment, grief, pain, and darkness passed away—and light, music, and perfume, with a myriad brilliant figures and objects, all beaming with a celestial glory, were around me. Then a holy joy filled all my soul, for I knew that I had left the earth, with its petty cares and wretched vanities, far, far away below the seven heavens and the mansions of the moon; and that now the Garden of the Blessed—the Eden of old—the Jannat al Ferdaws of the Faithful—was before me.

'O Mahmoud resoul Allah! May the angels of victory sweep away the dust from beneath thy feet, and may their wings shield all who believe in thee! O strange it is that I should have seen these things, and yet live to speak of them on earth!

'I was in that wondrous Garden of Paradise from which our first parents were expelled, when Adam was hurled downward on the Isle of Serendib,* where his footmark yet remains upon a mountain-top; and when Eve fell near Mecca, where the marks of her two knees, as she knelt, are yet to be seen, sixty musket-shot apart, for their stature was gigantic. After that prodigious fall, they were separated two hundred years, for the vast earth was all a silent desert then. But to resume:

'Had it not been promised that he who looks on Paradise becomes endued with the strength of a hundred of the strongest men, I must have sunk

* Ceylon.

under the scenes of more than mortal splendour, pleasure, and delight that passed before my bewildered senses ; for, as the Koran sayeth, they were such things *as eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, nor the heart of man conceived.*

‘I was in an ecstasy ! A blessed ardour—a glorious joy swelled all my heart with love, religion, and purity. A brilliant halo was around me—a light without cloud—as in Khorassan, the land of the Sun, and nothing that is there has a shadow, for light is everywhere.

‘After passing a lake of brilliant water, that was whiter than milk, a month’s journey in compass, and surrounded by as many goblets as there are stars in the firmament—each goblet formed of a single emerald, and containing a liquid so precious that he who drinks thereof shall never thirst more, I was ushered by two shining angels through seven lofty gates, in seven walls that were built of sparkling diamonds and gleaming rubies, into the Jannat al Ferdaws, or abode of the blessed. At the seventh I was clothed in the richest robes of silk and brocade, chiefly of a green colour ; and these robes, like the bracelets of gold and silver, and the crown of mighty pearls with which they encompassed my brows, were taken from the full-bursting flowers of Paradise that grew on each side of the way by which we journeyed. Before me went a long train of shadowy slaves, bearing silken carpets, litters, soft couches, downy pillows, and other furniture—each article being embroidered with more precious stones than all Asia could furnish in a thousand years.

‘After a feast such as Mohammed alone could conceive, for the *lobe* of a single fish on that wondrous table would dine seventy thousand hungry Ingleez, I was conducted along garden-walks of musk and amber ; the earth of the parterre seemed like the finest wheaten flour, and therein grew all the flowers

of Paradise—each parterre being lovelier than all Suristan, the Land of Roses; for the leaves were of emeralds, the buds and petals of rubies, the stalks of burnished gold, and the slender twigs of polished silver, all gleaming and glittering under a stupendous blaze of sunlight.

‘Passing kiosks of golden wire entwined with roses, wherein were youths and damsels in amorous dalliance; passing the mighty Toaba—the tree of happiness, which bears all the fruits, and meats, and food the world ever knew, with a myriad others all of tastes unknown to mortals, and every leaf of which is a melodious tongue, and the stem of which would take the swiftest Barbary steed a thousand years to compass; passing fountains of water, milk, honey, and wine, all flowing on pebbles of ruby and pearl, through beds of camphire, saffron, and amber—I was led on—on—through shrubberies of precious stones and golden-bodied trees, on every branch of which hung a thousand little bells, and there sat a thousand singing-birds, which united with the leaves of the Toaba in filling the air with divine praises and bewildering harmony—on—on—until we reached a pavilion hollowed and fashioned of a single pearl, no less than four parasangs broad, and nearly sixty Turkish miles in length—every part of it, without and within, gleaming with sentences from the Koran, written in rubies and jacinths.

‘Here stood eighty thousand slaves, all clad in shining garments, and three hundred beautiful damsels, each bearing three hundred golden and porcelain dishes, each dish containing three hundred kinds of food, awaited me on bended knees, with their charming faces bowed to the silken carpets; three hundred others bore precious vessels filled with fragrant wine; and in what language, O Frank, shall I refer to the two-and-seventy wives, the Houris, who awaited me there, each reclining in her couch, hollowed of a

single pearl—the Hûr al Oyn, the black-eyed, high-bosomed girls of Paradise, who are created not of clay, like mortal women, but of the purest musk, and are without blemish—maidens on whose faces of celestial beauty none may look and live without a miracle; for I seemed to see all at a glance, though the Prophet says, these things would take the most faithful of men a thousand years' journey to behold.*

‘Each couch whereon a maiden lay was a throne glorious as that of Solomon, the Star of the Genii; and each Hourî had no other veil to her naked loveliness than the flowing tresses of her perfumed and shining hair.

‘As my dazzled eyes swept round this vast apartment, they lighted on a familiar form; it was that of Noura, the nymph of the fountain; and as I recognised her, she stretched her snowy arms towards me, with her soft alluring smile, as the fire of love and conscious beauty lit up her large black eyes. Her light ethereal blood coursed through her veins; I hung in rapture over her, and half faint with joy and agitation, clasped her to my breast.

‘Then the curtains of the pavilion fell around us, drawn by unseen hands, and the voices of the singing-trees, the golden birds, and fairy bells without, became hushed or died away, as I sank entranced upon the tender bosom that panted under mine; and when impressing upon her warm lip the first kiss that man had ever printed there, lo! a sleep fell upon me—a deep and dreamless sleep—O Mahmoud resoul Allah! that I should ever have awakened from it!’

The moolah paused in great excitement; the perspiration stood upon his wrinkled forehead, and rolled over the glistening hairs of his snowy beard; his dark eyes glared with a hollow gleam, and his breath came thick and fast.

* See Sale's ‘Koran.’

‘Proceed, moolah,’ said Hussein, quietly, amid a puff of smoke; ‘and you awakened, where?’

‘On the verge of the snow-covered battle-field of Koniah, and close beside the fountain where I had fallen into a swoon; the chill dews of night were upon me, the bright clear moon rode through its loftiest mansions; the pale fountain was murmuring and plashing on its pebbled bed beside me; the lotus was drooping on its stalk; I was still accoutred as a soldier—a poor corporal of Scherif Bey, and my hand rested on the cold, hard barrel of my musket.

‘Paradise and all its glories had vanished with the sleep that sealed my eyes!

‘Again I was a poor soldier, lying bruised on that lost and moonlit battle-field, with the dew and the cold hoar frost whitening upon me.

‘Bismillah!

‘Slowly I staggered up, and felt for the wound in my breast—and O, wonder of wonders! Though my blue uniform was still perforated by the passage of the ball, the blood had disappeared, and the wound had closed; it was well and whole—and of all that bloody gash, a little scar alone remained!

‘I threw myself upon the earth towards the Kebab—the Holy City of Mecca; and I vowed seven times—by the seven gates of Paradise—by the souls of the seven lawgivers—and by all the lights of the faithful—to become a good, a pious, and a new man; and from that hour I ceased to be a soldier, a reveller, a dicer, and a gamester; I became a moolah, and went through all Greece and Asia Minor, preaching the faith of the Koran and of the only Prophet—Mahmoud resoul Allah—for there is no God but God, and the Camel Driver is his Prophet!’

Such was the vision of the old corporal Moustapha!

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE TURKISH VEIL.

WITH this strange story hovering in my mind, and the Yuze Bashi asleep in the cushioned recess of his araba, I paraded and marched off my detachment from the valley at the first peep of early dawn next day. I bade farewell to the old moolah Moustapha—the ex-corporal of Scherif Bey—and gave him one of the small Turkish notes (which are printed on thin yellow paper, and are worth about ten shillings sterling) for the benefit of his mosque; and feared that if he was not slightly defective in brain, he had at least but a slight acquaintance with the goddess whose billet is popularly said to be at the bottom of a well.

Along a road bordered by rare plants and gorgeous flowers; between groves of orange, lemon, and fig trees, all growing in wild luxuriance, and among myrtle-scented fields, we continued our march by the shore of the sea of Marmora, the voices of my thirty soldiers all uniting at times in one merry chorus, as they trod the old paved causeway of the great Sultan Solymon, many of whose works are, by the ignorant, ascribed to the Genii—just as our Scottish peasantry aver their old ruins to be the work of Picts or of the fairies—and before mid-day, we saw the little town of Rodosdchig rise before us, with the blue sea washing its old grey walls; with its dark cypresses and white minarets; its harbour full of quaint caiques; and its old castle of the Greeks, on which was the red Turkish standard, with an oval centre, bearing the three crescents of the Prophet.

As we marched in, the drum beat at the guard-house, and a guard of lubberly Turkish militiamen scrambled from around a logwood fire, where they

had been toasting kabobs and dough-balls ; they stood to their arms, and gave us a military salute. The officer at their head still retained at his neck the ancient gilt gorget, now long disused in our service.

We were immediately beset by Greek kabob-roasters, and sherbet-venders, from the arched gates of the bazaars, and a crowd of wondering Osmanlies, whom the strange sound of the Highland warpipe brought forth from every door, where they had been squatted on carpets, dozing over opium, coffee, and chibouques ; yet though louder, more martial, and more shrill, our pipe is almost similar to the instrument now used by the kilted mountaineers of Albania.

Not a woman was visible, though at times a veiled head and two brilliant eyes appeared at the wire lattices which opened to the unpaved and unlighted streets.

We marched into the old castle, of which the Yuze Bashi was commandant, governor, or suzerain, and as such was the terror of all Rodosdchig. He was the only officer there at present, though the quaint old Greek towers of the last emperor were garrisoned by his company of Bombardiers, and were mounted by ten iron twenty-four pounders and two ten-inch mortars. On the walls towards the sea were several old and useless, but enormous, brass guns, covered with Turkish letters and pious sentences, with piles of moss-grown marble shot between them.* The stockades in many places had disappeared, for our thrifty commandant had sold them when his piastres became scarce, to the kabob-roasters, for firewood.

On resuming his command, the first act of Hussein was to cudgel—almost to death—the chaoush of the main-guard, for some real or imaginary fault ; an act which gave us an odd idea of Turkish discipline.

‘What think you of this, Callum?’ said I, with smile ; ‘suppose an officer were to cudgel you?’

‘I would drive my skene into his heart with as little remorse as I would gralloch a dead deer,’ was the reply of my henchman, frowning at the idea.

My men occupied a portion of the miserable Turkish barrack, and I had rooms assigned to me in a tower, the windows of which faced the sea; and as the furniture was furnished by the government of His Majesty the Sultan, it could scarcely be expected to be much more luxurious than the birch-table, two Windsor-chairs, the iron coal-box and elegant pair of bellows usually issued from the stores of Her Britannic Majesty to an officer in garrison.

That evening I dined—or supped—which you please (for the hour rendered the meal dubious)—with the Yuze Bashi, whose portion of the castle was magnificently fitted up. His servants were black slave girls. We had neither forks, chairs, nor a table. We sat on cushions, and ate pillaff and paties of Gallipoli oysters with our fingers, from platters placed on little stools; we tore the fragrant kabobs from their wooden skewers with our teeth—rent the fowls asunder by the simple process of inserting the finger and thumb; drank sherbet of sugar and musk dashed with French brandy; then came iced Grecian wine, and, lighting our pipes, we gave thanks to the Prophet for the good things of this land, and subsided among the silken cushions with a sigh of satisfaction.

By the inquiring Callum Dhu I was given to understand that my friend the Yuze Bashi had a wife; but, as it would have been discourteous to have asked for her, as he studiously avoided ever recurring to the circumstance of her existence; and, moreover, as a Turk can never introduce his wife to any man save a most intimate friend, and then only on receiving his solemn word of honour never to mention so singular a departure from the established Mohammedan custom, I had no hope of being blessed by

seeing even the slipper of the commandant's earthy helpmate; and so I thought no more about it—besides, wives are most brittle and perilous ware to meddle with in Turkey.

Several weeks passed away monotonously at the castle of Rodosdchig. I soon knew every street, bazaar, mosque, bezestien, coffee-house, khan, and kabobki in the place as well as if they were my own property; the old Greek ruins in the neighbourhood; the dumpy Doric columns of what had been a temple, when beauty was worshipped in Thessaly and Thrace, lying among a wilderness of luxurious weeds and plants, with the snakes crawling over them, had all been, again and again, delineated in my sketchbook: the round towers of the old castle that overhung the sea; the sea itself, with its Greek caiques, Turkish xebeques, and quaint fisherboats, soon became as familiar to me as the murmur of its waves on the rocks below my barrack-room window.

To divert my *ennui*, fortunately for myself, as my after-adventures proved, I applied all my energies to the study of the monotonous and crack-jaw gibberish of the Turks; and, with the assistance of 'Madden's Grammar,' &c., was able to master the sonnets of the old Pasha, or General, Sermet Effendi; and of Partiff, whose rhymes in honour of the Sultan and of Omar Pasha are to be seen gilded above the gates of all the edifices erected by the Government; Jachiened, the *Gulistan*, or 'Rose Garden of Sadi of Shiraz,' and the 'Pleasing Tales of Khoja (Master) Nazir-il-adeen Efendi;' and I still remember one charming old Persian story of the Garden of Paradise, which was described as being *still extant* in Asia, but concealed among remote and inaccessible mountains, and to be reached only through long caverns and by a subterranean river; and therein were ever summer bloom and floral beauty, and all the animals were tame and loving, as before the fall of our first parents—the

lamb lying down beside the lion, and the panther beside the goat, as some old dervish, who—like my friend the corporal—had been there, called upon every hair in his silver beard to testify.

The morning and evening parades of my little party followed each other in unvarying succession; but the riotous, bloodthirsty, and insurrectionary Greeks, of whom the Yuze Bashi had spoken so much at our mess in Heraclea, were as quiet as the plodding denizens of the most rural district in England.

The bluff Yuze Bashi Hussein (may his shadow never be less!) was now my crowning bore, and I soon saw enough of him to make me avoid his friendship, and to inspire me with a dislike for him, still stronger than even the story of the Greek Lieutenant Vidimo had done.

Though the rent of his government, exclusive of his pay, was one hundred and twenty purses, or about 600*l.* per annum, Hussein had a large garden, which he forced the soldiers of the Sultan to cultivate, and the produce of which he sold to the inhabitants at *his own prices*, which were always rising and never falling. By this means he nearly doubled his pay; while, by selling the powder and shot of the batteries to Levant coasters and Greek pirates, he nearly trebled it; and then, to make up the deficiency at head-quarters, the returns of his garrison for 'ball-practice' were enormous.

Then he had secured a handsome sum for the head of his younger brother, which, like a good and loyal servant of the Prophet's earthly shadow, he had transmitted to the Seraglio gate in a jar of salt; for this unlucky brother, having fled from Stamboul, where he had been engaged in an intrigue with a lady of the Household, and having wounded the Kislar Aga with his handjlar, became well worth a thousand piastres, dead or alive.

Such was Hussein Ebn al Ajuz. He was a man utterly devoid of scruple or principle.

‘A Greek,’ said he, ‘once dared to dispute with me on religion—but I soon silenced him.’

‘How?’ I asked.

‘By running my handjari into his heart.’

‘The devil!—that was a convincing argument.’

‘A *sharp* one, at all events,’ was the cool reply.

He made his hatred of the Greeks a never-failing source of revenue. If a merchant of that humbled race gave an entertainment, and our commandant was not invited, he would send an onbashi and three soldiers, with fixed bayonets, to extinguish the lights, disperse the guests, and bring before him the master of the house, who was therefore ordered to pay down so many piastres, as a fine, for disturbing the neighbourhood—for the ponderous Turk is lord of the soil, while the lively and more intelligent Greek is but its serf and villain—being what the Englishman was to the Norman knight eight hundred years ago.

I avoided the Yuze Bashi, no difficult matter, as he spent half the day, seated on a carpet in a corner, smoking his bubbling narguillah and drinking brandy-and-water; and now having no resource but my own thoughts, or Callum Dhu, whose conversation was generally of old and regretful memories, my spirits began to sink, for I had no longer the daily good fellowship of our merry little mess, or the frank joviality of Jack Belton to bear me up. Left thus entirely to myself in that gloomy old castle of the Greeks, my mind reverted to other days and other scenes, and the face of Laura—lost to me for ever!—came frequently before me with a distinctness that made my heart ache, though I sought—but in vain—to thrust the painful thought and winning image from me.

One evening, according to my usual wont since I had become wayward and moody, alone (as Callum

was on guard), but accoutred with my claymore, dirk, and loaded revolver (for in this district nobody ventures abroad unarmed), I wandered beyond the walls of Rodosdchig, to a grove of cypresses, where the wild grapes grew in luxuriance, and where I could pluck them with the dew of evening on their purple clusters. A little farther on lay one of those quiet Mohammedan cemeteries which are so poetically named by the Orientals the Cities of the Silent. There the ghost of each true Believer is supposed by the superstitious to sit invisibly at the head of its own grave.

Near this burial-place were the ruins of what had been an old Greek hermitage, in the days when poor anchorites 'sought to merit heaven' by drinking cold water and chewing dry peas.

On this evening the City of the Silent rang with the merry voices of a group of Turkish ladies. Clad in bright-coloured dresses, they were sitting on carpets, among the green resting places, drinking sherbet, eating *bon-bons*, and smoking pretty little chibouques, while a few slaves and sullen eunuchs hovered near them in attendance. As I passed these veiled fair ones, I heard a few shrill exclamations of wonder, while their dark rolling eyes seemed to sparkle with peculiar lustre through the holes in their snow-white yashmacks.

On the verge of this cemetery, and apart from the group, I passed a solitary lady, who was culling a bouquet of flowers from among the turbanned headstones; and who, in pursuit of this innocent object, had wandered to some distance from her companions. Attracted by the singular grace which pervaded all her actions, I hovered near her, and affected to read the epitaphs gilded on the marble tombs; but perceiving that her bracelet—which was composed of those magnificent opals which dart fire, and by the Orientals are believed to be found only where thunder

has fallen—was lying on the grass, I hastened to restore it, and to clasp it on her wrist. With a hurried bow, and a sweet smile sparkling in her eyes, she permitted me to perform this little act; and while doing so, I was charmed by the delicate beauty of her arm and gloveless hand.

The bracelet was clasped, and I was on the point of touching my cap and retiring, when, either by accident or design—from all I knew of Turkish wives, I half suspected *the latter*—her bouquet fell from her hand, and the flowers were scattered about her.

‘Mashallah!’ she exclaimed, and laughed.

Though I knew well that if seen near her, or with her, a dose of bamboo-canes or a bullet, perhaps, might repay my temerity, I deliberately gathered up the flowers, and tying them with a ribbon, presented them to her, with a few Turkish compliments, and begged permission to retain a rose, as a gift from her.

She at once accorded it, giving me, at the same time, a full, deep, and piercing glance through the square opening of her yashmack.

Oh, those speaking eyes! How well this woman knew their dangerous power!

I see them yet in imagination, for heaven never created aught more beautiful than the eyes of this Turkish damsel. She touched my hand slightly, and said, while casting a hurried glance about her,

‘Where shall we meet again?’

The ‘*we*’ made my heart leap!

‘Meet again?—at this hour to-morrow evening—among these ruins,’ said I, entering recklessly into what might prove a dangerous rendezvous; and then, waving a kiss to me, my beautiful Unknown hurried through the cypress-grove and rejoined her gay companions.

It was all arranged and over in a moment!

CHAPTER XL.

A LOVE ADVENTURE.

THE next day passed slowly, and I thought of my love affair—(for a love affair I had determined to consider it)—with some anxiety; the path to Cupid in the East being strewn with more daggers than roses; for a panther in its hungry wrath is a lamb when contrasted to a Turk animated by a fit of jealousy; and that my unknown was the better-half of some dreamy Osmanli I had not the least doubt. I carefully loaded my revolver—placed all my money in my purse, to be ready for any emergency, and buckled on my dirk and claymore, as if I had been about to escalate the Malakoff or make a dash at the Redan, instead of merely meeting a pretty girl. I then set forth to keep my appointment, just as the Yuze Bashi was dropping off into his usual evening doze, and just as the long shadows of the towers and cypresses were falling to the eastward; and the muezzins on the upper galleries of the minarets were watching for the first dip of the sun's flaming disc, to shout the shrill summons to evening prayer.

Had I forgotten Laura?

Alas for the weakness of the human heart! I fear that after I saw my beautiful Oriental I had no memory for aught beyond that epoch in my history—for a time at least.

Though the evening was delightful, few persons were abroad; and after leaving the town, an old, white-bearded Grecian monk, wending his way staff in hand and wallet on back, was the only person I met; as with a beating heart I sought the sequestered ruins of the ancient Christian chapel and hermitage.

Once or twice a fear that I might have been lured

here for some deadly purpose, and that her rendezvous was but a wicked snare, flashed upon me.

The scene was beautiful. On one hand lay the cemetery with its grove of tall and solemn cypresses; on the other rose a marble rock surrounded by an old rampart, having ruined towers, from which the cannon of the Greeks had poured their stone-shot upon the fierce Timariots of the Sultan Mohammed the Second, the founder of the new Empire. Amid these old ramparts the antique outline of a gilt dome and the white minar of a little mosque cut the evening sky. At the base of the rock a stream flowed from a ruined arch into a marble basin, over which flourished the beautiful leaves of the acanthus, under the shade of the graceful and delicate olive-tree.

The sun was setting with gorgeous brilliance; the western sky was all a lurid red, as if the whole horizon was in flames, and the shadows of three gigantic Grecian Doric columns of white marble—ascribed to the Genii in the times of old—were thrown far across the landscape. From the shattered cornice and four triglyphs which still surmounted them, some long and pendant creeping plants swung like garlands on the evening wind, that came from the deep and blue Propontis.

The shadows began to deepen; the horizon paled. The birds had ceased to sing; but the little snakes were hissing vigorously under the broad leaves of the acanthus and the dewy *lentisuculus*—for in ten minutes night would be on.

There was a sound; and my unknown, in her white yashmack and flowing robes, came before me like a graceful spirit, and quite as suddenly. Her hands were placed joyously and confidently in mine, and her eyes—the loveliest of all those dark and soul-lit oriental eyes that seem to swim in their own lustrous glory—were beaming upon me. I was bewildered—confused—dazzled!

I felt the impossibility of resisting the fascinations of two such loving eyes. The inside of the delicate lids were blackened with kohol, and the ends of her slender fingers were tinged with rosyhenna—yet she spoke with somewhat of a Greek accent.

‘Tell me your name, my beautiful one?’ I whispered, retaining her soft hands in mine.

‘Iola,’ was the half-breathed reply.

‘Iola—anything more?’

‘Mashallah! what more would you require me to say?’

‘Do you live in Rodosdchig?’

‘Yes—but why do you inquire?’

‘Because all that concerns you must be full of tender interest to me.’

‘So soon! You have not known me quite five minutes.’

‘I have known you four and twenty hours; yet when I gaze into your beautiful eyes, Iola, I seem to have known you for a life-time.’

‘You love me then?’ she exclaimed, as her large eyes filled with light and merriment.

‘Oh, Iola! who could see you without loving you, tenderly and passionately?’

‘Inshallah!’

‘You are not a Turk?’

‘Turk—no! I am a Greek,’ she answered, in a changed voice, and drooping of the eyelid.

I attempted to remove her yashmack; but she exclaimed,—

‘In the name of Allah, not yet—not yet!’ and shrinking laughingly back, with pretty coquetry, prevented me from doing so.

After a little flirtation, and permitting me to kiss her hands as often as I pleased, from a few words she let fall, greatly to my alarm, I suspected that she *was* a married Moselema; but I was now too much involved with her to ‘hang fire,’ as we say at mess;

and too much attracted by her beauty--though I had seen but little of it--to relinquish the chance of enlivening my dull detachment duty by a little love affair--though death, perhaps, should hover near it. The imminent risk we ran enhanced the charm of this new acquaintance. The darkness was deepening, for in these climates there is little twilight; and alarmed by the sombre aspect of the ruins, which were haunted, of course, by a Ghoul, Iola (a charming name!) started from my side, and insisted on retiring.

'Take these three rose-buds,' said I, for flowers are the language of love among the Asiatics; 'three on one stem, Iola--they are emblematic of the three qualities of love.'

'Of love?' she reiterated, in a tremulous whisper.

'Sprightly, secret, and sincere love, as *ours* shall be. Will you accept of them from me?'

She trembled like one about to do a guilty thing; but took them with a blush and something like a sob of joy; yet this excitable little one would not permit me to kiss her!

'You will wear them for my sake, Iola?'

'There is danger in doing so--yet I will treasure them even when faded, like the jewel of Prince Giamschid; and what is my reward?'

'Your reward?' I faltered, while reddening in turn.

'Yes, for the danger.'

'One dear little kiss--or a thousand if you will let me give them!' I exclaimed, and threw my arm round her.

She drew down the yashmack, and I pressed my lip to hers, again and again.

Until this moment my Oriental had never perhaps known what love was. Risk, life, death, all were forgotten! I remembered only the charm and the opportunity.

'And so in Frankistan, the rose is also an emblem

of love?' she whispered, as we walked slowly hand in hand towards the town, the lights of which were sparkling in the distance.

'Yes, Iola.'

'Alas!'

'Why?'

'Because the rose lives but for a day—and if it should be so with love?'

'Why that thought, and why these doubts—my love will live for ever, Iola!'

(*For ever? Alas! where were a heedless passion and two bright eyes hurrying me?*)

'It is indeed delightful to have one's life thus entwined with another (and you will be always in Rodosdchig, I hope?); to have a double existence and double joy, as if we lived in the Rose Garden of Sadi.'

'Ah—but I fear your existence is so entwined already: your husband, Iola?'

She uttered a faint cry of anger, and thus I found my conjectures right.

'My husband!' she exclaimed; 'talk not of him! He bought me as he did his horse, in the common market-place. He never asked me to love him. O that were a condescension too much for a proud Turk! I am a Mohammedan now; but I was a Christian born, and am by blood a Greek, and my dead ancestors, who lie at Smyrna and at Scio, would raise their fleshless hands against me, could they know me as I know myself to-day. My husband bought me from a ruffian, reckless as himself. I was bathed, perfumed, and led to his arms. Bismillah! speak no more of my husband!'

These words removed every vestige of scruple in my heart. A purchased slave! could I ever view her as a wedded wife? But now she drew her feradjee close about her, and fled from my side without a word of to-morrow, or of meeting again; for we had unconsciously approached too near one of the town-gates,

where, as she had previously mentioned, a *dumb* slave awaited her. Here I lost sight of her, having pledged my word of honour neither to follow nor to make inquiries after her.

My heart sank as she left me; and the idea of this delicate and beautiful woman being bought and sold in a market-place, and being now the wedded slave of a sensual Moslem, made me writhe and ponder deeply, as I walked along the dark and muddy streets of Rodosdchig. The town was now sunk in silence, and not a sound was heard, save the occasional howling of wild and wandering dogs—the faithful but ‘unclean beasts,’ of the ungrateful Koran.

‘Love begetteth love,’ so my heart was sorely troubled. I could no longer doubt that this beautiful Oriental loved me. Her dark but brilliant eyes were full of it.

Her sighs but half suppressed as she had hung upon my shoulder; her cheek alternately pale and flushed, were also full of it.

Her tremulous voice—her conversation and manner—her very silence spoke of it—this deep fount of passion opened up within her ardent heart for the *first* time, and yet—pardon me for the chilling close to my sentence—she had been some years *married*.

For two evenings I went to the ruins, but she did not come again. I was well nigh my wit’s end, and more than once narrowly escaped a stab from a hand-jar, or a shot from a pistol, as I rambled about the bazaars and bezestiens, running after every woman whose figure resembled Iola’s, and poking my nose closer to their yashmacks than Oriental propriety permits; so close, indeed, that I was once nearly having my heels turned up by the ferashes of a mufti, despite my red coat and claymore.

Restless, thoughtful, anxious and abstracted—haunted by a pair of beautiful eyes that were the object of my waking thoughts in the morning, the

fast at night, and the source of many a lonely hour of reverie between, I was deeply in love with her before I knew the whole truth, or saw the full danger of our position; and even when cold reason displayed both, I was more charmed than startled by the novelty of this new passion.

And she loved me, the possessor of those beautiful eyes!

Oh, there was something delicious in the thought that this attractive woman, so bright, so brilliant, so happy in spirit—she who unconsciously attracted me to her, as in a better sphere she would have attracted all—even as the sun in his glory is said to absorb the atoms in the air—should love me!

Who was she? Where was she?

Oh, for Aladdin's lamp, or the ring of the Genii!

A thousand dazzling and daring schemes of elopement suggested themselves to me, for Laura's loss and desertion had made me reckless of consequences; but first I had to discover Iola among the closely-veiled hundreds of Rodosdchig; a task about as vain as the proverbial one, of attempting to find a needle in a haystack.

CHAPTER XLI.

A STRANGE TASK.

RETURNING one evening, dispirited and provoked after a second unsuccessful visit to the Ruined Hermitage, on entering the castle of Rodosdchig, I was informed by Callum that the Yuze Bashi had been inquiring for me everywhere, urgently and angrily. Surprised to hear this, I repaired at once to his quarters, and was introduced without ceremony; for the unfortunate captain of Bombardiers was considerably perturbed, and in great tribulation.

I found him seated on a carpet, in a corner of an apartment, the walls of which were, as usual, covered with pious sentences from the Koran. He was smoking a narguillah, through a crystal vase of rose-water, and the window, through which he usually watched the sun dip behind the hills, was open, to admit the sea-breeze, for he was flushed and feverish. An urgent despatch had come from the Seraskier and Kiaja Kiatibi, summoning him to appear without a moment's delay at Constantinople, on peril alike of his military button and his head.

'Beard of Ali!' he exclaimed, 'is not this alarming?'

'Rather,' said I, remembering that the first-named official was generalissimo of the Sultan's forces, and that the second was minister for the Home Department; and now the memory of a thousand speculations, local oppressions, extortions, and tyrannies came appallingly before Hussein, who, in his administration at Rodosdchig, had been about as tender hearted as a Madras collector. Besides, he knew that he had ever been savagely severe with his men; for that obedience which is simple subordination in the European soldier, degenerates into mere slavery in the Turk.

Poor Hadjee Hussein Ebn al Ajuz felt his respected head wag somewhat loosely on his shoulders; but while he prepared to depart at once for Stamboul, in his selfish alarm for himself, the actual interest of his wife and household were nearly forgotten.

His wife; here was a devil of a dilemma! What was to be done? The question would have puzzled the seven wiseacres of the East, had they been with us.

'And now,' said Hussein, relinquishing his narguillah with a sigh, and belting his sabre about his portly person; 'I look to *you* for a great service.'

'If I can serve you in anything, command me.'

'I shall not be gone many days.'

‘Take care, Hussein; I would bet a month’s pay, or a quarter’s field allowance, against the chances of your ever coming back again.’

‘Bismillah! don’t say so, pray—I *shall* come back!’

‘And this service?’ said I.

‘Is to take charge of my wife in my absence.’

‘I beg pardon—did I hear you aright? to take charge of——’

‘My wife,’ continued Hussein, grinding his teeth; ‘there is none other here to whom I can apply. The Moolah Moustapha, curses on him! is—I know not where; and there is no Turkish officer in the castle, save myself. You are a beyzadeh (gentleman’s son) as well as a soldier. I can trust you.’

‘But your wife, Yuze Bashi—’tis a perilous trust, especially in Turkey.’

‘I have no resource,’ said he, stamping his feet with rage; ‘none—I must leave this in ten minutes, and cannot apply to my soldiers, and still less to yours, to act for me in this delicate matter.’

‘Excuse my plainness—but I do not like the duty.’

‘I like you the better for this sincerity, and trust you the more.’

‘But——’

‘But me no buts! You are like Sadd Elbn Kais, who said to the Prophet on his march to Tabuc, “Give me leave to stay behind, and expose me not unto temptation;” because, as the Koran hints, he dared not trust himself among the black-eyed girls of Greece. Your scruples are just; but remember, they who do good shall obtain good, even in this world.’

‘I have never seen the lady,’ said I, doubtfully; ‘is she beautiful?’

The Yuze Bashi knit his brows, for this was approaching forbidden ground; but he answered,

‘Beautiful as a Houri, and young—so young that I

might be her father; so you must watch over her and guard her as if she was concealed by the seven blessed doors of the Prophet Zacharias.'

'So I am to be the guardian of a Turkish harem—what next?' thought I.

'You have still doubts,' said Hussein, with increasing irritation. 'Listen to me; when I was in the castle of Selyvria, my subaltern, afterwards the Cole-agássi Mohammed Saïd, was suddenly ordered to join the train of artillery then embarking for the Crimea, and it was on peril of his head that he loitered for a moment, after receiving the summons of the Seraskier. Here was just such a dilemma as mine; but he came to me, saying,

'Hussein, you must be unto me as *my brother*; my purse, my wife, and my household, I leave in your safe keeping.'

'You have my word of honour,' said I.

'It is unnecessary,' said he, 'for I believe in you.' And so he sailed for the Euxine.

'For three months I had charge of his young and pretty wife. I never saw her; but my servants by turns watched the house, allowing none to enter—none at least but Ali Pasha, who paid me a hundred piastres for every visit; so you see I was very strict, and daily sent my grandfather, who was a decrepit old man, to ask if she required anything.'

'And the subaltern Mohammed Saïd?'

'Came back no more.'

'How?'

'He died a major at the passage of the Alma.'

'And his wife?'

'When her jewels were sold, married Hussein Aga (the steward of Ali Pasha), who paid me fifty piastres each time he left his slippers at the door. But you are an Ingleez—I can trust you to guard my wife better than I guarded the wife of Saïd—so watch her well, though she is pure as the daughter of Imraun,

and gentle as the west wind, or the memory of a love we have lost when young.'

In ten minutes afterwards this coolest, queerest, and most cunning of all Yuze Bashis, had poised his huge bulk on the saddle of a fleet horse. With many sore misgivings, and terrors of the Seraskier and the Kiaja Kiatibi, he took his departure for Stamboul, leaving me in full possession of the fortress, and, more than all, of his wife, about whom, although I had not seen her, I felt some curiosity as he had acknowledged her to be young and beautiful as a Houri.

The plot of my Greek adventures was thickening!

'In love with the wife of one Turk, and solemnly requested, in a fatherly way of course, to look after the rib of *another*!' says Jack Belton, in one of his letters, which I received about this time by the hand of a mounted Koord. 'An arduous duty for a subaltern, Allan, but beware of meddling with such matters in Turkey! If the Horse Guards make light of dangers risked in the field of Mars, they will make lighter still of those encountered in the field of Venus. Allons, my boy! on the 11th February, Fort Alexander at Sebastopol was blown up and entirely destroyed. There is no word of our moving in that direction yet, though it is said that a costermonger's ass would not exchange duties with our poor fellows in the trenches. I send you a box of prime cheroots; the last month's "Army List," the last Scotch newspaper, "Punch," and the corkscrew you required so much, and wishing you safe back again with your pins under the mess mahogany, remain, ever yours,

J. BELTON

'Heraclea, March 1856.'

CHAPTER XLII.

TWO CHARMING EYES.

IF Hussein imagined that Callum Dhu and I were to watch his premises, and to guard the bower of his lady-love, even in the slender way that he watched those of the Cole-agassi Mohammed Said, he was very much mistaken; for, beyond an extra injunction to the sentinel at the gate to admit no man into the little fortress without my express permission I troubled myself no more about the matter; but this order would have proved no bar to an enterprising Turkish lover, or an intriguing Turkish wife, as the apartments of the Yuze Bashi had windows and a private door, which opened into a beautiful rose-garden without the walls; and the stockades, which once formed a barrier in that direction had all been sold long since by the avaricious Hussein for firewood.

The evening of the day after his departure was drawing near when I bethought me of my Unknown Beauty at the Ruined Hermitage, and before bending my steps in that direction, I lingered on the beach for a time, below the castle-wall, in the hope that she might pass that way.

The town was hidden by the weather-beaten masses of the old castle, the round towers of which had for ages formed a landmark to the sea. Reddened under the western sun, the ocean seemed on fire towards its verge, and the clouds were piled over each other, like mountains of burnished brass, or gold and flame, but ever crumbling, changing, and forming anew, as they rolled along the horizon, in all the splendour of an oriental sunset. A gorgeous orange tint was spreading over everything; the distant capes and headlands, isles, and rocks, were all tinged with amber

and violet hue or fiery red; and mirrored in that shining sea which blended into yellow and crimson as its waves rolled away towards the marble island of *Marinora*.

Among the rocks on which this strong old castle of the Grecians stood, the dwarf oak, the flowering arbutus, the broad-leaved bay, the fragrant myrtle, the *spini Christi* of the gallant Crusaders, the fig, the olive, the golden orange, and the luscious pomegranate, with its brown and husky bulbs, were all growing in luxuriance; while over all some giant plane-trees—which, by a marvel, had escaped the cupidity of Hussein, though their stems were seven feet thick—spread their shady branches. The castled promontory was a place of groves, of flowers, and of perfume.

Lingering there, and thinking, almost with a sigh, that such a land was worthy of a better race, there fell something at my feet.

It was three rose-buds—the faded three I had given to my veiled fair one a few nights ago! I started and looked up, just as the white hand that had dropped them was withdrawn from a casement in the old castle-wall close by, and not ten feet from where I was sitting, and where I had been musing for an hour past with Strabo and Herodotus and their old memories, conflicting in my mind, with the recollection of her magnificent eyes, when I found them beaming upon me!

She was still muffled in her yashmack and feradjee, yet I knew her in a moment.

‘Iola!’ I exclaimed; ‘you here?’

‘Here, where I first saw you,’ said she, smiling, and waving a kiss towards me in the prettiest little flirting way imaginable.

‘What—are you then—’

‘The lady of whom you have such solemn charge.’

‘The wife of the Yuze Bashi?’

‘The wife of Hussein Ebn al Ajuz,’ she added, with a gleam in her black eyes.

His prisoner, rather, poor Iola! what have you to live for?’

‘Those who love me—for them I live, and for them only. I am *your* prisoner at present, for Hussein has gone to Stamboul with terror in every hair of his beard.

‘Ah, Iola, you are worthy of a brighter and a better sphere than your husband can ever assign you. There are some things I wish you could understand; but the Mohammedan can form no conception of the position assigned to your sex among the Franks of the western world, where the influence of Christianity and of chivalry have served to exalt and purify the character of woman.’

‘I *do* know all this,’ she answered, impetuously, ‘for I am come of Albanian blood, and love the Christians, though they bow their heads and bend their knees before gilded idols and painted pictures; for among our mountains the Mussulmen cling to the memory of their Christian fathers, and, on certain days, say a prayer at the old stone crosses that mark where they lie. Moreover, I have been taught that it was the place assigned to Mary, the first Christian woman, that gave a nobility and purity to the women of Frangistan. I know this, for I am a Greek by birth, though a Mohammedan by faith; and, oh, blessed be the Moolah Moustapha, he who revealed unto me the divine teachings of the Koran. Yet,’ she added, with tears, and in a tremulous voice, ‘I can remember my dear, dear mother, teaching me to kiss the little cross of the Christian’s triple God!’

I winced a little at this peculiar phrase.

‘Your mother—you remember her, then?’

‘Oh, yes—yes! tall, beautiful, pale, and sad!’ she added, throwing her white hands and dark eyes up—

wards; 'her blood—her hot blood—came over me as she died!'

'Iola! her blood—then she was killed?'

'Murdered—she was barbarously murdered before my eyes—for she was a Greek, and the wife of the gallant Demetrius Vidimo.'

'Good heavens—what is this you tell me?'

'The truth,' she added, weeping; 'the terrible truth—you have heard of my father, then?'

'And you are—'

'Iola Vidimo.'

'The sister of Constantine—'

'Oh, Mohammed! how know you that?' I had a brother—a dear little brother, so named. Can you tell me aught of him? Speak—speak—have you lost your tongue?'

I had much to tell her, but how was I to fashion the tidings that her brother had been shot in the presence of her husband; and that he—Hussein—was one of those brutal soldiers who, after a vain contention for the person of her mother, had so barbarously pistolled her!

'Do you know this coral cross, Iola?'

She uttered a cry.

'It was my beloved mother's, and on that awful day at Acre, sixteen years ago, she tied it round the neck of my boy-brother, when we were separated. Tell me about Constantine—does he live?'

'It is a long story, Iola, and one that cannot be related here; but you forget yourself—you are excited—your voice may be overheard, and I may be seen. Where can we meet—at—the Hermitage?'

'No.'

'Where?'

'Here.'

'Here?'

'In these apartments.'

‘If I am discovered?’ I urged, with a heart that vibrated with strange emotions.

‘Where so safe as within a pistol-shot of your own soldiers?’

‘True—but your honour, Iola?’

‘Is in my own keeping—do you hesitate?’ she added, with a flash in her magnificent eyes.

‘Dearest Iola, I will be here in an hour after sunset—but how to reach the window?’

‘Leave that to me.’

‘Hush!’

‘Some one comes,’ she exclaimed, and shut the latticed-window, as I hurried away in a tumult of thought.

The interruption proceeded only from a wandering Arab, who was drunk with raki, and chaunted aloud the glories of the starlight, which, in his hot and sultry clime, is loved better than the sunshine.

‘*Leili—Leili!* O night—night!’ was the burden of his monotonous and intrusive ditty, for which I felt a decided inclination to punch his head.

I was aware that in forming this appointment with Iola I was making a sad breach in the trust Hussein had been compelled to repose in me; but what the deuce was I to do? An oriental woman is not to be trifled with; for love and hate are strong and sudden passions under an eastern sun; and while heartily despising and wholly disliking Hussein on one hand, I felt myself dazzled and fascinated by his imprisoned odalisque on the other. Then I remembered his cool admissions of the hundred piastres of Ali Pasha, and the fifty piastres of Hussein Aga, the steward, and my scruples melted away.

I lighted one of Jack Belton’s ‘prime cheroots,’ and sat down to think over the matter, and viewed it through the mellowing medium of a glass of brandy-and-water. I resolved to finish my flirtation with all propriety and speed; looked at my watch, and

longed exceedingly for the dark hour, which, in that climate, follows the sinking of the sun.

Alas! how weak are the best resolutions of the human heart, when opposed to the magic influence of *two charming eyes!*

CHAPTER XLIII.

I SCALE THE WINDOW.

WHEN remembering Laura Everingham and the pleasant days of other times, I sighed with mingled regret and bitterness. Was it the old love for her that could not be crushed, or the new love for my beautiful Oriental that I could but imperfectly comprehend, and which had so much of stirring novelty and imminent danger among its chief allurements?

Perhaps I found myself a little in that dilemma which—I trust all fair ladies will pardon the avowal—is not uncommon among men—*loving two women at once*—‘a way we often have in the army,’ as Belton would say.

The new passion which had seized me was certainly strengthened by a sentiment of pique at Laura (oh, Laura, I could love you still!); yet this passion, improper, unwarrantable, name it as you will, friend reader, for this beautiful and too facile Moslem, filled all my heart and fired my imagination with a thousand romantic fancies. I saw all her danger and my own. One moment I lamented the evil chance which had sent me on this solitary duty, and cast me in her path; and the next, I looked at my watch, impatient of the lagging sunset.

Thus did love fire, and reason cool me by turns.

‘I know,’ says a recent writer, ‘that five feet eight inches of female flesh and blood, when accompanied by a pale complexion, black eyes, and raven hair,

is synonymous with strong passions and an unfortunate destiny.' And most unfortunate was your destiny poor Iola!

Alh, those beautiful eyes! How sadly they put all one's wits and self-possession to flight—by their arrows routing horse, foot, and artillery.

I regarded her as a caged bird longing for freedom. I could not conceive it possible that the wife of a Turk—especially such a devilish and unmitigated Turk as the fat Yuze Bashi Hussein—should be otherwise than most unhappy; for the Mohammedan deems women the mere appendage of a household—a necessary comfort among others; a handsome wife, a cup of coffee, and a well-filled chiboque, are the mainsprings of life in the eyes of a true Believer—unless we add a hot bath and a savoury kabob.

With these reflections, an hour after sunset, I found myself in the dewy twilight, under her window, and among those richly-wooded rocks on which the sea of Marmora was rolling in ripples of violet, blue, and gold.

It was one of those brilliant nights when all the constellations are visible, and the poor Mohammedan believes that all the imps of earth are climbing to Heaven, to pry into the actions and overhear the conversation of the blessed, who occasionally pelt and slay them with the falling stars.

I waited for a little time, and then her lattice slowly—I thought reluctantly—unclosed; and two white hands were clapped gently together.

I replied to the signal; the stem of a date-tree and the tough branches of a wild vine enabled me to reach the window with ease, and in a moment I found myself within the sanctum sanctorum of a Mohammedan house—the *anderun*, or female apartments of the Yuze Bashi Hussein.

Iola was trembling; she drew her yashmack closely about her face, and hastened to shut the casement.

Her eyes were full of tears, and that she had been seized by some unusual qualm, or terror of these proceedings, was but too apparent. This was unpleasant, as it gave me the sensation of being somewhat of a conspirator, at least.

The successful peculations of Hussein had enabled him to make the apartments of his Greek wife magnificent. The roof was all of blue velvet, painted with the figures of birds and flowers. The walls were hung with silk, in alternate broad red and white stripes, on which shone gilded sentences from the Koran. An exquisite Persian carpet covered the floor, on which were a profusion of velvet and embroidered cushions of the softest and lightest down arranged in the form of couches; and there were two little stools bearing coffee-trays and chiboques. The lower end of the apartment, which was divided in two by festooned curtains of the finest muslin, was hung with leopard-skins, and trophies of Turkish and Arabian arms of the keenest steel—sabres, hand-jars, carbines, pistols, lances, matchlocks, and ancient horsetailed standards, arranged, in the form of stars, round Tartar shields of brown bull-hide, all glittering with knobs of burnished brass. The perfume of rich pastiles and wood of aloes, burning in tripods of bronze, and the fragrance of six tall candelabra full of fresh flowers, pervaded the apartment, which was lit by two large lamps of fine oil, the smoke of which was consumed by cream-coloured globes, that diffused a warm and voluptuous light.

To complete the picture of this remarkable apartment, let me remind the reader of Iola, who, shrinking a little from me, stood in the centre of it, with irresolution and timidity in her air and eyes.

She wore the hideous feradjee of the Turkish women, which enveloped her whole form, permitting little of its oriental symmetry to be seen; yet from amid its ample folds I could discern her hands, which

were gloveless, and her little feet, which had embroidered slippers, and the faultless form and delicacy of which there were no stockings to conceal.

Her black and brilliant eyes, expressive, languishing, and inquiring, arch and smiling by turns, were now bent on me, timidly and imploringly, under their long lashes and dark eyebrows, which were well arched, defined, and full of character—a charming thing in every girl. Through the thin yashmack, or veil of fine muslin, which concealed the lower part of her face, after that abominable fashion which the restless jealousy of their male tyrants imposes on the women of the East, I could discern that her features were beautiful. Her turban was of muslin, sprigged with gold; she had an ivory pomander ball of attar-gul in one hand; a finely-embroidered handkerchief and a sandal-wood rosary from Mecca in the other.

The respect with which she was treated was puzzling and confusing to her, as a Turkish woman; for in her country the fair sex are kept in a state of subjugation so strict, that a sister dare not sit in her younger brother's presence without first obtaining permission.

I attempted to take her hands, but she withdrew them, and crossed them on her bosom.

'Iola,' said I, tenderly; 'have you ceased to love me?'

'I know not,' she replied, sadly; 'for, as the Koran says, it belongeth to Allah alone to fathom the human heart—and I cannot fathom mine.'

'You are doubtful of your own emotions.'

'I am sad—very sad—having much reason to be so.'

'Allow me to remove this veil, for Heaven's sake, dear Iola!' I continued, trembling with the earnestness of my own sentiments; 'do not repel me,'

She was passive, and I hastened to remove both the

feradjee and the horrid yashmack; and then her fine figure appeared in a close velvet jacket, sleeved only to the elbow, cut low at the neck and open at the bosom; and her hair was gathered about her beautiful head in massive braids, like perfumed and sable silk. She trembled and blushed excessively, for, by the Mohammedan law, aged women who are past the time of marriage *alone* may lay this veil aside.

Her white neck and arms were encircled by strings of Turkish rose pearls, made from the leaves of freshly-culled roses, bruised to a paste, and dried and rolled in oil of roses and musk, and which, being thus beautifully polished and pleasantly perfumed, are favourite ornaments in the East.

She had all that combination of spiritual and voluptuous loveliness which her Grecian sires of old worshipped in the olive-groves of Paphos, and in the temples of Cyprus and Cytheria, when the power of Juno's rival was supreme.

I drew her gently towards me, but still she averted her timid and downcast face.

'Iola—why this change?' I asked, in a pettish tone; 'have you ceased to love me now?'

'I have not ceased to love you,' she answered, while trembling painfully; 'at first you merely struck my fancy, when passing daily in the castle-yard, where you seemed so different in air, so free in step and bearing, from the slow, heavy-headed, and crook-legged soldiers of Hussein; but now you—you—'

'What?'

'Have keenly touched my heart. Alas!' she continued, weeping; '*now* I am more a slave than ever the piastres of Hussein, or the promise I gave him, before the Kadi, made me!'

'Be wary, Iola—remember that your servants may hear us, and our position is full of danger.'

'There is no danger,' she replied, bitterly; 'they are all dumb—voiceless as marble statues.'

‘Dumb?’

‘Mutes—tongueless—and two are deaf, or rendered so.’

‘Horrible! For what reason?’

‘To prevent their being indiscreet.’

‘A wise precaution.’

‘So my husband thinks—but a cruel one.’

After a pause, she added, ‘Would to Allah that he had left me in the care of his friend, the Moolah Moustapha!’

‘Why?’

‘Can you ask me? The Moolah is said to know—like Solymon Ebn Daood—the language of the birds; and every kind of secret knowledge; and thus he had watched over the wanderings of my heart.’

‘Nay, dearest Iola, these scruples and coquettish regrets come somewhat late—and one kiss—’

‘Bismillah! In the name of the most Merciful, touch me not!’ she exclaimed, with a coy alarm that was rather chilling; but she was too late: my kiss was on her pouting lip, and she did not repulse me—for she felt assured, by the night and the silence around us, that no ear was there to overhear us, and no mortal eye but mine to see her unveiled beauty.

Here endeth the first lesson.

CHAPTER XLIV.

TEMPTATION AND FOLLY.

NEVER while life remains shall I forget the hours of delight I passed with Iola.

I know that it was wrong—exceedingly wrong—and blamable in me to have yielded to the tempting peril of engaging in this flirtation—to give my regard

for Iola its mildest term—but what could I do? And having once yielded to the allurements, and encouraged her in it, how could I fly or avoid her?

I met her no more at the Ruined Hermitage, or at the green City of the Silent, for such interviews were full of peril; but I met her again and again, in the seclusion of her own apartments, into which not even the tongueless and mutilated slaves of Hussein could penetrate without a signal being given and permission accorded from within. Thus we had an interview every evening, and had much delightful conversation, and many an hour of mute reverie.

How strange and alluring were those long, deep, and dangerous reveries, which were full of beatings of the heart, and tender meanings which the pen cannot depict, and no written language can convey!

My word plighted to the absent Hussein—my honour, and more than all, *her* honour—yea, her very life, were in peril, yet I trifled with both, like the heedless, reckless, and it may be, selfish boy I was!

Poor Iola!

I related the story of her brother's desertion, recapture, trial, and the death he suffered so courageously in our presence at Heraclea. I mentioned the two little incidents which brought me in personal contact with him; first in the public khan, and secondly at the last terrible scene in the valley of the mosque, where from his dead hand I took the little coral cross, which by a strange course of events I was now enabled to suspend upon the bosom of his sister; and as I did so, I thought of all that high-spirited and noble Albanian soldier would have felt had he seen that sister, now a Mahomedan, (the wife of one of those barbarous Osmanli who pistolled his stately mother at Acre,) and hanging in all her loveliness, dissolved in tears and grief upon the bosom of a stranger—a soldier of Frangistan!

I deemed it well for Hussein, well for Iola, and particularly fortunate for myself, that the fiery young lieutenant of Albanians was sleeping in his quiet grave, where the slaves of the Mir Alai Saïd had laid him.

Tempered by politeness, and by that respect and deference to a female which have come down to us from the days of the Crusaders and the Cavaliers, the manner of a European lover is so different from the bearing of an Oriental one, that there can be little wonder if the heart of a Mahomedan woman is easily won by the stiff-hatted, tight-coated, and long-trouser'd denizen of that ample and mysterious district known to her only as Frangistan. In the matter of love and wedlock, the Turkish woman has as little idea of freedom as the Turk has of the arguments advanced by S. Bufford, gent.—a certain learned pundit, who, in the reign of King William III., wrote an Essay ‘against persons marrying *without their own consent*.’

‘Oh, that I had the right to love you, as I have the right to hate the Yuze Bashi Hussein!’ said Iola, after one of her long silences. ‘Oh the odious! May the heel of my slipper be ever on his mouth—and yet—and yet he is my husband!’

‘I wince always at that word in your pretty mouth, Iola!’

‘In loving you, I cease to love him—if indeed I ever loved him. Allah did not create woman with two hearts—with one under each breast, as the Moolah Moustapha affirms.’

‘But our love is full of sadness as well as peril, Iola—for a day is coming when I must leave you.’

‘Oh, leave me not!’ she exclaimed, passionately. ‘Must my love be sacrificed to this coarse and untutored Osmanli? The day after you leave me I shall have ceased to live.’

‘Leave you I must, Iola.’

‘Why?—when?’

‘When ordered—for I, too, have Yuze Bashis and Mir Alais and Pashas who command me.’

‘By the love with which you have inspired me!’ she said in a piercing whisper, with her black eyes flashing in brilliance through their tears; ‘I conjure you to take me with you, for I cannot live without you, and without you I must die!’

With these words she threw herself upon my breast, heedless of everything.

‘I will take you with me, Iola, if I can—’

‘Nay you must—you shall!’

‘Yes—yes, at all hazards.’

‘Why should I die so young?’

‘You will go with me—I promise you,’ I replied, heedless of the future; and then she gave me a smile of confiding fondness that would have melted the heart of our old friend Bluebeard.

‘My husband will be here anon, and his jealousy—’

‘Well—fear him not, Iola; jealousy gives a relish to love—just as musk does to sherbet, or pepper to a kabob,’ said I, gaily.

‘But alas,’ said she, with a shudder, ‘the jealousy of a Turk is terrible! Could I teach Hussein that love and respect—or love and affection are *two* distinct sentiments?’

‘Give me but the love, Iola, and bestow the affection on whom you please.’

‘Allah!’ she exclaimed, with a shudder, and a gleam of terror in her expressive eyes, as she shrunk from my arm; ‘what if *you* should be Hussein?’

‘I Hussein—I the Yuze Bashi?’ I asked, in astonishment.

‘Yes—O Mahmoud! there is a strange sparkle in your eye.’

‘How could such a thing be?’ I asked, smiling at her simplicity.

‘Genii give men the power to assume the forms,

faces, and voices of others for a time,' she replied, a little reassured; 'have you never heard so?'

'Never.'

'How strange! Have you not heard of the wise Sultan Solymon, and his magic ring—of the evil Geni Sakhur, and how they changed forms and faces for forty days?'

'Never, on my honour.'

'Listen, and I will tell you,' said she, clasping her white hands upon my left shoulder, and reclining her brow upon my cheek, while her speaking eyes were lifted up to mine, as we reclined among the soft and silky cushions: 'listen, and I will tell you a story—oh, a very wonderful story—of things that happened long long ago,' she continued, while her fine eyes dilated and filled with light; 'long before Othmon the Bonebreaker sat on the Sultan's throne, and long before Palaeologus perished beneath the cimitars of the Janissaries—but kiss me once again before I begin.'

The request was soon granted, and in her pretty little prattling way, Iola told me the following tale of wonder and magic.

CHAPTER XLV

STORY OF THE WISE KING AND THE WICKED GENI.

'Once upon a time there was a king of Sidon, who had a daughter, and in beauty she surpassed all the maids of Asia. You must know that this was in the days when all the kingdom of Frangistan was hidden in darkness, and when none dwelt there but little men who lived on human flesh, whose faces were in their stomachs, who had but one leg, with which they made prodigious leaps in the dark from the summit of one hill to the summit of another, and when there

dwelt in Assyria a mighty Sultan, named Solymon Ebn Daood, who ruled all the land that lies between the Euphrates on the east and the Mediterranean on the west, and from Mount Taurus on the north to Arabia on the south.

‘He was a great and wondrous king; for after he slew—as an offering unto heaven—those thousand winged horses which came to him out of the sea near Damascus, Allah gave him power over the wind, by which he could cause it to blow at his will, over the hot deserts of Arabia, over Suristan, the Land of Roses, and over his own blessed realm. The Koran tells us, that on this wind, he could transport his mighty throne—the star and work of the Genii—from Damascus unto the hot shores of the Indian sea, in a single day; and unto him were subjected all the winged Genii; all the blue devils who dive for pearls in the sea of Kolzom, and those who build cities of gold and silver, and palaces of precious stones.

‘Having gone to war with the king of Sidon, whose territories he had desolated by a cold north wind, he resolved to besiege the city, and ordered his magic carpet to be spread without the gates of Mecca, and it reached therefrom half-way to Jidda on the sea-shore. This carpet was a mighty piece of green silk fabricated by the Genii, who did all that he commanded them to do, as we are told in the 22nd Chapter of the Holy Koran. On this carpet stood the throne whereon he was seated, and around it were all his army. horse and foot, bowmen and spearmen, slingers and swordsmen, marshalled by Asaf the vizier.

‘The moment they were all in order, he commanded them, to the number of a hundred thousand, to keep steady in their ranks, and avoid the *edge* of the carpet; then he placed his magic signet ring to his lips, and lo! There came a wind out of the eastern sky which lifted up the carpet, with the throne, the troops, and

all that were thereon, and bore it through the air so swiftly that like the shadow of a cloud, they traversed all the blue vault of heaven, above Khaibar, where the well of bitter water flows; over the mountains that look down on Tabuc; over Arabia the Rocky; over the domes of Jerusalem, and the dark waves of the Dead Sea, and over Acre, until they alighted on the sea shore of Phœnicia, near the city of Sidon, which stands on a plain that extends two miles inward from the ocean; and this was but the journey of half a day to Solymon and his air-borne host.

‘In great terror, the king of Sidon, when he saw this vast cloud darkening all the sky above the city, shut up his daughter Jerada, who had black hair that hung down to her knees, and who had eyes that were larger than her mouth; he placed her in a great round tower, which stands upon a mountain near the sea, and was built for him by the Geni Sakhur, who was his chief friend. But Solymon assaulted the city, sacked and destroyed its manufactories of linen and fine purple dyes, its schools of commerce and astronomy. He slew the king, while Asaf stormed the tower upon the mountain, and capturing the beautiful Jerada, brought her safely to Mecca before night-fall, and before the cry for evening prayer had rung from the minarets of the temple; and with her were his throne, his soldiers, and all the plunder of the Phœnician capital covering the magic carpet—and all this was but the task of one day.

‘But with all his power, this mighty Sultan now became the slave of his slave, and the worshipper of his bondswoman; for Jerada was beautiful as a houri of Paradise. Her figure was tall and full of majesty and grace. Her beauty was like her bearing, noble as became the daughter of a king. Her voice was sweetly modulated, and of all his three hundred and ten wives, not one could wile or soothe the soul of Solymon like Jerada, when her snowy arms were

thrown around the harp, and she sang the songs of Palestine. Veiled by long black lashes, her eyes were violet coloured, and of a deep, strange, and mournful tint and expression—as she never forgot that she was the daughter of Sidon's fallen king. Her skin was white as the foam on the sea; her hands and arms were exquisite; her manner soft and polished; her spirit gentle; her intelligence quick; her wit brilliant; and as his own unfathomable soul, the great lord of all Assyria loved her.

‘But in her secret heart, Jerada never ceased to lament the fall of Sidon and her father's fate; and a thousand times did Solymon surprise her in her chamber, weeping bitterly. Then his heart smote him for the wrong he had done to one so fair, and he desired the Genii to fashion an image of the slaughtered king, and to mould it of wax, painted like life; to clothe it in fine robes of Tyrian purple, and to set upon its head the captured crown of Sidon. This image was placed in the chamber of Jerada, where she and her maidens wept at its feet and worshipped it morning and evening for the term of *forty* days; but, on Asaf the vizier discovering this wicked practice, he hastened in terror to Solymon and said,

“Dost thou permit this foul idolatry? If so, the curse that fell on Ad will fall on thee, and this worship of a waxen image must not be permitted in the palace.”

‘When Solymon heard these words, he drew his cimitar, and by one blow destroyed the work of the Genii, and it vanished with a whistling sound. He chastised the beautiful Jerada by shutting her up in a tower, on the door of which he placed his magic seal; and then he went out into a wild and desert place, where he wept over the evils that had followed the fall of Sidon, and made supplications to Allah, crying aloud, as the blessed Koran tells us,

“Oh forgive me, and accord unto me a kingdom

which may not be obtained by any one after me, for thou art the giver of thrones.”*

‘But Allah resolved to chastise his negligence, and it happened thus:—

It was the custom of this great sultan, when he bathed or perfumed himself, to intrust his magic ring or signet, on the possession of which depended all his power and his kingdom, to one of his fairest favourites: and one day, when retiring to the bath, he placed it on the finger of Jerada, for with all his wisdom the wisest man—yea, even Solymon—may be but a fool before a beautiful woman. Jerada, as she gazed upon the ring, thought of her aged sire and fallen Sidon—of his nameless grave and her fallen fortune, and uttered a wish for “vengeance.”

At that moment there was a tremulous motion in the air, and the Geni Sakhur, the friend of her father—the spirit who had built the great tower which yet stands upon the mountain over against Sidon—appeared before her *in the likeness of Solymon*, and received from her the wonderful ring. Then the eyes of the Geni sparkled with triumph; he breathed upon it, and lo! when the Sultan came from the bath, he was an old and withered man, so changed in aspect that none knew him; and then, mocked by the courtiers, threatened by Asaf the vizier, hooted by the pages and beaten by the guards, he was driven from the palace gates, and forced to wander in the desert, eating dates, berries, and wild fruits for the space of *forty* days, returning ever and anon to beg alms at the gates of Mecca, and at the porticos of his own palace.

‘Here he saw the Geni Sakhur, on the terraces and in the gardens, clad in his royal garments, wearing his likeness and having his voice, toying with the lovely Jerada and the most beautiful of the ladies, who crowded his magnificent household, and the

* See “Koran,” xxxviii.

pious soul of this king—the mightiest that ever swayed the sceptre of Assyria—swelled with futile rage, for his ring was on Sakhur's finger, and he was powerless as the meanest slave.

‘Moreover, this evil Geni, by the power of which he became possessed, governed the whole kingdom, and while seated on its throne, made such startling alterations in the laws, that Solyman, when he heard them proclaimed by sound of trumpet and timbrel at the brazen gates of Mecca, rent his garments and wept, while the astonished Asaf threw dust upon his head and beard in grief and wonder.

‘At length *the forty days*, the exact period during which the waxen image had been worshipped under Solymon's roof, were expired; and then the devil Sakhur, with a yell of laughter, sprang from the throne on which he had been seated, with Jerada by his side, and to the terror of the faithful Vizier Asaf, and of all the courtiers, spread out his dusky wings, and ascending straight into the air, flew away with a speed that made him cleave the sky like a bird; and as he winged his way to the home of the Genii in the mountains of Kaf, he flung the magic ring of Solymon into the sea of Galilee.

‘As it cleft the deep blue waters, its glittering stones and shining gold caught the eye of a large and silvery fish, which immediately swallowed it; but soon thereafter the fish began to writhe in great agony, and was cast by the ebbing tide upon the yellow sands near the then ruined and desolate city of Sidon.

‘It happened that the Sultan Solymon, in form and face an old man, bent with years and clad in tattered garments, was wandering in hunger and destitution along the sands, eating shell-fish, when he espied this large and silvery tenant of the deep, writhing on the shore; he straightway killed it by a stone, and making a fire of the wood called markh, which if rubbed together will burn, be it ever so green, he

prepared to cook it, and lo! from its belly there dropped the golden ring—the magic signet by which the power of all Assyria was held—and with a prayer of joy he placed it on his finger!

‘In a moment he recovered his stately stature, his manly beauty, his youthful face and curling beard; and by uttering a wish, found himself in the hall of his palace at Mecca, where he gave thanks unto Allah, and proceeded at once to punish Jerada and the evil Geni Sakhur. The beautiful daughter of Sidon he enclosed in a flinty rock on Mount Horeb, and there, by a touch of his ring, sealed her up for ever. The Geni, by a whispered wish, he dragged shrieking through the air from the far and snowy recesses of Kaf. Then tying a huge stone to his neck, he flung him headlong into the lake of Tiberias in Galilee, near which stands a town built by Herod; but the Geni instantly changed his form, and arose from the lake in the form of a small worm, which crept towards Solymon, intent on revenge.

‘Now, as we all know, it would take a small worm a great many years to creep from the Lake of Tiberias to Jerusalem, where the Sultan Solymon was then finishing the great temple which was to stand there for ever in lieu of the tabernacle of Moosa. He employed a million of Genii to complete the work, and they toiled at it day and night, and over every Genii was a warden, who made his secret mark upon their work, and these spirits had secret signs and words by which they knew each other—the signs and words that were written on the seal of Solymon. But this mighty sultan perceiving that he was becoming aged, and that his end was drawing nigh, prayed to Allah, that, when he died, his death might be concealed from the Genii, who, if they discovered it, would all fly back to Kaf, and leave unfinished that gorgeous temple, which was yet to be the wonder of the world.

‘And kind Allah ordained it should be thus.

‘When Solymon died—for who among us would live for ever?—his spirit passed away as he stood at prayer, leaning on his long staff of plane-tree—the wood of the ark—and this staff supported his dead body erect and fresh, and comely as when in life, and as if he was still overseeing the work, for a year and a day, until the Genii were placing the last golden pomegranate on the shining summit of the temple, in the centre of which shone *a vast eye* that seemed to be behold everything; and all this while, the impatient worm was still creeping towards the dead Sultan.

‘The worm reached the staff and gnawed it through; then on the very instant the temple was completed in all its parts, the body of the Sultan fell heavily to the ground; his golden crown rang on the marble pavement; and now, with a yell of rage, the overtaken Genii found that they had been deluded, and that their master had been dead for a year and a day!

‘Thus it is that the twenty-fourth chapter of the Koran saith these words:—

“‘When we decreed that Solymon should die, nothing revealed his death unto them except the *creeping thing* of the earth, which gnawed his staff, and then his body fell down.”

‘Such was the story of the Wise King and the Wicked Geni.’

‘And Jerada,’ said I, laughing, ‘did she still remain sealed up in the rock, or did the death of Solymon dissolve the spell?’

‘Jerada wept and prayed sorely, for she had not deceived Solymon; but had been herself deceived by the wicked Geni Sakhur, who, as a traitor and falsifier, was worthy of the most severe death, the just could inflict—’

‘Right, O Allah!’ exclaimed a hoarse fierce voice

behind us; 'right, wretch, and you have named your own sentence!'

A low cry of terror left the white lips of Iola, and springing to my feet, I found myself confronted by the two flaming eyes, the levelled pistols, and the portly person of the furious Yuze Bashi, Hussein Ebn al Ajuz!

CHAPTER XLVI.

HUSSEIN'S WRATH.

WHILE listening to this old Arabian legend, which fell so prettily from the lisping tongue of Iola, I never thought of Hussein, who, having transacted with the Seraskier his business, which merely concerned the shipment of certain guns and shot for Varna, was then galloping along the paved road to Rodosdchig.

Intent upon the dark and tender eyes, the white neck, and soft tresses of Iola, I did not hear the ruffle beaten on the brass drum of the Main-guard as he cantered into the court; nor did I hear the tramp of his horse or his heavy foot-fall on the old Greek marble stair, or in the anteroom; nor did I remember in any way that a being so ungainly and so decidedly unwelcome existed in the world, until the muslin hangings were fiercely rent asunder, and he stood before us, his countenance livid with just rage, his dark eyes gleaming like two live coals, and his long brass-barrelled Turkish pistols levelled at us, one in each hand.

I had no weapon but my sword, which I immediately unsheathed, while instinctively placing myself between him and the mute and terror-stricken Iola, who sank grovelling before him, bowing her beautiful head to the carpet, and murmuring only—

‘Mercy! mercy! vai! vai! woe—woe!’

Alarm for her, and shame for myself, deprived me of utterance. I could only interpose the long, glittering blade of the Highland claymore between us, and gaze on Hussein’s angry front, debating whether or not I should slash him across the fingers, lest he might shoot one or both of us; and I remembered poor Callum Dhu and his thirty comrades, who would be at the mercy of Hussein’s hundred Bombardiers, and might, moreover, be exposed to the fury of the populace, from whom not even the Greek Archbishop of Rodosdchig could protect them.

‘Oh, face of brass and heart of steel! what do I see?’ he exclaimed. Then uttering that expression of grief which is so frequently in the mouths of Mohammedans, he rent his white beard, and cried, ‘We are God’s, and unto Him we shall return! You have darkened the light of my eyes, oh Frank! but may the fiends have me if I take not a sure and terrible vengeance for this!’

‘Hear me?’ I implored, without knowing what to say.

‘Nay—stir not a step, or these balls shall whistle through your brain!’

‘Yuze Bashi, hear me, I beg of you, and you shall know all.’

‘All!’ he reiterated, stamping with rage; ‘ye shall wish yourselves like the brutal Greeks, from whom this woman sprang—deaf and dumb and without understanding—before the measure of my vengeance is full. Her fate she knows; but for *thee*, accursed Frank—thou who hast reft me of her, who was to be unto me a garment and a comfort, as the blessed Koran saith—by the seven heavens and the seven earths, and by the hand that hung and cleft the moon in the firmament, I will have your heart to tread beneath my heel; but first the ferashes shall apply the bastinado until every toe you have has

drooped from your feet in blood! Hallo, Chaoush. Hallo, Onbashi!

'Do with me as you please, Effendi, but spare her.'

'As for her, the hand of a profligate Christian has touched her—a hand which defiles all it touches—yea, even the food of a dog; so, from this hour, she is alike divorced—thrice, I say it, divorced, divorced and accursed by Hussein!'

With these words, he pulled both triggers at once; but the pistols, having old flint locks, by the mercy of heaven, flashed in the pan and hung fire. Then, finding the necessity of immediate action, just as he was about to draw his sabre, I grasped him by the gilded waist-belt, and hurling him, with all my force, back upon the cushions which lay piled upon the floor behind him, I locked Iola into an inner apartment—kissed her cold hands, and rushed by a back door to the foot of the staircase. Then crossing the castle-yard, I regained my quarters, where I was immediately joined by Callum Dhu, who, ever kind and watchful, had been awaiting my return.

Alarmed, on seeing me spring in with my sword drawn, and excitement in my eye,

'In the name of the devil, co-dhalta,' said he, 'what is the matter?'

I told him that I had been visiting the wife of the commandant; that he had returned suddenly, and finding us at coffee, had been seized by a fit of jealousy, and nearly pistolled me; but that I had knocked him down, and made my escape.

This explanation was all truth, and yet was but a compromise between it and falsehood; and so I thought Callum suspected, for his keen dark Highland eye loured; his face flushed for a moment, and he gave me a glance of scrutiny such as he had never ventured to do as my fosterer in Glen Ora, and still less since we had joined the regiment. Beside

all this, Callum Dhu was sufficiently well read in the writings of Morier, Frazer, Slade, and Franklin to know that the domestic privacy of an oriental household cannot be trifled with, and, after a moment's reflection—

'Glen Ora,' said he—for he never forgot my old Highland patronymic—'evil will come of all this, for you have been unwary; and there will be the life of one—it may be three—lost. Have you thought of that?'

'I *have* thought of it,' said I, irritated on finding a Mentor in him; 'and I tell you, Callum, that I care not whose life is lost, if the poor innocent Greek girl I have compromised is saved from the ferocity of this Turkish officer.'

'True—but how?' was the calm query.

'How—I care not how; but saved she must be, Callum. As for that true type of an Eastern tyrant—the ignorant, sensual, and avaricious Hussein—what care I for him?'

'Yet he trusted to your honour, Allan Mac Innon!'

I felt the quiet reproach, and dared not follow up my own thoughts, for I felt how weak is the human heart, and vain the resolves of human reason, when opposed to the wiles of beauty. Lest some outrage should be attempted upon me, as we knew not what lengths the Yuze Bashi's wrath might carry him, Callum suggested that one of our men should be posted, with his bayonet fixed and musket loaded, at the foot of the stair which ascended to the tower wherein we had our quarters; and, to watch over the safety of Iola, my faithful fellow proposed that he and Donald Roy, who was a sharp-witted, active, and hardy West-Highlander, should guard by turns the residence of the exasperated governor of Rodos-chig; and after these arrangements, I sat down to

write to Jack Belton for his advice, and composed the letter, and my own mind, over a devilled bone, a bottle of Kirkissa wine, and cigar.

During my conference with Callum we heard various noises and cries of alarm proceeding from the quarters of the Yuze Bashi; and each of these sounds had a terrible echo in my heart, for, when believing that they proceeded from the apartment of Iola, the main strength of my fosterer scarcely sufficed to restrain me from rushing out, sword in hand, to her assistance.

All became quiet after a time. Then we heard the clatter of horse's hoofs, as a mounted messenger galloped from the fort, which made me suspect that our Yuze Bashi had sent some awkward instructions to the Bostandgi Bashi of the police; or worse still, to some of the lawless Bashi-Bozouks, an orta or regiment of whom, were cantoned at Carga, not far from us; but ere long, we learned that it was only a slave, dispatched by Iola for a certain learned Jewish Hakim, who arrived in due time, and reported, that after imprecating a torrent of maledictions on 'the chief of the bare-legged *Yenitcheries*,' as he termed the brave steady lads of her Britannic Majesty's — Highlanders, the Yuze Bashi had suddenly become speechless and black in the face; that his eyes had started in their sockets, and he became senseless, as if ghoules or ghinns were strangling him; that he was recovered only by bleeding and having his temples bound with a fillet, on which were traced the signs of the Zodiac. After this, he was able to make known that he wished to see the Moolah Mustapha, who had accordingly been sent for.

The plain English of all this I supposed to be, simply, that Hussein, being very short in stature, stout, pursy, and thick-necked, in his phrenzy had brought on a fit of apoplexy, the effects of which—

if they had no better cure than the signs of the Zodiac—I believed would at least keep him quiet until I was recalled to Heraclea by Major Catanagh, an event for which I now devoutly prayed.

CHAPTER XLVII.

SEQUEL TO CHAPTER FORTY-THREE.

A MORNING or two after this, there was no small consternation existing among the soldiers of my little band at Rodosdchig, when Dugald Mac Ildhui, my sergeant, paraded them as usual, and neither Callum Dhu nor his master were forthcoming. Corporal Donald Roy was despatched to make inquiries, but returned to the parade with tidings that he had knocked repeatedly at Mr. Mac Innon's door without receiving any answer; and as it was open, he had ventured to peep in, and saw but too plainly that his camp-bed had not been slept in over-night; that the last fragment of an unextinguished candle was still burning, but streaming and guttering on the table; that his sword and belt and some of his uniform lay strewed about; but that neither he nor Callum Dhu had been seen since last night, when the Turkish sentinel at the barrier-gate thought he perceived them both pass hurriedly out, and take the path which led towards the sea.

The faithful sergeant and his corporal spent that day, all the next, and all the succeeding in vain surmises and in futile inquiries; no trace of their officer and missing comrade was to be found; and as the story of Hussein's rage and imprecations against me, for causes unknown, had by some means—perhaps through the chaoush or onbashi of the Bombardiers—reached the little band of Celts, they began to look darkly and inquiringly in each other's faces, while

vague whispers of assassination gained strength and corroboration among them. The sergeant and his corporal had been among the wandering Highland dancers who went to Paris in 1848, and were so near being shot by the Republican troops for appearing kilted and plaided, with dirk and claymore, in the Place de Carrousel; and having imbibed thereafter a great doubt of, and detestation for, all foreigners whatsoever, they came to the conclusion that we had met with an untimely end.

The circumstance of a boat being found by a Galiotgi adrift near the castle, containing an officer's regimental sash, spotted with blood, and a Highland private's Glengarry bonnet, increased this terrible mystery, and led the soldiers to believe that, beyond a doubt, the unfortunate Ensign Mac Innon and his *fidus Achates* had become food for the fishes of the Propontis, and the whole beach around the bay was searched in vain for their bodies.

The sergeant—a sober, steady, and brave soldier, one of the many who were daily forced from their homes into our ranks, for he was an evicted Sutherland Highlander (evicted because he was unable to pay the marriage-tax of forty shillings now daily and illegally exacted by the grasping factors of the north and west Highlands from the people, to keep the number of the population down)—procured a thin yellow sheet of Turkish paper, and after holding a solemn council of war, in which a vote of vengeance was unanimously passed on the Yuze Bashi, who was still under the Jewish Hakim and the signs of the Zodiac, he squared his elbows, made a broad margin, carefully nibbed his pen, and proceeded to prepare an official report to Major Catanagh, recounting the strange disappearance of the officer commanding the detachment; and this report caused no small excitement at the mess-table when it reached Hecalea.

Some weeks elapsed before this mystery was cleared up; and the origin of it all was as follows:—

One evening, after the arrival of the Moolah Moustapha, of whose presence at the fortress I had an intuitive dread, an unusual bustle, and then a dead silence were remarked in the apartments of the Yuze Bashi; and in half an hour after sunset, Callum Dhu, with his dark face flushed and excited, came in haste to inform me, that a boat—one of those straight prowed and heavily-built craft, called by the Turks a *ko-chamba*—with several men in it, had come from the harbour round the promontory of the castle, and was now close to the sea staircase, a flight of steps hewn in the rocks near the lower gun-battery. He added more startling intelligence.

A loud whistle, as a signal, had been given by someone in this boat, and thereafter two men, one of whom he suspected to be the Moolah Moustapha, had left the postern gate, half leading and half dragging a veiled woman, ‘who sobbed heavily,’ concluded Callum, ‘but who made not the least resistance, as if all hope in her heart was dead, poor thing!’

I cannot express the horror with which I heard this information. Innumerable stories of Turkish cruelty, of the burial of living women, sacked and drowned in the Bosphorus; of the gashed and mangled bodies of others that have been found across the cables of our own ships, or were raked up by them as they swung at their anchors by the Golden Horn; of bodies stranded and torn by jackals on the shore at Pera, with a thousand real and imaginary instances of the terrible result of oriental jealousy and domestic cruelty, flashed upon my memory, and I determined to save Iola from the dreadful fate impending over her, or to die in the attempt.

In the beginning of Islamism—women who were supposed to have broken their vows were stoned to death, or immured in a stone wall; for the fourth

chapter of the Koran commands that they shall be "imprisoned in separate apartments until death release them."

'You are my foster brother, and will stand by me. Callum?' said I, grasping his hand.

'To the death will I stand by you; but on what errand go you now?'

'To save this woman.'

'The wife of the Yuze Bashi.'

'Yes—the Greek girl, Iola.'

'From what?'

'Death!'

'Death?'

'Yes—yes! hand me my dirk and the shot-belt for the revolver; get your bayonet. The Yuze Bashi means to drown his wife in a sack—'

'Dhia! it is horrible!—like a puppy-dog.'

'Or, it may be, to behead her by a slash of a yata-ghan. If either takes place, her blood will be on our heads, Callum—on mine, at least.'

'I don't understand all this; but, dioul! I will follow you anywhere, Mac Innon—so lead on.'

I slung my dirk and revolver-pistol to my belt; Callum buckled on his bayonet; we hurried from the castle, and soon reached the landing-place, where a few boats were usually moored.

The night was dark and cloudy; no moon was visible, and the sea of Marmora lay between its headlands like an ocean of ink; yet, by stooping low, I could perceive between me and the white streak that lingered at the horizon a large boat, containing several dark figures, being pulled like a great funeral barge, silently and rapidly to seaward.

'Tis those we are in search of,' said Callum, as we leaped on board of a little Greek caique, slashed through the painter, shipped the oars, and pulled sturdily and breathlessly after them.

In such a land as Turkey, where, in 1808, the

Sultan Mahmoud II. could quietly, and quite as a matter of course, or as a piece of state policy, strangle his deposed brother Mustapha IV., together with his infant son; and also command four of his female slaves to be sacked and drowned, because they were likely to increase the royal family by presenting him with four little Harem-zadehs; where even his son, the present Sultan Abdul Medjid, with all his vaunted civilization, has committed more than one act of domestic barbarity, more especially the assassination of the two little princes, his nephews; and where too many of the atrocities recorded by travellers in all ages are *still* perpetrated, I knew all that hung over the doomed wife of Hussein; all I had to repent of, and all I had to fear!

Ill-fated Iola!

While all the rest of the world has been pushing on the rapid march of *progression*, Turkey like Spain, has stood still. The Turkish woman, says the Baron de Tott, when inspired by an irresistible love and desire of freedom, overcomes every obstacle, and at times escapes from the harem, her domestic prison. 'These unfortunate creatures,' he continues, always carry off their jewels with them, and consider nothing too good for their lover. Blinded by their unhappy passion, they do not perceive that this wealth often becomes the cause of their destruction. The villains to whom they fly never fail at the end of a few days to punish their temerity, and ensure the possession of their effects by a crime which, however monstrous, the government is least in haste to punish. The bodies of these miserable women, stripped and mangled, are frequently seen floating in the Port (of Constantinople) under the very windows of their murderers; and these dreadful examples, so likely to intimidate the rest, and prevent such madness, neither terrify nor amend.'

But to resume: surely, steadily, and lustily, with all our strength, Callum and I shot the light caique after

the great dark barge of these voyagers in the dusk, at every stroke causing her to fly through the seething water as with each effort of the bending oars we almost lifted her into the air, and made the black waves boil in her white wake astern. The clatter and straining of our oars between the tholing pins, and the noise made by the caique as it surged through the water, soon gained the attention of the rowers in the large boat, which was now about half a mile from the shore, and they paused for a minute to observe us. Then one black figure stood erect, and peered into the gloom of the darkened sea.

He was the Moolah Moustapha.

The voice of one in authority now warned us to keep off, for the large boat contained two topchis, of Hussein's company, and four armed policemen of the Bostandgi Bashi, with one or two galiondgis.

'Dioul!' exclaimed Callum; 'what is he saying?'

'That they will fire, if we do not keep off.'

'How many of them are there?'

'One—two—six—seven, if not more.'

'Including the Moolah?'

'Who is almost nobody.'

'Two to six, at least,' pondered Callum.

'But I have six shots in my revolver.'

'If I had only my old rifle here,' sighed Callum, 'I could pick them all off like black-cocks!'

Two pistols flashed from the kochamba, and threw a sudden gleam across the water; but their bullets whistled harmlessly over us. Exasperated by this, my foster-brother cried,

'Kill every mother's son of them, Mac Innon—quick—before they reload again!'

But I dared not fire, lest one of those dark figures should be Iola.

'Pull hard,' said I; 'we are not twenty yards apart now; board and attack them with your bayonet—I'll make good use of my dirk, believe me!'

‘Fire—fire! are they not three to one?’

‘One Highlandman is equal to three Turks any day.’

‘True, Mac Innon,’ exclaimed Callum, entering at once into the spirit of the attack; ‘hoigh—hurrah!’

But never was assault more fatally devised, or more signally unsuccessful.

In a moment the prow of the caique came with a frightful crash against the quarter of the lumbering kochamba; the shock threw me forward upon the thwarts, by one of which I was severely cut and bruised about the face, while I narrowly escaped three pistol shots, one of which grazed and slightly wounded Callum’s left hand; but our misfortunes were only beginning; for in the concussion I lost my revolver-pistol. On relinquishing the oar, and springing up, I instinctively grasped for it at my waist-belt—but alas! the pistol was gone. For a moment I groped wildly and fruitlessly about the bottom of the caique, without finding it; and then, as no time could be lost, with my naked dirk, I sprang madly on board the kochamba, followed by Callum, who made free use of his bayonet, and now a deadly struggle took place; the Turks assailing us with batons, drawn sabres, and the brass knobs of their long-barrelled pistols, amid a storm of yells and barbarous maledictions.

Grasping one powerful galiondgi by the waist, Callum flung him fairly overboard, tossing him into the air like an India-rubber ball; and he was left by his fatalist friends to sputter and sink, or scramble on board as best he could.

The huge boat swayed from side to side, plashing and surging heavily, while we fought and grappled like wild animals; but though individually more than a match for any of the Osmanlies present, Callum and I were overborne by their number, and must inevitably have been shot, stabbed and tossed overboard, but for the exertions and authority of the Moolah Moustapha, who would not allow them to slay

us; but under pain of his everlasting curse and displeasure, commanded them to spare our lives, "as he had eaten bread and salt with us." Though four of the fellows whom we encountered, and with whom we had exchanged several buffets, blows, and stabs in the dark, belonged to the unscrupulous force of the Bostandgi Bashi, or Police Inspector on the banks of the Bosphorus and its adjacent villages, the voice of the Moolah, who ordered us to be taken alive, proved all powerful. We were soon beaten down, and severely, roughly, even brutally, tied like sheep with a wet rope which lay steeping in the bilge at the bottom of the boat; and while we were lying helplessly there, the revengeful Osmanlies trampled and spat upon us, reviling us at the same time with such epithets as can only come from a vituperative Turkish tongue.

'Allah burn you, you dog's sons—you imps of Shaitaun!' said one whom they frequently named Zahroun, and who seemed to be half Bostandgi and half seaman.

'The drunken Ingleez—whose dogs are they?' asked another, mockingly.

'They worship the devil, like the wild Yezidies of Iraun—the children of hell, and are false as the falsest Yahoudi. Dirt be upon their beards!' said the ferocious Zahroun.

'Son of Shaitaun,' said another, kicking me so severely that I thought my right arm was broken, 'it is your khismet (destiny) to die here, and I know not why the simple Moolah spares you.'

'Infidel that you are,' said a fourth, 'your khismet is written on your forehead by the finger of the prophet—and it is a skinful of the cold Bosphorus.'

To all this, the others added coarse and vulgar ribaldry, such as one might expect from the boatmen and Bostandgi of the Bosphorus, a depraved and murderous class at all times; and my heart swelled with honest rage when I thought of the futile war we had

waged for those insensate Turks, whose name had not been heard in battle since our army landed in the Crimea, and who, with all their boasted valour, had fled at Balaclava, and left a single Highland regiment—"the thin red streak," of Sir Colin Campbell—to receive in line the charge of all the Russian cavalry!

But now the Moolah raised his voice.

'Bismillah—peace, I command you, peace! Allah permits them yet to live, and dare such as ye to repine? We come not here to brawl or to revile, but to fulfil the decrees of Allah as spoken by his prophet, upon whose memory, name, and grave be all the blessings of the faithful. The home of a true Believer—the *anderun* of a true Mussulman—one fearing God, obeying his Koran, and walking in the shadow of the prophet, has been violated, and the Koran and the law say, that a terrible punishment must follow!'

'Amaun! amaun!' muttered Zahroum and all the others present, while a moan from the stern of the boat drew my eyes towards Iola.

* * * * *

Would that I could blot from my memory the dreadful scene that followed!

Worn by nights and days of weeping—exhausted by unavailing prayers for pity, and paralyzed by terror, there seemed to be no life left in her slender and delicate form, save what a short, quick, and heavy sob indicated, as her small and tremulous hands were tied by a cord behind her back; and, calm and pale as death itself, she submitted to her fate without a murmur.

'Moustapha—insensate Moolah!' I exclaimed, in an agony of mind, 'hear me—hear me! Have you no pity?—no mercy?—no compassion for those who have been cruelly tempted?'

'Peace, accursed,' replied the Moolah, in a stern whisper, '*we tempt ourselves.*'

As a degradation, the executioners had torn away

the yashmack of muslin from her face, and its pale beauty and divine resignation were sad, sublime, and maddening to me ; but a large, coarse sack was hastily drawn over her by Zahroun, who seemed an adept in the work ; he tied it securely to her slender ankles, and saw her form no more.

A cry escaped me, and a half-suppressed groan from Callum Dhu, as these inhuman wretches launched her headlong into the deep.

She sank like a stone ! * * * * *

On the black waves of that midnight sea there rose a few bubbles, and a ripple or two, that widened round us, and then all was over ! A voice broke the stillness ; it was that of the Moolah praying. He was repeating the first chapter of the Koran ; a short chapter held in great veneration by the Mohammedans, who use it as a prayer, and deem it the quintessence of the whole writings of the Prophet.

‘Allah latif magid !’ (Allah is gracious !) he exclaimed, with a loud voice : ‘the Lord of all creatures—the most merciful—the King of the day of judgment ! Thee do we worship, and of Thee do we beg assistance—Direct us in the right way—in the way of those to whom Thou hast been gracious—not of those against whom Thou art incensed and who go astray.’

‘Amaun ! amaun !’ muttered all the ruffians, bowing their heads, as they shipped their oars again, and now the huge and lumbering kochamba was slowly pulled away from the place ; from that hideous grave—the inky waters that had swallowed up Iola Vidimo.

In the morning I was beloved by a beautiful woman—at night by an immortal but scarcely purer spirit ; and with eyes full of tears for her who had passed away, I gazed upward on the starlit sky of Greece.

The passages of that night seemed all a hideous and incredible dream.

Iola was the most artless of all earthly beings, for in many things she was a mere child, and can aught be nearer angels, or more akin to heaven, than a child? But so perished this unhappy one; so pure, so unstained and beautiful—the victim of a pitiless destiny!

CHAPTER XLVIII.

THE TURKISH BOAT.

OUR craft had been for some time in motion before I became aware that a large lateen sail was hoisted on it, and was filled to the extremity of its long and tapering yard; and that our course was directed, not to Rodosdchig, but up the sea of Marmora, towards the north-east.

I demanded of the Moolah Moustapha whither he was conveying us, but received no answer. Again and again I made the same request, each time with growing anger and vehemence, and each time adding threats of what our Government would say, or do, or require, curiously oblivious that I had, in my own person, outraged the civil and religious laws of Turkey, such as they are; but still the Moolah disdained to accord me the slightest answer or recognition, and sat, with his hands folded in his green robe and crossed upon his breast; his high felt cap pulled over his beetling brows; his keen and glittering eyes fixed upon the eastern quarter of the sky, where the dawn was shedding a rosy tinge over all the land and sea; and the rough galiondgis or boatmen, and the pistoled, sabred, tarbooshed, and bearded policemen of the Bostandgi Bashi were equally taciturn, though Zahroun scowled and swore at us from time to time.

Now I conceived that they might be conveying us

to one of the old castles at the mouth of the Bosphorus, or perhaps to Constantinople, but the distance was rather too great to be traversed in an open boat at the season of the year.

Day dawned at last; morning brightened on the Grecian hills, and the outline of many a grim old tower and ruined temple, crowning the grey rocks and storm-beaten headlands, stood in dark relief against the blushing east.

Upon that sea, which mirrored all the morning sky, I gazed with a shudder of horror, for it was the grave of my poor Albanian girl, and her pale, wan face, her beautiful eyes, and angelic smile, came before me with painful distinctness: while, with a morbid grief, I endeavoured to imagine on what coral bed, in what deep and unfathomable rift or abyss of that huge watery tomb, on which the waves were shining in the orient sun, her charming form had found a last resting place.

Poor Iola! I could not yet realize her death, or the conviction that if I was to go back to Rodosdchig I would not meet her at the Ruined Hermitage, in the cypress cemetery, or in the silken-hung apartments of Hussein, where I had last spent an evening with her. The events of the last night still seemed all a hideous nightmare, or the memory of some terrible phantasmagoria.

‘It is long before we become assured of the loss of those we value,’ says a charming female writer; so her dying glance was still lingering before me, and shall be so, in years to come, when other memories may have been swept away and effaced, like foot-prints on the shore of an ebbing sea.

With emotions of rage and hatred, difficult alike to express and to control, I turned from her destroyers, and hid my face in my hands, as this bitterness was replaced by anguish and remorse.

The kochamba continued to run at great speed

before a sharp breeze which blew direct from the narrow Dardanelles, and the rocky capes, the sandy bays, and wooded inlets opened and closed again in rapid succession, as we passed them with a flowing sheet, and ere long Callum and I recognised the flat-roofed town and barracks of Heraclea, with the old ruins of the age of Vespasian, and the white foam curling on the rocks of Palegrossa, where the timbers of the *Vestal* lay—a rent and weedy hull.

I now hoped that the Moolah and his ruffians meant to land us there, and deliver us up to our own commanding officer, and with this idea my spirit rose a little. The familiar faces of our men came before me; rough Duncan Catanagh, with his old legends about Loch Lomond and stories of the Mahrattah war; frank Jack Belton, and others among whom I had felt happier than ever I hoped to be after the time I had laid my mother in her lonely Highland grave, and since I had been driven from Glen Ora into the wide and selfish world; but this gleam of liberty faded away, for the kochamba still bore on; her head was kept to the seaward, and in another hour Heraclea was left astern.

What could be the Moolah's object, and whither was he going?

Ere long a British screw-steamer-of-war—a frigate under easy sail, and with her steam up—passed us to leeward, on her way apparently for the Bosphorus, and Callum and I gathered new hope as she came close to us, with her scarlet ensign swelling proudly on the morning breeze, and with the sun shining through her open gun-ports. I arose in the boat, believing that my scarlet uniform might arrest the attention or excite the suspicion of those on board; but I was instantly thrust down below the thwarts; a pistol was held to my head by Zahroun; then a tarpaulin was thrown over Callum and me, to conceal us more completely from any prying eye that

might be aloft in the steamer's rigging, and steadily, swiftly, and monotonously the kochamba continued to cleave the glittering waves and run along the coast of Roumelia.

Our Turkish captors were all smoking opium and coarse Latakia in taciturn composure; some had small chibouques, and others cigarettes made up of paper and tobacco, from those little embroidered bags which an Osmanli is seldom without.

Several hours had now elapsed since Callum and I had been tied so roughly by ropes, and these being wetted by the salt spray, had shrunk to a degree that caused us intense and acute pain. My hands became red, swollen, stiff, and benumbed; and with something of satisfaction I saw the lateen-sail trimmed anew, the helm put up, and the prow of the kochamba turned towards a town which we were nearing. But still my mind was painfully full of Iola—my poor victim—for conscience made her seem as much the victim of my folly or recklessness—term it as you will—as of the cruelty of that Osmanli dog her husband, whom I had registered a hundred vows to pistol on the first opportunity.

Could I have recalled the events of the last few weeks Iola had still been spared, for my rashness would now have been tempered by reason and the ties of honour; and she had still been a thing of life and of this earth, enjoying the monotonous and secluded existence accorded to a Turkish wife—varied only by an evening ramble in the City of the Silent with the gossips of adjacent harems and anderuns.

The kochamba bore straight and steadily on, and as we neared the harbour, every object increased along the shore, and soon we were in smooth water and between the piers.

This, then, was the place of our destination, and here it was that probably poor Callum and I were to figure before one of those absurdly solemn courts of

mufftis and kadis who sit in every Turkish town to play the farce of Justice, and whose code of law is the verbose and obscure Koran of Mohammed, and the Koran alone.

Again I ventured to question the Moolah.

‘What place is this?’

‘Selyvria, in the Sandjiack of Gallipoli,’ was the brief reply, as the boat came sheering alongside the low and slimy mole. Then the yard was lowered, and the flapping sail stowed away; the long oars were unshipped, and the painter run through one of the enormous iron rings on the quay.

We were ordered to land, and lost no time in doing so; then the policemen of the Bostandgi drew their sabres and conducted us into the town, where an increasing crowd of chattering Greeks and gambolling young Turkish *gamins*, with brown, bare legs and red tarbooshes, followed us through the muddy and unpaved thoroughfares with shrill cries of astonishment, amid which the incessant ‘Mashallah,’ Inshallah,’ and ‘Allah Ackbar,’ were the most prominent.

The sun had set now and the aspect of the sea and land was magnificent.

Throned in the eastern heavens, the soft and silver moon was in all her clearest splendour. The studded belt of Orion and the constellation of the Scorpion united with her in filling the wide blue vault of night with lustre, and all the waves of Marmora seemed to be tipped with blue fire and to be rolling in liquid light.

Built on the slope of a hill, the terraced houses of Selyvria were irregular, quaint, and queer, like those of all Turkish towns, and they rose above each other like the seats of an amphitheatre. The hill was green, and on its summit rose a fortress of the Greek Empire—old, say some, as the days of Selys, who founded the city. The lower, or Turkish town, is without enclosure, though an embattled wall connects

the outer row of houses, above which rise the domes of its khan and several mosques.

On leaving the town we were conducted along an ancient bridge of about forty arches, the shadows of which were thrown by the moonlight far across the salt sea-marsh, over which it is built. Thence proceeding by a part of the paved road that leads to Stamboul, and is formed of blocks of basalt, we found ourselves beneath the walls of a grim and dilapidated castle, which stands close to the sea-shore. On one hand the waves of the Propontis lay rolling in shining ripples on the yellow beach, and inland, on the other, spread a wilderness of wild vines and cherry-trees, with massive Grecian columns, tottering or prostrate among them, and beyond these a spacious burial-place, with all its shadowy, huge, and solemn cypresses, standing like a rank of giant spectres in the brilliant moonlight.

Above our heads towered the black parapets, the peering cannon, and the red-capped sentinels of the Turkish castle. Then the wild and strange voices of the Osmanli soldiers were heard, as the Onbashi of the Bostandgis conferred with the Mulazim who commanded the guard; the heavy doors were opened, and as we entered a cold and dark archway, we heard the clank of bolt and bar and swinging-chain, as the barrier was secured behind us; and then the ropes were untied from our almost powerless hands—an inexpressible relief!

‘*Dioul!*’ muttered Callum, with a shrug of his shoulders, ‘we were better at home in desolate Glen Ora, even under Snaggs the factor, than here.’

Before I could reply, we were pushed through a side door, and thrust down a flight of steep and slimy steps, into a hot, close, and noisome place, where the sights, sounds, odours, and horrors that awaited us, require an entire chapter to themselves:

CHAPTER XLIX.

THE BAGNIO.

‘ Truth is strange—stranger than fiction.’

NEVER were words more expressive of what is passing around us daily in the world, even in its most matter-of-fact scenes and phases of life. Many a deep and bitter romance is occurring beside us, amid the bustle of the railway train; on the deck of the departing steamer; with the regiment embarking for foreign service, or with the disbanded soldier returning to search for his parent’s cottage, and finding perhaps a manufacturing town, where he had left a rural village; amid the hum of the streets, in the brilliance of the crowded ball-room—in all these are thoughts and wishes, fears and aspirations, known only to Him who reads the hearts of all. Hence though my autobiography may seem a romance to the reader, it is a true and painful history to me.

Thus, as I have related, on the very day the late treaty of Peace was signed at Paris—to wit, the 30th March, 1856, or according to the Mohammedan Hejira, 1271—Callum Dhu and I found ourselves inmates of a Turkish Bagnio, an event of much more importance to us than the definement of the Bessarabian frontier, the fall of Sebastopol, or the acceptance of the “five points” by Russia.

We were thrust into a large, vaulted apartment, in the sunk or ground-floor of the fortress. It was damp, and pervaded by an atmosphere so foetid, hot, and humid, that for a time it was all but overpowering, and denied us free respiration. A dim iron lantern hung from a pillar on one side, and shed a cold and wavering light into the misty dungeon, which was half seen and half sunk in shadow.

This darkness seemed dotted at certain distances by swarthy visages, fiercely browed and blackly bearded, with wild gleaming eyes; and on our British uniforms being seen, the clanking of chains rang on all sides, with incessant yells of

‘Bono Johnny!’

‘No Bono!’

‘Barek-allah—no Bono!’

And after a time, Callum and I could perceive that we were surrounded by about fifty prisoners, all of whom were chained to the four walls, and almost within arms length of each other.

‘Ingleez! Ingleez!’ shouted one.

‘Glaours of Frangistan!’

‘May they all go to Jehannum!’

‘Tis their kismet.’

‘And who can avert it?’

‘Bono—bono!’

‘No bono—wallah!’

‘Hah—ha! Hah—ha!’

Such were the cries and yells we heard on all sides, mingled with groans, idiot or ferocious laughter, brutal jests and scurrility, in all the dialects of the Bosphorus and the Levant. Many of these prisoners were nude, or nearly so, and their muscular limbs and olive skins were fretted by the massive and rusty fetters which confined them to the walls on each side. Others were clad in every diversity of oriental costume, fashion, and colour. We could perceive the blue gown of the Jew; the torn but ample white robes of the Armenian; the gay cap of the short-trousered Greek; the fur pelisse of the hawk-eyed Tartar; and the red tarboosh that covered the woolly head of the Egyptian; but all these men were squalid, tattered, and beyond description, filthy. Assassination, robbery, and a thousand crimes of the deepest die, were legibly stamped on the hideous fronts of this crew of hardened desperadoes; and we shrank from their

touch, on each side, as we hovered in the middle, and kept carefully beyond their reach, for I had once heard of a prisoner who was placed in a Turkish bagnio unchained, a privilege which so greatly exasperated his fettered companions, that they flung, beat, kicked, and tore him from man to man, until his mangled corpse defied their further efforts at insult or torture.

Most of these prisoners, as I afterwards ascertained, were men who had committed those foul murders and robberies, such as, since the war, are nightly occurring in the dark, unlighted, unpaved, and narrow streets of Stamboul—that Stamboul, boasted by the Turks as ‘the refuge of the world—the city full of faith;’ and these fierce denizens of the prophet’s patrimony, would all, ere long, receive the reward of their crimes in some form of law; for though the land is almost lawless, its punishments, like its people, are barbarous and severe.

For several days and nights Callum and I remained together in this hideous place, ignorant of what fate had in store for us; whether we were to be detained there in hopeless captivity; whether we were to be brought before a court of malevolent muftis and ignorant kadis; or whether we were to be delivered to our own military authorities; to the Turkish, or to that enterprising ambassador who has immortalised himself by the *anxiety* and diplomatic *energy* he evinced during the defence of Kars; and from whom, by his conduct on that occasion, we had so much to expect in the form of protection and aid!

By day, Callum and I paced to and fro in the centre of this dreadful place, keeping apart from all our companions, and we soon became almost as oblivious of *their* presence, as they were of ours; and during this monotonous time our sole employment was watching the long flakes of misty light which streamed through four iron-grated apertures or narrow

slits down to the Bagnio; and which, like four palpable objects, passed slowly round from one side of the dungeon to another, as the sun declined and day faded away. At these holes the Turkish sentinel, with his scarlet fez, dark moustachioed face, and cunning eye, was seen at times peering into the place to see if "all was right;" and through these apertures, I was told, they had been wont to fire ball-cartridge, when any unusual commotion took place among the prisoners.

At night we crouched together in a corner, somewhat apart from the rest, and weary of communing, surmising, and conjecturing, slept the sleep of the anxious and worn—that waking and painful doze, which is but a succession of nightmares and visions, till dawn again struggled through the misty atmosphere, to light up the quaint forms and ferocious faces of these fettered wretches, and to bring the Turkish guard, with their daily allowance of black bread and fresh water, when again would begin the usual chorus of laughter, groans, and curses, mingled with the swinging and clashing of fetters and chains, bolts and padlocks of rusty iron.

Among the unfortunates confined in this place I discovered two who were treated by our guards with more kindness and respect than the other prisoners, and whose stories somewhat interested me.

One was hopelessly insane; and the other, who was indeed sunk to the lowest depth of misery and dejection, informed me that they had been lieutenants (Mulazims) in the Turkish military service.

CHAPTER L.

THE TWO TURKISH LIEUTENANTS.

I AM Achmet Effendi,' said the latter, a handsome but pale, sad, and emaciated young man; 'I was a lieutenant in the old regiment of Scherif Bey, and, as a mere boy, served in the campaign of Egypt. My younger friend whom you see here so heavily visited by heaven and the prophet, that his mind is gone or possessed by a devil, so that he requires chains and bars three times heavier than the most powerful villain here, is Ali Effendi, a Mulazim of artillery, and there is none better or braver in the army of his Imperial Majesty the Sultan.

'He was with that Turkish army which on the 28th October, 1853, crossed the Danube, and on the 4th of the following month won the victorious battle of Oltenitza, where he slew the aide-de-camp of the Russian General, and found those important despatches which informed us, but alas! too late, of the intended attack upon Sinope, where four thousand five hundred of the Faithful were slaughtered by the dogs of the Czar.

'Ali Effendi was next engaged and severely wounded at the battle of Kalaphat on the 8th of January, 1854—you may still see the scar of the Russian bullet on his bare right arm, above the iron fetter. Ali is tall—he was then handsome and winning; a clover poet and maker of verses; an expert player on the guitar, but poor; for, like myself, he had only one hundred and twenty piastres per month, as a lieutenant en seconde, of Topchis.

'For five years he had loved and been beloved by the daughter of a wealthy Stambouli merchant, and he had received her plighted troth. You may know all the danger, the difficulties, and the deadly snares that

hover round a Turkish love; yet the skilful Ali had surmounted and escaped them all, and won the love of Saïda. But her father discovered them, and he was inexorable, of course—fathers always are so, for they are the evil Genii of all love stories, and so he proposed to barter or sell her to Ali Pasha himself!

‘Poor Ali, my friend, was marched off with his brigade of artillery to fight the Russians under Mouravieff at Kars, and the unhappy Saïda was in despair when the Pasha sent the dressmakers from the bazaar to measure her for the bridal attire and pearl slippers. Then her grief and fury could no longer be controlled; and bruising the crystal pendant of a lamp to powder, she drank it in a cup of sherbet and expired, with the name of Ali on her lips, and a copy of his last farewell verses, written on fine silk, pressed to her heart.

‘Kars fell! Its garrison was captured, but Ali escaped the Cossacks of Mouravieff, and hastened home to find Saïda, not as of old, at her chamber window to answer the tinkling of his lute at night, when the quiet stars looked down on the blue Bosphorus, and the thousand lights of Stamboul were shining on its waters; but to seek her green grave among the silent ones at Pera, and he was almost beside himself with grief. Three days he remained on his knees at her resting-place, until he had read over all the hundred and fourteen chapters of the Koran, and covered the grass with flowers. Then he placed above her a gilded tomb, on which he wrote in charming verses the whole history of their hopeless love; and this tomb cost the poor lieutenant nine hundred piastres. Beside that tomb he swore a dreadful vow to slay both Ali Pasha and her father.

‘While this rash vow was trembling on his lips, that father of cruelty and avarice, the old merchant, tottering on his staff, and with tears rolling down his white beard, appeared under the tall and sombre cypresses of the cemetery; and then the frantic Ali,

transported with rage, sprang up from amid the flowers of Saïda's grave, and drawing a pistol from his girdle, shot him dead!

'From that moment Ali became a maniac, and the sultan sent him here. Allah has dried up his brains; but He is ever merciful and just; so whether my poor comrade shall recover, and be as he was in other times, a merry companion, a true friend, and gallant soldier, I know not; our kismet is in the hands of God and the Prophet, whose holy finger traced it, at the moment of our birth, upon our infant brows.*

'A mournful story, Achmet Effendi,' said I, gazing with deep interest on the hollow cheek, lack-lustre eyes, and wasted form of this brave young officer, who had seen as much service, and fought with the gallant Williams at Kars; 'but, if I may inquire, what brought *you* here?'

'Love, also,' he answered, with a smile, and then a frown of anger on his olive brow. 'A few words will tell you all. My father is the Bashi-katib or military secretary of the Egyptian Contingent. The orta or battalion to which I belonged, and still belong—'

'Still belong?' I reiterated, glancing at his fetters.

'Yes,' said he, colouring, 'you shall hear.'

'I was in cantonments at Pera, when I became acquainted with a lady who was wont to walk, unattended either by slaves or carpet-spreaders, in the great cemetery there—'

'Ah!' said I, with mournful interest.

'Her figure was graceful; her brow like alabaster; her eyes—strange in our sunny land—were a deep and bewitching blue, for her mother had been a Russian lady, stolen from the shores of the sea of Azof. Her eye-brows were brown, and arched, like the half-

* Ali *did* recover, and is now a *cole agassi* (major) of the Turkish artillery at Hunkiar Skellessi; but being, as Jack Belton says, in full possession of his senses, vows he will never think of marriage more.

moon of the Prophet, and never did the divine Hafiz of Iraun pen a sonnet on a face more beautiful than hers; and as Jammee the Iraunee sings in his ode, I was miserable when absent from her.

‘ Oh! in what place soe’er I stray,
By midnight, morning, or by day,
Thou art the inmate of my breast;
I cannot linger, cannot stay,
But thy sweet image with me aye
Abides my bosom’s dearest guest!’

Yet she was *another’s*, and by one of the contrarieties of our nature for that reason, more perhaps than for her loveliness, did I love her! she was—

‘ A wife?’

‘ No.’

‘ What then?’

‘ A slave.’

‘ Well?’ said I, thinking it was only a distinction without a difference among ‘the Faithful.’

‘ Her master was in the service of the Kisklar Aga, so you will perceive at once that she was a dangerous person to meddle with. The arrival of the allied troops in the Bosphorus had attracted the attention of all in Stamboul, so Pera was almost deserted. Zarifa, by a prettily-arranged bouquet of flowers, asked me to visit her, and I did so, taking care, however, to arm me well. I had my sabre and a pair of pistols, which I loaded carefully, in case of being surprised by the Kisklar Aga or any of the black guardians of the Royal Seraglio. I had with me a fleet horse, one of those carefully-trained barbs which are used by our Turkish cavalry, and are drilled to close to the right and close to the left; to dress back, or forward, at a single word of command; to remain beside the rider if he falls, or to drag him out of the press by their teeth. Leaving my horse concealed in an olive-thicket, without perceiving that I was watched and followed by a Moolah, named Moustapha, who had

been a corporal in my regiment, I entered the garden of the Kislár Aga's country-house, and there Zarifa received me in a beautifully-gilded kiosk, covered with tendrils of the myrtle, the passion-flower, the gorgeous azalea, and the Damascus rose. There soft carpets were spread; hot coffee, sherbet, wine, and a chibouque awaited me—and more than all, Zarifa, in all her beauty, with her yashmack thrown aside!

‘Reclining on that soft carpet, with my arm around the yielding waist of my love—a pipe on one hand, a cup of Greek wine on the other, I was in the seventh heaven!

‘The roses were sparkling in the new-fallen rain, which had just refreshed the earth with a shower, and the sun was exhaling it, as he came up in his splendour; the breeze was laden with the melody of the joyous birds, and the large drops hung like diamonds on every flower and tree, while the perfume of the orange-groves, of the violet-beds, and of the china jars of heliotrope, loaded the air with delicious fragrance; everything spoke to my heart of love, delight, and silence, as I pressed my lips to those of Zarifa!

‘At that moment the gleam of three or four bayonets appeared above the garden wall; the door of the kiosk was dashed in; I sprang to my feet, with a hand on my sabre, to be confronted by the scowling Moolah, who, I found, to my rage, had surrounded me by a guard from the nearest police-station. In short, the ruffians of the Bostandgi Bashi were upon me!

‘Zarifa uttered a shriek, as I rushed from her, to find my horse captured, and bayonets opposed to me, breast-high. I was obliged to surrender at discretion, and on being deprived of my arms, was thrust into an araba, and, with the terrified and weeping girl, was taken before a corrupt and cunning kadi.

‘“Remember,” said I, “that I am the son of the Bashi-katib, and the grandson of the Seraskier”

“You are wise to boast of your ancestry since you cannot boast of yourself,” sneered the Moolah.

“Did not the Prophet cast eyes of evil on Zeinab, the wife of Zeid, his adopted son, from whom he cajoled her away and then married her; and Zeinab, thereafter, vaunted that she was above all the other wives of Mohammed, since their marriage was made in heaven?”

“Peace, blasphemous kite!” exclaimed the kadi.

‘He then asked me, according to our law, when a man is discovered in the society of an unmarried woman, if I would wed Zarifa?’

‘But I remained silent.

‘Zarifa was beautiful, and I loved her—true; but to marry the slave of a servant of the Kislar Aga, the Chief Eunuch to that son of a slave, the Sultan; I—a Mulazim—on one hundred and twenty piastres per month. Wallah! the thing was not to be thought of! I refused, and was sentenced to pass two years in chains. Zarifa was given to a deserving chaoush of cavalry as a wife, and I was sent here as a prisoner, and as such must remain a few months longer.’

‘And you were sentenced to pass two years in chains?’

‘Two years, Effendi.’

‘Heavens,’ thought I, ‘should such be my sentence, what will become of Callum Dhu, and what will be the fate of my commission, which I value as my own life!’

CHAPTER LI.

DREAMS AND LONGINGS.

‘If I were cast into a deep pit,’ saith the quaint Hobbes, ‘and the devil put down his cloven-foot, I would take hold thereof, to be drawn out by it.’

This is an apt, but somewhat fallacious application

of the mode of working ascribed, with what truth I say not, to the Jesuits, viz., that we may do evil if good should come of it; and of the system upheld by the philosopher of Malmesbury, 'that it is lawful to make use of an ill instrument to do ourselves good.'

Callum and I, though sunk in dejection, dispirited, and exasperated, and feeling ourselves fitted to attempt or encounter anything desperate to achieve our liberty, had scarcely reached the climax referred to by the learned Hobbes. I thought of bribery; but my foster-brother, though poor as a cadger, was proud as a king, and with some scorn rejected my proposal to tamper with our not over-scrupulous Turkish guards and turnkeys.

These officials (as Achmet Effendi informed me), by the connivance of the governor and his subalterns, could favour or permit the escape of the worst malefactor committed to their care, if there were friends without, who were ready to pay down the requisite number of piastres, on receipt of which their names would at once be struck off the books of the *Bagnio as dead*.

'Suppose cholera should break out here?' said I, one day, when almost suffocated by the overpowering malaria of the prison.

'In the name of mercy do not think of it!' replied the Turkish lieutenant; 'I have seen that dreadful pest more than once within these walls, and all the Koran says of hell cannot equal the horrors of the scene. The dead, collapsed, pale, and frightful, have lain among us in their chains for days, until the governor, by offers of liberty, bribed some of the prisoners, and by threats of death forced others, to convey them from this vault, into which the vilest of his slaves refused to enter.'

These brief conversations increased my desire to leave the place. My horror of it; my anger at being detained; my anxiety for the issue, and for the con-

struction which the regiment might put upon my unaccountable disappearance, with a thousand other exciting reflections, rendered me at times only fit company for a maniac. Often my spirit sank to the lowest ebb; and, crouched at the foot of a pillar, with my head resting on kind Callum's brawny shoulder, I have slept, or striven to sleep, through the long and dreary hours of a monotonous night, after the equally long and dreary hours of a horrible day. And even these snatches of uneasy slumber were filled by countless dreams, visions, and thoughts of incidents long past, and places, faces, and voices far, far away.

Amid all this misery I thought much of Iola, who was now where her errors would be more lightly judged than by the sons of men.

Strange it was that when I dreamt of her—her death, that scene of horror, seemed all a *dream*, that had passed away with night and sleep. She was again alive and beside me, as of old, with her soft angelic smile! Again her lips were warm and breathing; and her breath came hot and fragrant, as her white bosom palpitated against mine. Dear Iola! Then the atmosphere seemed dense and full of languor; again I was trembling, dazzled, and confused with delight, as she lay within my arms in all her Oriental beauty, waking in my heart a thousand thoughts and aspirations hitherto unknown to me.

Then her face would fade like the dissolving views of a magic-lantern; melting half away, it changed and brightened into another that resembled Laura Everingham; then I would start with a convulsive shudder and awake, to find around me the grizzly, unshaven, and dreadful visages of my Asiatic and Turkish companions, with all the horrors of that earthly hell, the Mohammedan Bagnio.

Many a time the scenery of my native land came before me. Again, in fancy, I trod the purple heath, and heard the roar of the Uisc-dhu, as it thundered

over its steep precipice into the black linn below ; again I saw my mother's grave, and the old jointure-house shining in the sunlight ; the lofty scalp of Ben Ora capped with the snows of the past winter, and its sides clothed with bronze-like thickets of larch and pine ; again I saw the azure loch on which the wild swans floated, bordered by its groves of silver birch, of wavy ash, and the rowan with its scarlet berries ; and out of that deep, dark, and pestilential vault, the desolate glen of the Ora passed thus before me like a panorama, with all its moss-grown hearths and roofless homes ; the waving woods, the rocks, and mountains, shining under a glorious sun.

On waking from dreams like these my spirit sank lower, but sturdy Callum never quailed, for he cuffed and kicked the Turkish prisoners, and sang 'The Brown-eyed Maid,' or whistled endless and interminable pibrochs, as he said, 'just to relieve his mind and let off the steam a little.'

Anon I was with the regiment again—'roughing it,' among rough and gallant spirits, who hovered round me in all the glittering appurtenances of Highland chivalry. I heard the comic song, the glee, the laughter of the mess ; or I was again at sea on board the *Vestal*, passing over the waste of water like a floating spirit, and gliding along the dim and distant coasts of France and Spain—that seemed pale and blue by sunny day, and dark by starry night—or lit only by the solitary light-houses that burned like ocean-stars upon the horizon's tremulous verge ; on—on—on the wings of steam, swiftly, silently, and mysteriously.

Tola still !

It would come before me again and again, that face of tender beauty and reproachful sadness. Her eyes were ever on me, by night, when all was darkness and profundity ; and in the day-time, when the misty flakes of sunshine fell through the prison-bars,

in waking or in sleeping, they were ever gazing on me—those dark and sad, but sweet imploring eyes.

Eye fell even in Paradise—why not Iola?

With such thoughts for my companions, how heavy was my sorrow, how dull and monotonous my captivity!

At last, even Callum, who could boldly face all those disagreeables which usually rise like dust along the roadway of life, began to sink under the weariness of our existence in this hideous place; and once, to my surprise, I discovered tears hovering in his eyes.

‘O-dhalta,’ said I, kindly, placing a hand on his shoulder; ‘what are you thinking of?’

‘I am thinking, Mac Innon, of that green place where God gives rest to the weary—the old kirk-yard at home, where your mother and mine, too, are sleeping under the shadow of the old stone cross; and I was pondering on——’

‘What?’

‘Our chances of ever being laid beside them.’

‘Let us rather think of escape.’

‘To work, then,’ said Callum, briskly; ‘let us not continue to waste what little Father Raoul was wont to term the poor man’s best inheritance?’

‘What may that be, Callum?’

‘Time,’ was the pithy reply.

This brief conversation was interrupted by the arrival of two more prisoners, who were immediately greeted by the usual appalling chorus of yells, cries, curses, and laughter, together with that clattering accompaniment of chains, bolts and fetters, which had so strangely startled Callum and me on our first entrance to this Cimmerian and infernal abode.

CHAPTER LII.

THE GALIONDGI.

ESCORTED by a party of Turkish police, or personages armed with similar authority, and accoutred with yataghan and pistols, of course, for these are as indispensable to an Osmanli as his nose and eyes, our new companions who entered were two hideous and ferocious Asiatic Turks, with receding foreheads, sharp temples, and shaggy eyebrows—black and sinister eyes—hooked noses and long moustaches, having a savage curl, round almost to their ears. While they were being secured by the legs to the wall, a gleam of sunlight from one of the grated slits fell upon them, and I recognised Zahroun and another of the Turks who had assisted the Moolah Moustapha in committing Iola to her dreadful tomb amid the waters.

I stepped towards them, with a dark frown on my face and a twitching in my hands, as if I could have sprung upon their throats; and Callum followed me close, with a gleam in his dark eye that betokened mischief.

Zahroun recognised us, and pointed his dirty brown fingers at me with mockery, while his companion gave us but a scowl and a sullen stare.

‘Chaoush,’ said I, to the sergeant of the guard, ‘of what have these men been guilty?’

‘Murder and piracy,’ replied the soldier, briefly, as he drew a key from the fetter-lock of Zahroun.

‘Murder!—where?—near Rodoschig?’

‘No—for murdering a Frankish officer off the coast of Natolia a night or two ago, in a solitary caïque; but they are safe enough till the ferashes of the Bostandgi Bashi lead them out to take their last view of the setting sun.’

Yells, hoots, and groans, whistling and laughter,

greeted the chaoush as he retired, and I turned away with aversion from the two wretched assassins who had been added to the number already round us. But their arrival excited a little curiosity in this strange community, and by those who were chained on each side of them, and opposite, they were loudly and vociferously pressed to relate the story of their crime and the cause of their incarceration there.

It was briefly told, for the Turk is neither verbose nor circumlocutory.

They, and a few others, all well armed in a fleet caïque, were hovering about the coast of Natolia, on the look-out for any smaller craft they might be able to overpower or pick up, when they discovered, in a creek of the opposite Isle of Marmora, an English pleasure-yacht ashore, wedged upon the sand, and left almost dry, as her crew, without the assistance of a large steamer, were totally unable to get her off. *Barek Allah!* here was a prize! A well-found, taut-rigged, sharp-prowed, and strong English yacht, of some three hundred tons, pierced for twelve eight-pounder carronades, and handsomely fitted up.

In those disorderly times, when the shores of Asia Minor were swarming with lawless bands, and Greece was vibrating with incipient insurrection, what havoc could be made in the Archipelago with such a craft as this English yacht! But then her owner was a sturdy, burly old infidel, who, since she had gone ashore, had stuck a huge cutlass and four pistols in his girdle. He had a well-picked crew of forty men, all well armed, and who loved fighting better than idleness, for these Ingleez galiondgis were the very devil! He had on board, also, a British officer from Sebastopol, and two Ingleez ladies, beautiful as the houris of Paradise, moon-faced and cushion-hipped (and here the hideous Asiatic rolled his black goggle eyes, and licked his blubber lips), and so the yacht with her twelve brass guns, plunder,

et cetera, was deemed well worth venturing one's hide under pewter and steel for.

While Zahroun and his companion Abdul Rasig watched her in a little caïque, pretending to fish by day and to sleep in an adjoining creek by night; others, their comrades in many a crime, were scouring all the sea-port towns about Rodosdchig and the Natolian coast, to muster enough of lads on whom, by old experience, they could depend—choice and sturdy sons of the handjari and pistol, to assist in surprising the grounded yacht some cloudy night when the moon was below the horizon, and no help was nigh; for with enough of hands she could easily be boarded in the dark—the throats of the Ingleez cut from clew to earring, and then the whole craft, with all her plunder, provisions, women, wine, plate, and everything, would belong to the captors. Inshallah! was it not a notable speculation?

‘One evening,’ continued this exulting ruffian, ‘Abdul and I were hovering near the creek in our caïque, looking at the stranded yacht, and admiring her beautiful mould, and clean run under the counter, as she lay with a heel over to her port side, when suddenly, while we were speaking, her colours were run up to the foremast-head to gain our attention, and a giaour on deck waved his hat to us. Then we pulled alongside, but cautiously and slowly.

‘The Effendi to whom she belonged had grown weary of lying in a few feet of water among the woods of that secluded creek, and impatiently proposed that, for so many piastres, we should convey the bearer of a message towards the mouth of the Dardanelles, where he would be sure of falling in with one of the many British cruisers, whose captain would at once lend him all the assistance necessary, on merely mentioning his name; for this stout old infidel in the square-tailed coat, white trousers, and straw hat, evidently deemed himself a great man in his own

country ; and so perhaps he may be, for Abdul tells me that it is an island of white chalk, where the sun never shines, and whose shores are surrounded by a thousand leagues of mud ; and that its mountains are peopled by Arnaouts, who wear a striped camise round their middle like yonder giaour (pointing to Callum Dhu), and that they have tails—Allah Ackbar!—of which, however, they are deprived by the Moolahs at their birth.

‘ Be that as it may, we agreed with the Frankish Effendi to take his messenger to a castle of the Dardanelles, and for three hundred piastres, which were at once paid over the capstan-head, to set off that very night. Before he left the yacht, his messenger, a handsome Ingleez captain—a Yuze Bashi in the Guards, and bearded like a Janissary, or like all those infidels who come from the war, kissed the unbelieving women before descending to our boat—kissed them before us all, without their yashmaks ; and then we put off, set our sail, shipped the sweeps, and pulled away to sea.

‘ The night was beautiful, and muffled in a coat which had a hooded cape like that of a Bashi Bozook, the Ingleez captain lolled in the stern-sheets of the caique, smoking cigars, speaking, as all these Ingleez do, about the weather, and looking upward at the stars, or back to the Isle of Marmora, where he had left his two wives, for such I took the women to be ; but now the Isle was diminished to a dim blue speck upon the waters, and we could no longer see the creek where the yacht lay.

‘ He had a fine ring on the fourth finger of his left hand ; it flashed as he gave us each a few cigars, and lit a fresh one for himself. He had a noble gold watch (all these infidels have such), and he looked at it from time to time, as he hummed a song, and after telling us to “ pull like devils, as we should be well paid,” fell fast asleep, for he feared nothing.

‘Abdul and I continued to pull, but less vigorously than before. We looked slyly at each other, and thought of the watch and the ring. The sea was very quiet and smooth; there was not a ripple on it, and no eye beheld us, but the winking stars. The infidel-dog slept soundly, and he was smiling in his sleep, as he dreamt perhaps of his two Ingleez wives, or his island of mud and fog, for we could see his white teeth shining under his dark moustache in the starlight. We were some miles off Cape Karaburun, for we could see its lighthouse glimmering on our lee. Everything was quiet and lonely as it may well be upon the midnight ocean. We exchanged another glance, and in a moment more, the throat of the infidel was gaping with a red slash of my handjari, which nearly cut his head off!

‘Abdul Rasig made a snatch at the gold watch, and just as we tossed him overboard, I tore off the diamond ring with my teeth, and, Allah Kebir! a mouthful of his unclean flesh came off with it; but here it is—the ring, not the flesh!’

In the excitement of his narrative the wretch forgot himself so much as to exhibit the ring. It was a chaste little jewel—a pure diamond, set round with pearls; and on beholding it, I started back as if a thunderbolt had burst at my ear.

That identical ring I had seen a hundred times on the finger of Laura Everingham; and I had last observed it, to my pique and grief, on the hand of her lover—her husband Clavering—when he dined at our mess in the Castle of Dumbarton!

Astonishment and horror chained all my faculties, and meanwhile the exulting Zahroun continued his revolting narrative.

‘We flung him over, and he sunk like a stone; then we put the helm up, and bore away for the river Ustuola, our point of rendezvous on the coast of Natolia—a lonely place, where all our armed caiques

were to meet for attacking and taking the yacht. But a storm came on; wallah! a storm of wind and lightning, a flash of which shaved my left whisker clean off, as you may see; we were driven up the sea of Marmora, and after losing both sweeps and sail, were drifting at the mercy of the wind and tide, when an armed boat of the Bostandgi Bashi—may dogs defile his beard!—overhauled us, just when we were quarrelling and mauling each other about the respective merits of the watch and ring, for Abdul Rasig was wrathful at the splendour of my diamond, vowing, that for every para the watch was worth I had got a piastre, and a para being worth only the thirtieth part of a piastre, four of which now go to make a shilling Ingleez, we loudly accused each other of murder and robbery, like the fathers of fools.

‘The Kadi before whom we were brought carefully wound up the watch, applied it to his ear, and as it ticked to his satisfaction, he solved the matter by depositing it in his judicial pocket. He would also have quieted me, by slipping my ring on his finger, but I placed it in my mouth, and swore, by every hair in the beards of the two hundred and twenty-seven thousand prophets of Islam, that I had swallowed it; then we were marched off to the Bagnio, and so are here.’

‘Ay, here we are, a thousand burning curses on your folly!’ growled Abdul; ‘for the four caiques will leave the mouth of the Ustuola on the fourth night from this; the yacht will be boarded and taken, and neither of us will be there to share the plunder or the pleasure; and wallah! I had set my whole soul on having one of those white-skinned Ingleez women!’

CHAPTER LIII.

A ROW IN THE BAGNIO.

It is impossible for me to analyze my thoughts or reflections, on hearing this terrible relation of Clavering's lonely and helpless butchery in his sleep, by the hands of villains such as these Turkish galiondgis.

Poor Tom Clavering! his well-whiskered face and manly figure came vividly before me, as I had last seen them in Dumbarton Castle, when he seemed the jolliest of our merry mess; and when full of joy at his approaching marriage, and all thoughtless that I was his rival, he spoke to me of his love for Laura; of her beauty, and that which was better than beauty, her worth; and when, in the fulness of his heart, he generously placed his purse at my service with all the frankness of a soldier and of an English gentleman.

But he was gone, and Laura was a widow now.

A widow at two-and-twenty, or thereabout!

Here was food for thoughts of hope and ardour, for now she would be free to choose another; and though the pale image of Iola still hovered painfully and oppressively before me at times, I felt that I loved Laura still. Then came the crushing and startling thought of the dangers which menaced her, and the words of the villain Abdul were yet tingling in my ears.

'The caiques will leave the Ustuola on the fourth night from this, and the yacht will be boarded and taken!'

Taken by those Greek pirates and Turkish outlaws whose savage barbarity have long made terrible the shores and isles of the Ægean sea!

So Laura was with me in this land so distant from our home; she was within a few miles of me, and a great longing seized my soul—a longing to look once

more upon her face—to hear her voice again; the voice that in other times had thrilled through my inmost heart, which now began to ‘ache with the thought of all that *might have been* ;’ but it stood still, forgetting almost to beat, while my blood ran cold at the reflection that I was a prisoner, and totally incapable of assisting, warning, or protecting her or her friends.

All my soul seemed now to be with that stranded yacht on the Isle of Marmora, which was more than forty miles distant, as a bird would fly.

Oh, to be free! my longing and my horror were fast becoming insupportable.

How often had the same unavailing exclamation left my lips, as with clenched hands, and teeth that gnawed my nether lip, I trod to and fro in wretchedness, despondency, and bitterness of heart, in the narrow passage or aisle formed by the double line of captives chained on each side of the Bagnio.

I had long since discovered the futility of attempting to soften, bribe, or terrify the chaoush who commanded the guard, for he feared us, as prisoners of the Moolah Moustapha; thus the rascal seemed incorruptible.

The story of Clavering’s fate, and the adventure of the diamond-ring, haunted me as much as the doom that overhung the yacht of Sir Horace and her crew. Could I rest while, almost within arm’s length of me, there was this jewel which had been on the white hand of a pure and innocent English girl like Laura Everingham (and which, moreover, had been her gift to a brave and honest-hearted fellow like Clavering) remaining in possession of a vile and polluted assassin like Zahroun?

Twenty times I stepped towards him, with the intention of clutching his throat, though he seemed to possess thrice my strength; and I as often drew back on reflecting that, in case of a brawl, I might

be torn to pieces by the prisoners if I came within arm's length of them, or perhaps I might be shot by the guards from without, as Achmet Effendi informed me that, on scuffles ensuing, they frequently fired through the gratings, without the least remorse or ceremony; and he added, that if we escaped a round of ball-cartridge we would assuredly be chained, like the rest, to the walls.

To Callum Dhu I translated the horrible story of Zahroun, and the honest heart of my foster-brother was fired with rage and sorrow when he heard the fate of Captain Clavering. The frank and manly bearing of the English Guardsman, with his love of old Highland sports, had made a most favourable impression on the mind of my follower, whose heart was apt to become somewhat encrusted by jealousy and prejudice on the approach of strangers; and now, whispering fiercely in my ear, he swore by the stones of Iona to tear the head off the shoulders of Zahroun.

The sunset had faded away; the eight reflections of the eight narrow slits which, from a shady verandah, admitted light into our vault, had disappeared from the stained and dirty walls; the place was so dark that we could not see each other's faces, as on this night the chaoush of the Turkish guard had omitted to light the lantern which usually swung from a pillar of our den; or perhaps the quartermaster of the castle had no oil in store; but whatever the reason may have been, we were left quite in the dark when I finished my translation of the story, and then Callum Dhu, filled by a sudden tempest of Highland fury, and regardless of all consequences, sprang upon Zahroun, and seizing him by the throat, endeavoured to hurl him beneath his feet; but the bare-legged and bare-armed galiondgi was brawny, muscular, and strong as himself, so the struggle that ensued between these two athletæ was alike fierce

and terrible! Their hard, constrained breathing; their half-suffocated exclamations, threats, and execrations in hoarse Gaelic on one hand, and guttural Turkish on the other, were drowned amid the noise made by the prisoners, who began their usual infernal chorus of shrieks, yells, oaths, and laughter, with loud and impetuous inquiries on all hands as to what was the matter, while the general row was increased by the swinging and dashing of chains.

‘Callum! Callum!’ I exclaimed, ‘here are lights—the Turkish guards may fire upon us.’

‘Let them blaze away!’ was the answer of Callum, who, wholly intent on battling with his ferocious antagonist (whom he had now beaten to the ground, and on whose brawny chest he had planted his kilted knees), heeded me not, for his Celtic blood was fairly up, and his mouth, moreover, was full of it, as Zahroun, with one of his iron fetters, had given him a blow on the jaws. While they continued to fight thus, like two wild panthers, writhing, twisting, and struggling, sundry pleasant adjectives in their different languages were resorted to.

‘Bioul!’ was freely invoked on one side, and all the genii of hell, with the beards of the twelve imaums, and the same reverend appendages of the two hundred and twenty-seven thousand prophets of Islam were summoned in vain on the other, while the storm of swinging chains and clamorous voices rang in the arched vault like the bellowing of a stormy sea.

A red light flashed fitfully through one of the iron gratings, and the swarthy visage, heavy moustache, and scarlet fez of the Turkish sergeant appeared, as he held up a flaring torch and gazed in, with something of wonder and alarm in his dark and dilating Asiatic eyes. The iron door was hastily opened, and several soldiers, clad in short blue jackets, and tight red trousers, ran down the steps, and preceded by

the chaoush with the torch, began to lay about them on all sides with bamboo rods, caning all without discrimination.

As the sergeant rushed forward, a prisoner, in sheer mischief, put out a foot and tripped him up. With a malediction the non-commissioned officer fell flat on his face, with the burning link almost in his mouth, by which—Barek Allah!—his sacred moustaches were scorched off in a moment; and as the light went out, two or three of his comrades fell over him in the dark, increasing the confusion. A hand now grasped mine with fierce energy. It was Callum's.

‘Now,’ said he, ‘now or never! follow me!’

And he dragged me up the steps and through the open door, which we could easily distinguish by a faint light beyond it. As we issued into the yard before the Turkish guard-house, Callum, with admirable presence of mind, closed the barrier of the vault, turned the key, and by an additional wrench broke it in the lock, leaving the chaoush and his soldiers to fight or fraternise with the prisoners, as they pleased.

‘Let us be but through the outer barrier, and we are free!’ said I.

The night was starry but dark, for the moon had not yet risen, and an increasing wind rolled the waves of the Propontis on the rocky beach.

There was no time for calm deliberation; no leisure to undo an error, for we had nothing to guide our decision but the quickness of instinct and the rapidity of desperation. Our lives would be lost or won in less than five minutes—a dreadful reflection to me, even now, when all the danger is over and I sit in my quiet quarters writing of what is all happily past.

The gate was closed and secured by a transverse wooden bar. Muffled in his blue greatcoat, the Turkish sentinel stood near it, with his musket on his shoulder, and the long bushy tassel of his scarlet

cap drooping down his back. I could mark his sharp Asiatic features defined against the sky. He stood still and motionless as a bronze statue, with his lustre eyes fixed on the stars, and absorbed apparently in one of those waking dreams peculiar to those Osmanlies who spend their spare paras in opium and raki.

‘Mac Innon,’ whispered Callum, ‘to you I leave the undoing of the gate; give me the sentinel to manage—’

‘You will not kill him?’ said I, hurriedly, seeing that there was a wild gleam in Callum’s eyes, and that he had, between his teeth, a skene-dhu, which, by being concealed in his hose, had hitherto escaped the search of our captors.

‘Kill him? not if I can help it; but I would rather be shot here, sir, than go back to that infernal prison. Dioul! do you hear how the old chaoush is bellowing at the door?’

Roused by the unusual noise, the dreamy sentinel turned his head half round to listen, and at that moment Callum sprang upon him, and grasped his throat with a clutch into which he threw all the muscular strength of his sinewy arms and fingers. The swarthy visage of the poor Turk became distorted; his eyes almost started from their sockets, and the musket fell from his shoulder. I snatched up the weapon, and (while Callum hurled the soldier to the ground) endeavoured to throw off its iron hooks a solid cross bar that secured the wicket in the gate, which was composed of strong vertical palisades.

This bar was secured in its place by a chain and large brass padlock, the key of which was probably at the belt of the chaoush, whose outcries we dreaded would momentarily rouse the rest of his comrades in the little fortress.

Heavens, what a chaos were then my thoughts! All seemed a dream, and we did everything as if in a

dream ; yet all we did was wisely and correctly done. I unfixed the bayonet from the musket ; inserted its triangular blade into the loop of the padlock ; grasped the socket with my right hand, the point with my left, and using the weapon as a lever, wrenched it fiercely round, and burst the impediment. Thus the chain which secured the bar was loosened ; the wicket stood open, and the sentinel lay breathless on the ground.

‘I hope the poor fellow will soon recover—he was only doing his duty,’ said I.

‘He’ll be able to bawl for help in three minutes ; Dioul ! if he does, I’ll go back with my skene and gralloch him like a dead deer ; see he is stirring already !’ said Callum, as we leaped through the gate ; and intent only on placing the greatest possible distance between ourselves and the Bagnio of Selyvria, hastened along the sea-shore, avoiding the high road which traverses the rugged coast, and which we naturally supposed would be the first line of search and of pursuit.

CHAPTER LIV.

FLIGHT.

THE shore was sandy, broken here and there by masses of black rocks, and fringed by groves and thickets, which afforded every means of concealment, if we were pursued. Moreover, many little caiques and fishing-craft were moored in the creeks and inlets for nearly three miles beyond Selyvria : thus we had every means of escape to seaward, if closely pressed by the soldiers from the castle. I had still the sentinel’s loaded musket ; but was resolved to toss it into some pool of water or olive-thicket when day

dawned, lest the circumstance of having it in my possession might excite remark or suspicion; and we intended to pass ourselves off to the Osmanlies as shipwrecked British prisoners, escaped from a Greek pirate—a story probable enough, if told at a moderate distance from Selyvria.

A hundred times we paused anxiously to listen, assured that we heard the noise of pursuit, rising above the far-sounding murmur of the eternal sea that rolled upon the sandy beach. Now it seemed the baying of dogs; then the tramping of horses on the paved road that led to the bridge of the Saltmarsh; next it was the tread of men's feet and the clink of accoutrements; but these were all the effect of an over-excited fancy; for after listening breathlessly, with heads stooped low, we became assured that there was no sound in the night air, but the sighing of the wind through the olive and orange groves, and the murmur of the Propontis as it broke on the silent shore.

We were progressing in the direction of Heraclea, where Major Catanagh lay with the rest of our comrades and the regiment of the Mir Alai Said. Callum urged that we should lose no time in repairing there, and insuring our own safety; but I was more intent on reaching Rodosdchig, where I could draw off my little party, embark them in boats, and sail for the opposite Isle of Marmora, as I had now no thought in this world but to save or rescue Sir Horace and his friends from the danger that menaced them.

‘But if our detachment has been recalled from Rodosdchig?’ said Callum; ‘what then?—we have been absent several weeks, I think, though I forgot to reckon the time in yonder atrocious den.’

I had not thought of this chance, and it puzzled me.

Major Catanagh, may have been ordered to join

at head-quarters, for all that we know to the contrary, sir, and may have marched for Constantinople, said he.

Still my resolution was not altered.

‘Let us reach Rodosdchig,’ said I, doggedly.

The silent night wore away; pale Phosphorus, the morning star of the old Greeks, melted into the rosy sky of sunrise, as the god of day ascended from the distant Ægean sea, and tipped the hills and castles of the Dardanelles with fire. The waves of the Propontis gleamed in gold, and rolled like liquid light upon its fertile shores. We found ourselves in a lonely place, where the sea broke in surf on one hand, and on the other lay a marshy waste, where buzzards and vultures seemed the only living things, with a few of those solemn-looking storks, which are so often to be found perched on the roofs of Turkish houses; or peeping out of nests of twigs and clay, made under their eaves.

Day had now fully broken. I concealed the bayonet in my sleeve as a weapon of defence; but threw the musket into the sea. Then Callum and I put our sorely-soiled uniforms into the best order, and though the amount of hair which flourished around our visages gave us rather a Crimean aspect, it mattered not in Turkey, and we stepped forward with growing confidence, looking about for some one to direct us, as the dome and minarets of a mosque (like a punch-bowl between two champagne bottles) appeared at a distance, and indicated the vicinity of a town.

Near a well on the wayside, we found an old woman, of an aspect rather Ghoulish, with her eyes shining through the holes in her yashmack, which was carefully drawn over her head, though her poor mammary region was bare and flat as a drum-head. She was filling a vase of most classical aspect, with the pure water of the circular well,

over which drooped the long branches of a solitary date-palm.

On my inquiring the name of the little town which was now visible above the orange-groves, she hastily flung down her pitcher in great alarm, and muttering something about 'Franks and Giaours,' fled from us.

'The devil's in the cailloch,' said Callum; 'does she take us for ogres?'

Rather discouraged by the impression our appearance seemed to make, we pressed on towards the town, beyond which we saw a chain of snow-capped hills, sparkling in the sunshine like cones of polished silver. We studied our plans and distances over and over again; and I shuddered as I thought of the hopeless captivity that might succeed our recapture—the danger that hung over the Everinghams—the dreadful Bagnio; and with that recollection there came before me in fancy the careworn smile of poor Achmet Effendi, and his miserable comrade the lieutenant of artillery, who were still lingering there.

I knew well the danger and the difficulty attending two unarmed strangers travelling on foot in such a country as Turkey; for at the present hour I need scarcely remind the reader that even in the streets of Stamboul, notwithstanding the presence of regular troops and patrols of armed police, robberies and assassinations of every description, by the handjiar, the pistol, the bludgeon, and strangulation, are of constant occurrence in open day. If such is the case in the capital of 'the Lord of the Black and White Seas, and Keeper of the Holy Cities of Mecca, Medina, and Jerusalem,' our prospects in his rural districts were not very encouraging.

By the side of a rivulet we found a dreamy Osmanli reclining under an orange-tree, regaling himself on dates and cold water, with a paper cigar in his mouth. He was basking in the sunshine, and be-

lieving himself, perhaps, in the Garden of Delights, though minus the river of fragrant wine, the fruits of the giant Toaba, and the caresses of the black-eyed girls, with their limbs of snow, and scanty cymars of green.

With the usual greeting, I inquired if he knew the town now before us.

He replied in the affirmative; but the name I cannot now remember, and no map that I have seen bears it.

‘Whence come you?’ he inquired.

‘Frangistan.’

‘That I can perceive—but how?’

‘By a ship.’

‘Allah Kebir! I did not expect you to fly.’

‘Of course not—she was wrecked upon the coast.’

‘And you escaped?’

‘Narrowly, as you may see—all we possess is upon us, and we are almost famished.’

‘Bismillah! now I remember having smoked pipe with you once.’

‘Where, Aga?’

‘In the khan at Heraclea.’

‘I think I remember you,’ said I; though in truth I had no recollection of the worthy man whatever.

‘I have some dates and the spring-water here; but you are welcome to both. Eat with me, and we shall be friends. I am no Aga, but a humble dealer in cherry-sticks, and having sold all my stock in Selyvria, am now returning home.’

‘To yonder town?’

‘Exactly.’

‘Has it a Kadi?’

‘Yes, and none in Roumelia knoweth better the hundred and fourteen chapters of the Koran. Whenever his carpet is spread, heels are turned up and heads sliced off in a twinkling! Wallah! he knows

the law well, Hadjee Sohail Ebn Amru; and more than all, he is my elder brother, and has built for the public use a mosque and fountain, surrounded by cypresses and mulberry-trees. I had the misfortune to come into existence a little later than he, so our father left him every asper he had in the world: thus the Kadi Sohail is a rich dealer in shawls, silks, and carpets, while I am a poor vender of cherry-sticks; but what seek you of the Kadi?

‘Not money, my friend.’

‘You are wise—what then?’

‘Horses to take us to Stamboul.’

‘But who will pay for them?’

‘Our ambassador.’

‘Wallah!’ replied the pipe-stick vender; ‘all the world say he is breaking his heart about the fall of Kars; but all the world are liars, I think. However, as you came to fight for the Faithful, horses you shall have, if my brother the Kadi can find them.’

The acquaintance of this garrulous fellow was quite a boon to us; and encouraged by his free and talkative manner, and not a little amused by the airs of patronage and protection he assumed, we stepped boldly into the town, giving out, on all hands, that we required horses for Stamboul.

I found that these Turks were fast making me as sly and reserved as themselves.

CHAPTER LV.

RESUME MY COMMAND.

ASSISTED by our new friend, we reached the house and bazaar of the Kadi Sohail Ebn Amru, who, on seeing

our uniforms, and hearing that we required two horses for the Sultan's service, after wonderfully little delay, ordered that they should be procured, *i. e.*, taken, or forcibly pressed, from the first or nearest persons who were *not* included in the circle of his acquaintance. While the nags were being brought, the seller of pipe-sticks bustled about, and set before us a repast of mutton-ham, cheese, white bread, and Kir-kissa wine, and we seated ourselves on some of those soft carpets of Iraun, which are the pride of the Stambouli housewives.

The Kadi was not present, being closeted in an inner apartment with a stranger, a brother Hadjee, whom he appeared to treat with great reverence. Ere long he came out, and invited us to enter and 'partake of coffee with his friend, who had travelled a long way on foot and was weary.'

'A friend?' said I, hesitating.

'Yes, Aga.'

'A soldier?'

'No—a Moolah.'

'But a Moolah may not like us.'

'He is sure to do so.'

'But then we are soldiers,' I continued, still hesitating; 'and Moolahs hate all soldiers.'

'Mashallah!' said the Kadi; 'tis the famous Hadjee Moustapha, who has himself been a soldier, and a brave one too.'

We were both confounded by lighting on this devil of a Moolah even here! I scarcely dared now to whisper our danger to Callum, lest the visitor might overhear, as a partition formed of striped cloth, covered with sentences from the Koran, alone separated us; and if discovered by him, all the wealth of Karoon (Croesus) could not save us. While pondering what excuse to make, and finding that the more I pondered the more obstinate my invention became, luckily the horses—two fine Arabs—ready

accoutred, with high demi-pique saddles, and having bridles and cruppers covered with brass knobs and long red tassels, were led up by grooms wearing each a red fez and voluminous blue breeches; then bidding the Kadi and his brother farewell, and hastily leaving a receipt and order on the regimental paymaster for the alleged value of the horses, if not safely returned, we trotted 'away,' as we said, 'for Stamboul;' and then, from the street corner, started at full gallop for Rodosdchig.

The town we left was garrisoned by two battalions of the Egyptian contingent, consisting entirely of *one-eyed men*. So great is the horror of military service in the land of Pharaoh in this age of steam, that the people mutilate themselves in such numbers to avoid soldiering, that the Pasha has been compelled to enrol those having right eyes in one regiment, and those having left eyes in another.

We rode at great speed, and when the sun was verging towards the long chain of the Tekir mountains, we saw before us the crenelated walls, the old castle, the flat roofs, the gilded mosques and white minars of Rodosdchig, with the tall, solemn cypresses, and the green City of the Silent, where I had first met Iola; and there lay the ruined hermitage of St. Basil amid its beautiful groves, and the Holy Well still sparkling in the setting sunshine. My heart filled with tender memories, and I shuddered when I saw her dreadful grave—the waves of the blue Propontis—gleaming far beyond the landscape; but I thrust away such thoughts, and gnawing my nether lip, strove to think only of Laura and the desperate task I had before me.

Laura and Iola!

The struggle is a sore one, when there is but *one* heart for *two* loves!

As we approached the castle, all heedless of the clamour excited among the usually inert and sullen

Turks by our appearance when galloping through the muddy streets, Callum uttered a shout of satisfaction on seeing the red coat, the green tartans, and glittering bayonet of a Highland sentinel at the castle gate.

‘Now God and Mary be thanked, our men are here yet!’ exclaimed he, in Gaelic.

As we rode in, our comrades hurried forth to meet us, and in a trice we had Serjeant Mac Ildhui, Corporal Donald Roy, and every man of my little detachment around us with clamorous tongues, and hands outstretched in joyous congratulation, with many an inquiry, while the Turkish guard of Topchis looked on with a sullen and dogged stare from under their bushy eyebrows.

Roused by their clamour, an officer in a scarlet jacket and tartan trews, with a Turkish fez, a bearded clin, and a meerschaum in his mouth, jumped over a window on the ground-floor, and joined the group in the castle-yard.

‘Mac Innon—Allan Mac Innon!’ he exclaimed.

‘Jack Belton!’

We shook hands warmly as I dismounted.

‘By all the powers, where have you been? In the hands of the evil genii?’

‘Where I cannot tell you, at present.’

‘We all feared you had bid farewell——’

‘To what?’

‘The great scuffle of life.’

‘Not at all—but how came you here?’

‘To take command of your detachment, when Serjeant Mac Ildhui reported your lamentable demise, and we had the big drum covered respectably up with crape, and funeral knots tied on our sword-hilts. We are to march to-morrow, so had you been a few hours later, we had been off for Stamboul.’

‘Fortunate!’ said I, with a glance at Callum; ‘but

you must delay your march a little time, Jack. I have a small expedition cut out for you—'

'Of a warlike nature?'

'Yes.'

'And I have some news for *you*.'

'Indeed!'

'We are both gazetted Lieutenants; *vice* Cameron and Moray, dead—one of wounds at Sebastopol, the other of cholera at Scutari—poor fellows! So we have two commissions to wet—I, yours—and you, mine. I have another box of cheroots and some prime Cavendish, with a jar of Kirkissa wine. Come along—I'll hear all your news in my room—'

'And tho Yuze Bashi—how is he?'

'Oh, a most unamiable old fellow—in the sick-list still, having been powdered and pilled by a Jew Hakim, till he cannot move.'

'Long may he remain so!' said I, revengefully, as we entered Jack's quarters.

In a few minutes I had refreshed myself, changed my attire, and sat down to such a repast as Jack's servant could prepare in haste; we lighted our cigars; Jack drank his wine out of a tumbler, and I mine out of a cream-jug, as our utensils were scanty and in a dilapidated condition. Jack smoked in silence and patience, waiting to hear a story which I knew not how to begin, as I was loth—exceedingly loth—to account for that remarkable cruise undertaken by Callum and me at night; so there was a long silence, during which Jack whiffed away, and then he stared inquiringly at me.

'You sigh?' said he; 'what the deuce is the matter? Fill your cup with wine again—and drink, my boy. Remember the mess-room song—'

'Since the chief end of life is to live and be jolly,
To be sad about trifles is trifling and folly.'

En avant! What have you been about, Allan? We heard that you had been making love to a Haidee—

a flower of "the Isles of Greece," or some Turkish odalisque—but you lost her? Never mind, my boy—she'll soon prove, "though lost to sight, to memory *queer*," when we change quarters.'

I quieted Jack's raillery by a grave relation of my adventures; and his wonder, anger, and resentment were excited alternately by the horrors I had undergone, and by the heartless assassination of poor Clavering; but the moment I mentioned the danger of the yacht, he started to his feet, exclaiming—

'O hang it! this can never be permitted! We can't march for Heraclea to-morrow.'

'Of course not, with this devilish business on the tapis.'

'It is our duty—our bounden duty—to march at once with every man we have, and to save Sir Horace and his people from these butcherly Moham-medans.'

'March?—sail you mean!' said I.

'And we must get a craft to-night—it is not yet too late,' he exclaimed, looking at his watch.

'Callum! call Serjeant Mac Ildhui—our lads must all be in marching order, with haversacks and ammunition, an hour before daylight to-morrow.'

'Very well, sir.'

'Bravo!' added Jack; 'we shall cut a dash, and have a little war on our own account.'

'An entire column in the "Times" to ourselves.'

'And a sketch in the "Illustrated News," of course.'

'There go the pipes for tattoo—fill your wine-horn again, Allan! Here's success to our expedition in the morning!'

CHAPTER LVI.

'BIODH TREUN!'

THE morning was cold and frosty, though in the last days of February. The sun was yet below the horizon; but all the sea that stretched away towards the mouth of the Bosphorus on one hand, and the Dardanelles on the other, was covered by a golden brilliance; and a rosy gleam in the east indicated the quarter from which, without any lingering twilight, he would climb at once the azure sky. No cloud shaded the surface of the latter, and scarcely a ripple seemed to curl the still and beautiful bosom of the Propontis.

Callum brought me my only heir-loom, the old claymore, on the blade of which my father—in some old Flemish camp, when serving under York—had written the two words, *Biodh Treun* (be valiant). I stuck my revolver and dirk in my belt, and descended to the parade-ground full of enthusiasm and hope.

My little band of Highlanders mustered in the chill morning with alacrity. They were all in light marching order, and in addition to their arms and accoutrements, carried only their greatcoats and wooden canteens. I carefully inspected their ammunition, and then marched them to the landing-place, where a large kochamba, which had been procured overnight, and which was manned by eight stout galiondgis, awaited us. Before marching out, I had no little difficulty in explaining to the Yuze Bashi's second in command the nature of the expedition on which we were departing, and that we must necessarily return for our baggage, knapsacks, and squad-bags, before marching to Heraclea. To the Major I despatched a mounted Topchi, with a letter acquaint-

ing him with my return to my party, my late adventures, and the nature of the service on which I had gone—a service of which I was convinced he would approve, as the necessary protection of British subjects had forced me upon it, and as there was no vessel of war near with which I could communicate, and, save my Highlanders, no other armed force on which I could rely.

Of these Highlanders, whose task was now to save Sir Horace from the pirates, *eight* were evicted Mac Innons of Glen Ora; and in the ranks I heard them recalling to each other the day 'when the glen was desolated,' as we marched from the castle with our pipe playing, and embarked in the kochamba; then we shipped eight long sweeps, with two men to each, hoisted the long and tapering lateen sail, and stood out of the harbour of Rodosdechig, with a fair wind that bore us away southward for the Isle of Marmora.

As we put to sea, Callum urged me in a whisper to have the boat's head shot first to starboard—'*the deisuil*,' as he said, 'in honour of the sun'—an old superstitious custom, for which, like many others, he was a great stickler; and as I had the tiller-ropes, it was at once complied with.

My fellows were all lively and merry at the prospect of a brush with any one; and this duty seemed a stirring change after the dull monotony of mounting guard in that old castle, whose shadow fell far across the shining water, and where their only companions were the stolid, opium-drugged, big-breeched, raki-drinking, and chibouque-smoking Topchis of the Yuze Bashi Hussein.

With their broad chests heaving, and their bearded faces flushed by exertion as they bent to their task, Callum Dhu, Donald Roy, and Serjeant Mac Ildhui sang an old Highland boat-song, to which the rowers kept time with their broad-bladed sweeps, that flashed

like fire as they threw the silver spray towards the rising sun—the glorious sun of Asia, which filled all that morning sea with his dazzling splendour—and while the piper played in the prow, all the soldiers joined in parts, their thirty voices making the sky ring when they united in one volume, to the astonishment of the immovable Turks, and to the great amusement of Jack Belton, who enjoyed our enthusiasm, but laughed like a Lowlander at the strange words of the chorus, which suited the action of the oars, and were somewhat to the following purpose :—

*'Horo, horo, horo elé,
Horo, horo, horo elé;
Hu ho i o 'sna ho elé,' &c.*

'Well, 'pon my soul,' said Jack, as he lolled in the stern-sheets of the boat, polishing the barrel of a finished Celt with the ashes of his cheroot, 'this is better fun than blowing on the flute, or pumping on an accordion all day long in one's barrack-room for lack of something to do.'

'Wait,' said I, 'until you have seen Fanny Clavering; your mind will then be fully occupied.'

'By love for her?'

'Of course.'

'Query—is she beautiful?'

'I don't think Heaven ever created another so brilliant and so fascinating.'

'Indeed! you quite interest me. The deuce! I shall be in danger of losing both life and liberty; but I don't mean to wed in a hurry.'

'Fanny has a handsome fortune—she is rich.'

'Money is nothing to a sub of a year or two's standing.'

'True—but we may remain jolly subs long enough now.'

'Don't think of it, pray—but alas! peace will soon be proclaimed now, as we have polished off the imperial

boots of His Majesty of Russia, and all the additional battalions must be reduced.’

‘Fanny’s bright hazel eyes—’

‘Will not lure me into matrimony, pin-money, and baby-jumpers. I mean not to think of such things until I require cotton caps, water-gruel, and hot bottles at night; until I give up the polka, relinquish my pipe, and vote the mistletoe a most improper appendage to a Christmas chandelier; when I consider music a bore, and babies *not* a bother; when I deem flirtation disgraceful, and prefer a quiet game at crown-points to whirling with Maria or Louisa in the *deux temps*—I shall think of it seriously, and prepare to take upon my knee a little Jack Belton, and sing “Ride a cock horse to Bambury Cross,” or of old “Humpty Dumpty who sat on a wall,” and so forth.’

While Jack ran on thus, Callum Dhu, who sat near me with his belt and jacket off, pulling the stroke oar, was listening to him with a quiet smile, for he liked his rattling, off-hand manner.

‘Callum,’ said I, ‘*you* remember Miss Clavering?’

‘Many a time, sir, I have led her pony up Ben Ora, and round the Craig-na-tuire! Who that ever saw her could forget her?’ he replied, as his eye sparkled and his cheek flushed, while he gave fresh energy to tugging at the bending sweep; ‘She was ever so gay, so beautiful, so joyous and flattering!’

‘And Miss Everingham, too,’ I added, in a low voice; ‘Mrs. Clavering, I should say.’

Callum gave me a glance full of deep and sorrowful meaning; but he only bit his proud nether lip, and bent more lustily to the oar. He was as full of ardour at the prospect of risking his life in defence of these two ladies as if he was the accepted lover of them both; for poor Callum’s heart was chivalrous as it was kind and true; and though, like himself, more than one soldier in that huge lumbering boat had good reason to curse the intrusive name of Evering-

ham, and that feudal law which enabled a landlord to evict the people, they were all ready to face fire and water, shot and steel, to rescue him and his friends from the perils that surrounded them. Fresh hands were laid on the oars; the sun attained its meridian height; the outlines of the Isle of Marmora began to rise higher to the southward; sturdily pulled the Highland oarsmen, and still their strange wild chorus was wafted to leeward on the Grecian sea—

*‘Horo, horo, horo elé,
Horo, horo, horo elé;
Hu ho i o ’sna ho elé.’*

CHAPTER LVII.

THE ISLE OF MARMORA.

I GAZED alternately on the distant island that was now rising faint and blue from the shining sea, and on the huge lateen sail that tapered far away aloft upon its slender yard, which resembled a fishing-rod, while Belton still lounged in the stern-sheets, and lunched on sliced Bologna sausages, biscuits, and sherry.

‘Yonder Isle of Marmora has some interest for me,’ said he; ‘I had an uncle who got his wife out of that identical place.’

‘From the marble quarries, perhaps.’

‘Not at all—he was no Pygmalion. He was first-lieutenant in the flagship here, about ten years ago, and being in hopeless ill health, was landed, with six months’ leave to remain at the house of an Armenian merchant, who treated him with great kindness, and whose daughter—young and lovely, of course—nursed him with the most enchanting tenderness. So whether it was owing to the fresh breezes from

the Propontis, the cool wines of old Greece, or the charms of the soft maid of Armenia, I know not; but before the six months were up, mine uncle reported himself to the Admiral as "fit for duty," and joined his ship. He thought very sadly about his Armenian for a time, and felt very restless in his cot at night; but soon dismissed her from his thoughts, as the ship had to be painted and overhauled, and sent home to Portsmouth. A year after he was with our fleet at Stamboul, and while rambling there with a brother captain—for he had his own frigate then—they entered the slave-market in disguise. There he saw—what?—his beautiful Armenian friend—his kind little nurse—the daughter of his hospitable entertainer—offered for sale as a slave! She knew him, and in tears and agony stretched her pretty hands towards him; for she was a Christian woman, and felt keenly all the horrors of her situation. Her story was soon told. Her father's ships had perished at sea; his wealth had passed away; he died, and his Turkish creditors had remorselessly seized everything, even to the carpet his daughter sat on. Then they seized her too, and offered her for sale—and there she stood, with a ticket on her breast, and her price marked thereon.

'For sale! My uncle was an honest fellow—he damned their eyes all round, and swore he felt it in his heart to flog one-half Stamboul and keelhaul the other. An Unbeliever cannot purchase women; but my uncle knew a Turkish officer, who was an Irishman—Bim Bashi O'Toole—who, for a dozen of wine, undertook to manage the affair; so for four hundred guineas he bought the fair Armenian, and married her at the ambassador's chapel. Then he brought her home in his own frigate. He is now posted, a C.B., on half-pay, and resides with his Armenian wife, and six little half-Scotch, half-Armenian

imps, in one of the prettiest villages in Strathearn; so you see, Mac Innon, this classic island of Marmora has quite a family interest for me.'

While Jack ran on in this fashion, I was wholly occupied in thinking of two soft eyes, and a certain fair, pale, English face, with its chestnut braids and rosy lips, and of a low sweet voice, that seemed already whispering in my ear—the voice of Laura, whose tones had come to me so often in the dreams of night. In imagination I again beheld her, and that peculiar *individuality* which indicates every one by habit, gesture, form, and smile, came all before me in one gush of memory.

The nut-brown sail, with its broad, black stripes, bellied out in the light wind that played over the ripples of the noonday sea, but ere long the wind grew light, and as it died away, the sail flapped heavily and the kochamba lurched and rolled upon the glassy swell.

The day drew on, and soon the rosy tints of sunset lingered on the shore, bathing with a ruby gleam each wooded bay and rocky cape that stretched into the dim and azure haze, far, far away. The coast of Roumelia seemed all of sapphire hue; the little Isle of Coudouri beamed from the blue sea like a huge amethyst sparkling with diamonds—these were the casements of its little town, that were glittering in the western light.

The Isle of Marmora now looked close and high, and I sighed for the lagging wind, as we lay becalmed about four miles off its western promontory, and one mile due east of Coudouri, with the sea darkening fast around us, and the stars coming out one by one from the sky of brilliant amber.

While we continued to scan the coast with our telescopes, as it was in this part of the Isle the yacht was ashore, Jack Belton discovered the masts and hull of a smart schooner, which lay pretty high up in one of

the sandy bays that now opened upon our view; and this we had no doubt was the craft we were in quest of, as the position in which she lay, and her appearance, exactly corresponded to what we had heard of the *Fairy Bell*, Sir Horace's vessel. Being somewhat tired by the exertions of the past day, my soldiers and the galiondgis had relinquished their oars, and sat gazing dreamily either at the glassy water or the little black speck which indicated the hull of the yacht ashore.

'Suppose the islanders were to rise upon us, and assist these Oriental ticket-of-leavers!' said Belton.

'You are most unpleasantly suggestive,' said I; 'but let them rise, they are welcome.'

'Indeed!'

'Yes. With thirty Highlandmen, I would not fear to face three hundred Greeks.'

'Even those of Leonidas?'

'Yes, Jack—even those of Leonidas!'

'Bravo!—but this may prove more than a mere melo-dramatic performance.'

'It may—but ha!—what is that?' I exclaimed.

'A gun—a flash on the shore!'

'Another!'

'And another!'

'Now, heavens above, what may this mean?'

'The pirates.'

'The pirates already!'

'We have been anticipated by the four caiques!' cried several voices.

'Out with the sweeps and oars!—down with the mast and yard!—in with the sail!' I commanded, with excited energy, and the orders were obeyed with alacrity.

'Clap on to the sweeps now!'

'Give way, my boys—give way with a will!' said Belton.

Flash after flash came rapidly and redly from the

dark and wooded bay ; the boom of carronades pealed over the water, and then came the patter of small arms.

My soul was full of anxiety ; I panted rather than breathed, for I was without a doubt that we had been anticipated—that those wretches had commenced their attack, and that Sir Horace was fighting gallantly, like a brave English gentleman.

‘But see,’ said Callum, to whom I had freely communicated all my fears, ‘there are three or four vessels now rounding the promontory and entering the bay, for good or for evil?’

‘The telescope, Jack—the telescope, for God’s sake!—thank you,’ said I, adjusting it for a night observation, as the darkness had now almost set in ; but I could distinctly perceive four long, low, and sharply-built caiques, full of men, many of whom appeared to be armed with muskets, pulled swiftly round a black promontory of rock which jutted into that sea of amber, and each in succession shot swiftly into the wooded bay.

Several brilliant rockets now hissed upward into the blue sky ; and as their sparkles descended in a shower among the woods, or on the rippled water, all became dark and still—so deathly still, that I heard only the beating of my heart, and the half-suppressed breathing of the rowers, three of whom were bending on every sweep, and the splashing of the water, as we neared the eastern headland of the little bay in which the yacht was beached, and into which these dark and mysterious craft had glided so noiselessly

CHAPTER LVIII.

THE FAIRY BELL.

THE Island of Marmora—the Elephonesos of the ancients—is a dependency of an Anatolian Sanjiack, and lies sixty miles south-west of Stamboul. It is about ten miles long, and has a miserable little town of romantic-looking wigwams on its southern coast, and a Turkish pharos on a promontory towards the Bosphorus. Of old, it was famous for its marble quarries, but now is noted only for sterility, and its meagre population of bare-footed and blue-breeched Greek fishermen.

The bay, however, which we were now stealthily entering, was richly wooded; but many of the trees were bare, for the black gusts of the last autumn had swept both sea and shore; but there the wild almond was wont to shed its silver blossoms in spring, and even now, the wild thyme, the caper-shrub, the rose-laurel, the woodbine, and the china-rose, made all the inlet beautiful; nor were the scarlet lotus, or the graceful date-palm, which an Oriental poet likens to a young beauty bending her head; or the soft perfume of the sweet El-caya tree of Yemen, wanting to complete the charm of this dark and shady cove. Softly we stole in, with handkerchiefs tied round our sweeps to muffle them; and while we pulled swiftly, keeping close in shore, and under the deep shadow thrown by the woods upon the starlit water, we carefully loaded and capped our fire-arms, all of which were fortunately Minie rifles, as my detachment belonged to the Light Company.

Now at the end of the bay the moon rose broad and full, and as her giant disc heaved up in all its bright effulgence from the shining sea, a column of

light flashed from the horizon into the wooded creek, and displayed its sylvan scenery.

We could see the yacht—the *Fairy Bell*—as she lay in the shallow water careened to port; she was tautly rigged; her foremast was strong; her mainmast tall, and tapering away aloft like the finest willow wand. Her hull was long and low; her breadth of beam was great, and the copper on her sharp bows shone like burnished gold in the moonlight; her decks were flush, level, and had twelve carronades—all of which, however, were quite useless, by the elevation of their muzzles on one side, and the consequent depression on the other; and I saw at a glance that, unless vigorously defended, this smart little yacht, the flower of Cowes, the pink of the Channel squadron, and the winner of five silver cups which adorned the library at Elton Hall, would fall a prey to these piratical caiques.

We were all nearing her rapidly; but fortunately the dark shadow of the wooded shore completely veiled the kochamba, while the caiques were fully visible in the blaze of a moonlight that filled the bay. A half-shout, half-cheer, from the crew of the yacht—now distant from us about five hundred yards—announced that her people were on the alert. Then a garland of fire zoned her low black gunwale round, as a volley of fire-arms was poured upon the approaching boats, and crashed through their planking.

‘Hurrah!’ cried Jack Belton; ‘the old M.P. is quite up to the mark, I think!’

‘Keep close in—keep in the shadow,’ said I; ‘or, by Jove! we may come in for a dose of that, too, before they know who we are.’

‘That fire was well directed,’ said Callum.

‘It has staggered those devils in the boats—I see them throwing aside their oars,’ added Jack.

‘Stretch out—stretch out!’ I exclaimed, drawing

my sword ; ‘and be ready, every man of you, to fire the moment I give the word!’

It was most unfortunate for the yacht that her guns were rendered useless by her heel to port ; but the fire of her small-arms was brisk ; and a yell replied, as the caiques, which had been warily pulled in a line duly astern of her, now dashed upon her quarters, and a vigorous attempt was made by the Turks to board. In the moonlight we could see the momentary gleam of sabres as they were brandished, and of bayonets as they were pointed ; the flashing of pistols, and the appearance of dark faces and darker figures, as they strove to gain a footing on the side-chains, and to force a passage, by fighting, to the schooner’s deck, but were thrust over by the bayonet or beaten down by the clubbed musket ; and were dashed, wounded and bleeding, into the sandy and blood-stained water, which took them up to the girdle, or little above it. With all their efforts, it was evident the yachts-men would have the worst of it ere long, for some of the Greek villains had just forced a passage to the deck, when one more stroke of the sweeps brought us within sure range.

‘Now, Highlanders,’ cried I, ‘ready !—present !—you can pick off these fellows like a covey of partridges.’

‘Or sparrows on a midden,’ added Callum, as thirty Minie rifles, levelled low, were fired out of the gloomy shade, and thirty spherical rifled bullets whistled among the dark crowd which filled the caiques.

‘Keep up your fire, my lads,’ cried I, ‘and give way—stretch out!’ I added to the galiondgis ; ‘close up—let us only come hand to hand with them ; pull right across the stern of the yacht, and rake the boats alongside.’

This enabled us to sweep the caiques on both sides of her ; and my men kept up a brisk fire. As they

had sixty rounds each, there was no danger of their running short of ammunition. Yells of fear and rage were now blended with those of pain, and the water was full of dead and wounded wretches, from among whom some forty or fifty of the survivors were frantically endeavouring to escape; and to the astonishment of the yachts-men, who were totally unable to comprehend from what quarter this unexpected succour had come, the attack was abandoned with precipitation; and two of the caiques were pulled rapidly away, while the others floated alongside, deserted by their crews; for all who were not lying dead on the thwarts, or struggling with wounds and broken limbs in the water, had scrambled ashore and fled.

The attack had been made by not less than sixty outlaws—all savage-looking Suliotes, half-black Natiolians, wild Arabs, and Candiote mariners. Of these nearly twenty had been sent to their last account; but the affair was not over yet.

Four or five had fought their way on board the yacht; but when our fire had swept the water alongside, they all sprang overboard, save *one*, who concealed himself in one of the quarter-boats, at the moment we boarded the schooner.

As I ascended the side, a strange-looking personage, clad in a light-blue uniform jacket minus tails, a pair of checked Tweed trousers, and wearing a cavalry helmet of unique form, appeared to welcome us. He was armed with a large sabre, and though his upper lip had been put on the war establishment, and wore a grisly moustache—and though the costume he had so hastily donned was partly the uniform of the South Pedlington Yeomanry, of which he was Lieutenant-Colonel, I had no difficulty in recognising the sleek round visage and well-curved paunch of old Sir Horace Everingham, all breathless and blown, and decidedly more ‘out of sorts’ than ever I had

seen him, when toiling up my Highland hills at home.

‘Never was aid more opportune, my dear sir,’ said he; ‘from whence have you come with your soldiers—from the clouds? Awful business this—but I expected it—I shall complain to our ambassador—those d——d ungrateful Greeks! I shall address the House on the subject—I will expose it in the “Times” newspaper—I will, sir, by Heaven!’

Close by the baronet stood his *fidus Achates*, the pale and affrighted Mr. Jeames Toodles, whom he had barbarously forced to remain on deck, and who, having no idea of how to handle any lethal weapon, had spread before him an immense gig umbrella, which loomed in his front like the shield of Achilles, and which he had successfully held between him and ‘the dark Suliot,’ whom he believed to be nothing else than veritable Bashi Bozooks, of whom he had seen some appalling sketches in the ‘Illustrated London News.’

Several of the fugitives, from among the dark foliage on shore, were now firing with their muskets and pistols, and had wounded some of us. We pulled vigorously towards the beach, and opened a random fire of musketry upon those lurkers in the jungle; but now there came a shrill cry from the deck of the yacht. I looked back, and for a moment saw the light dress of a lady flutter in the moonlight—and then there was a heavy splash in the water alongside, as she was flung overboard.

It was Fanny Clavering, who, impelled by an irresistible curiosity, had peeped on deck, and had at that instant been seized and tossed over the gunwale by the pirate who was concealed in the quarter-boat.

This pirate was Zahroun, the galiondgi, the wretch whom I had left in the Bagnio, but who had escaped from thence, heaven alone knows how (unless aided by Clavering’s ring), to share in the horrors of this

night attack, which he had so carefully and daringly projected.

In another moment we saw this brawny villain standing on the beach, with the light form of Fanny in his arms (but I knew not that the girl was Fanny then); and a sickly terror that she might be Laura palsied every thought and energy. At arms' length he held her up triumphantly above him, and uttered a cry of derision and defiance:

'Allah ho Ackbar!'—a cry, half-laugh, half-yell—as he opposed her light and drooping figure to the levelled muskets which we dared not discharge. I sprang into the water, with my claymore in one hand, and a loaded revolver, with a single barrel but having six chambers, in the other. Yet I could not fire a single shot for the same reason that withheld the truer aims of Belton and our soldiers, lest the ball might miss the vulture and hit the dove. Callum Dhu followed me close, with his rifle cocked; but as we advanced from the water, up the sandy and pebbled beach, Zahroun ran hurriedly inland, and while we pursued, once, twice—ay thrice, the dark wood was streaked with light, as pistols were fired from the jungle at us, but happily missed.

Now on a little plateau of rock, in the full blaze of the moonlight, the brawny and bandy-legged figure of Zahroun appeared against the sky in dark and strong outline. He grasped his captive by her hair with his left hand; she was on her knees beside him, and with his right arm held aloft, he flourished a long keen Turkish handjari, which flashed with a blue gleam, for it is a weapon deadly as the creese of a Malay.

'Now, now, foster-brother!' cried I, to Callum Dhu, in Gaelic, 'by God's love and your mother's bones, fire true!'

He knelt down on one knee, and quick as thought took aim; his keen and hawk-like eye glanced along

the smooth rifle-barrel—there was a flash—a sharp report; the form of Zahroun wheeled frantically round for a moment in the air, and then fell flat beside his rescued prisoner.

‘Dioul!’ said Callum, as he coolly reloaded, and cast about his musket; ‘tha chried mi gu’n d’thoir am fear ad tuille trioblaidh dhuinn!’ (The devil! I don’t think yonder lout will trouble us more.)

But he was mistaken; for again the figure of Zahroun staggered wildly up, and he fired a pistol at random, and, in revenge, full at us. I felt a sharp twinge in my left side, as if a hot iron had seared me suddenly. I became giddy, and as I tottered, the dread of leaving life and all the world entered my soul, vividly and painfully.

‘O, Callum!’ I exclaimed, and fell backward into his arms; ‘the villain has shot me!’

A volley rang in my ears as the Highlanders poured all their shot and vengeance on Zahroun, who fell prone to the turf, literally riddled by rifle-balls.

Callum’s deadly aim, by bringing this savage down and arresting his upraised knife, had averted a great calamity, and saved the life of Fanny Clavering. Another second had seen our terrified beauty laid at the feet of the galiondgi a corpse.

Fanny knew and felt all she owed to Callum, for she had seen him kneel and aim when others shrank from the perilous task; and as he sprang lightly up the rock, and tenderly raised her, she impulsively threw herself with a burst of transport into his arms; for in a moment she recognized her former acquaintance and guide over the steep craigs and heath-clad mountains of Glen Ora.

‘Callum Dhu—Callum Mac Ian!’ she exclaimed, ‘and you it is who have saved me—oh Callum, how I shall love you!’

The features of Callum were strongly marked, and bore evidence of deep and bitter thoughts, and of

ready passions. His eyes were keen, and, by turns, fierce and thoughtful, sad, and winning. His bearing was soldier-like; his moustaches were smartly trimmed; his eyebrows were thick and well defined. Fanny, a constitutional coquette, brought all her batteries to bear upon the handsome Highlander; and the moment that her native spirit of fun and flirtation replaced her terror of death, she would have no other hand and no other arm than those of her 'preserver, her dear, dear old friend Callum,' to conduct her to the yacht, and assist her up the side on board.

There, too, I was conveyed in an almost inanimate state; and the alarm for my safety was greatly increased by the total absence of any medical attendance.

I shall not describe the grief of honest Callum, or the terror of Laura Everingham, who during the past conflict had been seated, pale and in tears, in the cabin of the yacht; nor her cry of anguish, on seeing the poor young officer of the Highlanders, who had come so miraculously to their aid, borne senseless and bleeding into her father's cabin; nor shall I attempt to detail her wild glance and speechless astonishment, when the blunt baronet returned to tell her 'that this unfortunate fellow was no other than Allan Mac Innon, the son of old Glen Ora, the wild Highland boy she had known at home!' * * * * *

It was long before poor Laura could realize the truth of this information, or the terrible tidings of Clavering's death, which, after the hurly-burly was over, she learned from Jack Belton and Callum Dhu next morning.

CHAPTER LIX.

A GLEAM OF OTHER DAYS.

THE firing which we had heard on coming in sight of the yacht was caused by Sir Horace, who, to soothe his impatience, had been discharging his carronades. Moreover, from an old Greek pilot, who dwelt on the little isle of Coudouri, he had received some hints, that unless the yacht was speedily got to sea, she might be attacked some night and plundered.

In this affair several of the yachts-men were killed, and several severely wounded; but all the Highlanders escaped, save Donald Roy, who had one of his bare legs slashed by a yataghan; the son of old Ian Mac Raonuill, who received a pistol-shot through the left shoulder, and another lad from my glen, a son of Alisdair Mac Gouran, who was bruised by a musket-butt; but the surgeon of the *Mahmoudieh*, the Turkish steamer, which came in a day or two after, and who proved to be a clever Milanese, soon put all our cuts and scars right, and pronounced me out of danger, though two of my ribs were broken on the left side, and I was weak as a child from over-excitement and loss of blood. His injunctions moreover were, that I was not to be removed; but there was no chance of that, while Laura and Fanny hovered like guardian angels near my cabin-door, and while the burst of gratitude that swelled the heart of Sir Horace, on finding himself rescued by Her Majesty's troops, and by my personal exertions, remained in his bosom—all aristocratic, externally frigid, and exclusive as it was.

'Removed!' he reiterated, 'no, no—he shall make my yacht his home—and every Highlander shall make it his home. They must remain on board till the schooner returns to Constantinople (she had left it three weeks ago, on her return to England), and I

will be accountable for them all to their commanding officer. I am an M.P., as well as a Lieutenant-Colonel—yes, Lieutenant-Colonel of the gallant South Peddlington Yeomanry, or Prince Alfred's Own Carbineers, the terror of the mining districts.'

Jack Belton and Sergeant Mac Ildhui with twenty men had a hunt—a regular stalking-match—over the island for the fugitive pirates; but not one was to be found; they had all vanished like the three hundred and sixty idols of Mecca, when the prophet waved his enchanted lance. Then Jack conceiving that it would be much more pleasant to proceed to Stamboul in the yacht of Sir Horace, when there were two charming young ladies on board, with the best of good living, prime port, and 'no end' of pink champagne and hermetically-sealed provisions, than to march on foot from Rodoschig to Heraclea, and from thence to the Golden Horn, warmly seconded the baronet's grateful invitation, and sent a despatch to Major Catanagh, detailing Sir Horace's wish, and warmly commending his zeal for Her Majesty's service. He also sent the pinnacle of the *Mahmoudieh* for our men's knapsacks, squadbags, and baggage; and while the lubberly Believers, who formed the crew of that imperial steamer, were endeavouring, with all the force of their paddles, engines, and hawser, to drag the yacht into deep water when the tide flowed, Jack was quietly seated in the cabin—about a month after all these troubles—beside Fanny at the piano, turning over the leaves of her music, and gazing sentimentally on her glossy tresses and white hands, while she warbled away, and in a low voice told him how 'she dared not seek to offer him, a timid love like hers;' till our matter-of-fact Jack was quite overcome, and the merry Fanny, already recovering from the shock of late events, was filled with laughter at the triumph of her own beauty, and the success of her brilliant coquetry.

She had already forgotten poor Snobleigh, who, after doing his duty bravely in the trenches before the Redan, was found one morning cold and stiff, with his sword and a half-finished cigar beside him. He had been slain in the night by the splinter of a 'whistling-dick,' *i. e.*, a ten-inch shell, and was now taking his eternal rest with the gallant Blair, and eleven other officers of the Household Brigade, on Cathcart's Hill.

At last the yacht was got fairly afloat, and was anchored in the stream. Her sails were bent anew, her running rigging rove, and the testy old baronet longed for the time that should find him under weigh to lay his grievances personally before our ambassador.

Beating against a head-wind, that blew straight from the Bosphorus, the *Fairy Bell* was close-hauled on the starboard tack. It was evening now; the wind was light; a warm glow bathed all the shore, and tinted with amber and crimson the waves that rolled upon the beach from Ogia to the Point of St. Stephen.

I had been insensible, or weak and dozing, for many days and many nights—in short, I must have been feverish and delirious for some time previous; and on this evening, when the cool sea-breeze from the open cabin-window fanned my cheek, and the bright waves ran merrily past in the setting sunshine, I first became aware of existence; the painful phantasmagoria of sickness passed away, and I felt conscious of the rippling water, the warm sun, and the flowers that stood in vases near me. I had dreams of Laura Everingham, and of her pretty face prying into mine—that face, the soft features of which were almost fading from my memory like a dream of other years. I remembered sounds of music that had come to me in sleep; soft perfumed hands that had touched me; subdued lights, and whispering

voices, and then long, dull, and monotonous silences. I started and awoke to life! Laura's well-remembered voice was in my ear, and speaking to me—every accent was painfully yet delightfully distinct.

The voice of Laura—could it be? Was the tender memory of Iola—were all the events of the past year—but a dream? Or was the hope that had brightened other days coming back to me again?

Who has not felt the nameless, the indescribable thrill, amounting almost to a pang of joy, that shoots through the heart after a long, and it might be, hopeless separation, when the old familiar voice of one beloved—a friend, relation, or lover falls upon the ear?

I drew back the curtain—there was a light step on the carpet; a little hand was placed in mine, and two blue eyes looked kindly and tenderly on my face with a sad smile, such as Laura alone could give.

'Oh, Laura!' I whispered, in a breathless voice, 'I have suffered much—very much since we last met.'

'And I, too, have suffered,' said she, weeping.

'You?—oh—I remember now,' I added, pressing a hand upon my brow, and endeavouring to rally all my thoughts; 'did not some one die—and then we had some fighting?'

But my brain became giddy and I closed my eyes, yet I still felt the pressure of Laura's little hand, as it lay trembling in mine. My heart vibrated to its pulses, for in this there was a dangerous and alluring novelty that bewildered me. Sleep seemed to come upon me again, and of that interview I remember no more.

Again it was evening, and the sun, as he set behind the faint blue hills of Roumelia, shed a blaze of yellow glory over the vast extent of Constantinople, gilding its embattled towers, its tall white galleried minarets, topped with glittering crescents, its gilded domes of

dazzling brightness, and its dense masses of terraced roofs, filling every casement apparently with lamps of burnished gold. The green foliage of the Seraglio Garden and of the Prince's Island; the white walls of Scutari, the strong tower of Galata, Pera, the residence of the Franks, were all sparkling in light; and the forest of masts and gay ensigns that crowded the Golden Horn seemed to be countless as the light caiques that shot over the ripples of the Bosphorus.

Long and black rows of cypresses cast their shadows to the east, lengthening, as the sun departs; then, hark! the red evening guns peal from the strong tower of the Seraskier; the ships of war reply, and the muezzins, from a thousand mosques, shout the shrill cry 'to prayer!' while over tower and temple, cypress-grove and guarded ship, over the Seven Towers, the giant façade of the Seraglio, and over all the sparkling sea the sunlight dies away.

We were at anchor off the city, and stretched upon a cushioned sofa, I gazed languidly at all this from the stern windows, as the yacht swung round with the stream.

Laura was beside me; Sir Horace had gone ashore to confer with the ambassador; Fanny was with Jack Belton in the outer cabin, as the tinkling of a piano informed me—and, as Laura timidly seated herself by my side, Callum Dhu, my constant, my kind and faithful attendant, retired on deck.

I felt happy; for after a separation so long and so hopeless, and having the certainty of a separation before us again, to be with her was to enjoy perfect happiness.

'Laura,' said I, 'I feel as if in a dream—while addressing you, and when uttering your name.'

'A dream?'

'From which I fear to waken.'

'Dream on, then, dear Allan, if it delights you.'

'My life at home was all an agony of suspense and

continued mortifications, even while hope, however faint and slender, lasted; but how shall I describe the torture that life became, after hope itself faded away, and I lost you—lost you for ever!

Laura answered only with her tears, and a long pause, filled up by tender smiles and mute caressing glances or a pressure of the hand ensued. All was forgiven and forgotten.

My letter from Dumbarton she had *never received*. So this imaginary neglect, which had stung me so deeply, was at once explained away.

And what of poor Iola? Was my love for her forgotten quite?

Here, in my own extenuation, I cannot do better than quote a paragraph from one of the most pleasing of our female writers—one alike charming for the brilliancy of her style and the beauty of her person, when referring to a man's first and *other* loves:—

'He spoke no more than truth when he told you that you were his ideal of love and loveliness. The woman who is so beloved may have successors, as she may have had predecessors; but rivals—properly so called—she can have none. Lone and different as the moon in a heaven full of stars, she remains in the world of that man's heart. He has known other women and he has known *HER*. It may be the love of his youth, or the wife of his old age—first love, or last love—it matters not. *The* love—the one love that fulfils all the exigencies of illusion, all the charms of sense, and all the pleasures of companionship, comes but *once* in a man's life-time. The rest are substitutes, make-shifts for love. To them in vain he shall affirm or deny that which they desire or dread to hear. In his heart a shadow sits enthroned, who for ever bends down to listen—to watch those who would approach him—and bar them out, with whispers of sorrowful comparison, and the delight of remembered days.'

During my passion for Iola I believed that Laura's marriage had freed me from every tie to *her*—a bitter freedom certainly.

The story of Clavering's horrid fate had been told to her long since by Jack Belton, and on my recovery, her natural sorrow was one of the first things that piqued and galled me, the more so as poor Tom's miniature, done in Thorburn's best style, seemed to be constantly winking at me out of a brooch on Laura's breast. I referred to this, and she gave me a sad smile.

'Poor Clavering was well worthy of all my esteem,' said she; '*that* sentiment he possessed to the full, Allan, but my love—never! Oh, never! for it was yours, and yours only, dear Allan,' she added, sobbing on my shoulder. 'He knew that he possessed my purest esteem when he married me, and hoped that love would follow the marriage into which papa's impetuosity hurried me—a vain and too often a wicked hope. Advised by some, cajoled by others, quizzed by a few, seriously urged by the many, and overawed by papa, I consented to become his wife, and no time was given for reflecting or retracting. You were lost to me, and other love I had none; so the day came at last which was to make your Laura Everingham his Laura Clavering—the fatal day came and the hour! The vows were said; the mute assent was given; *this* gold ring was placed upon my finger—there was a kissing of friends to undergo—a murmur of voices, and a hum of congratulation. I heard the marriage-bells jangling overhead and felt myself lifted into a carriage. I had fainted, and remember no more of that day—but that poor Clavering was all tenderness and kindness.'

I sighed bitterly at this description; and then felt something of joy and triumph as Laura placed her cheek caressingly to mine, while with her sweet eyes the very sunshine seemed to brighten as she smiled

with the same smile that first shed a light upon my path in life, and taught me that I had a heart to lose.

‘Ah, Laura,’ I exclaimed, ‘I have but one request to make of heaven.’

‘And it is——’

‘That you will love me as of old.’

‘Dearest Allan, my heart never wavered in its love for you; though my affections were forced upon another, my soul was ever with you. Take courage, Allan, you will soon recover, and all will yet be well.’

‘I have no wish to recover!’ I exclaimed, with a sudden burst of renewed bitterness.

‘Allan!’

‘None. I wish that Zahroun’s shot had pierced my heart; I can never win you, for your father hates me, and will never consent to our marriage!’

‘*He does not hate you*, my dear boy,’ exclaimed the hearty voice of old Sir Horace, as he started forward from a corner of the cabin, where he had been for some time an unknown observer of this scene; ‘he does not hate you—but he loves and regards you, as you deserve to be loved and regarded, for he owes you a debt of eternal gratitude; he owes you life and more than life—the safety and honour of his dear little Laura. Take her, Allan Mac Innon, and with her take your old ancestral glen, wood and water, rock and mountain—and may God bless you both, and make you happy as you deserve to be!’

CHAPTER XL.

FAREWELL.

AFTER the interesting tableau with which the last chapter concludes, the reader may consider that to

say more were a useless task; but there are others in this narrative for whom I trust he—or she—may have conceived a little affection as well as for myself.

My friend, Jack Belton, was excellent at all manner of flirtation, and had an inimitable way of hanging sentimentally over a believing young lady's chair, and quoting Byron, or even Shelly, and giving her to know with all point and tenderness how, if

‘ — the sunbeams kiss the earth,
And the moonbeams kiss the sea,
What are all these kissings worth,
If thou kiss not me?’

And Jack was always sketching or copying music for the girls about the garrison—*i. e.*, making the band-master do so, and passing it off—like a rogue as he was—for his own. He was dazzled by Fanny Clavering; but his surprise and chagrin were great, to find that, when promenading the deck, she was quite as much enchanted with her old friend Callum Dhu as with himself.

‘A private!’ muttered Jack, stroking his bandolined moustache; ‘demme, the girl’s mad!’

After a time, he discovered that she was more than a match for him—a perfect flirt, who knew the language of the *fan*, as well as any girl of Cadiz or Almeria.

In the evenings when they sat on the deck, viewing the scenery of the Bosphorus, Jack was always by Fanny’s side, watching her bright and beautiful face, and her sparkling eyes, that glanced waggishly upward, from under the prettiest of pink parasols with a long wavy fringe. Here would this coquettish Fanny deal her battery of smiling shots and wicked shells alternately at Jack Belton and my Highland follower, whom on some cunning pretence or other she contrived to keep pretty constantly about her;

and on whom, to the unbounded wrath of Jack, she gave the especial care of her little Maltese spaniel—a silky-haired and Lillyputian cur, with a pug nose, a snappish eye, a silver collar and bell, all being the parting gift of some forgotten lover in the Rifles at Valetta.

Seated thus, with Jack by her side, and the handsome ‘Callum in attendance,’ as she phrased it, Fanny would speak to the latter of his home, of the Highlands, of Glen Ora, and poor Callum’s honest heart was so completely won, that the memory of his dead Minnie was forgotten. He could have worshipped this beautiful English lady who knew so much about the clans and of other times, when that oppression of the poor, which now crieth to God for vengeance, was unknown in the land of the Gael; and who said so many kind and bewildering things to him; and though his plainness, his honesty, and manliness gained her respect—even as the heavy debt she owed him won her gratitude—his handsome face and noble figure, with his sincere eye and respectful manner, made so favourable an impression on the brilliant Fanny, that though making in her little heart, a vow for the thousandth time, *not* to coquette with the poor private soldier, she could not resist it; and the end of it all was, that the biter was bitten; for the dazzling Fanny fell in love with my henchman, even as the friend of my “Lady Lee,” the proud and imperious Orelia Payne, did with her corporal of Dragoons.

Though a coarse red coat covered the broad breast of Callum Dhu, Fanny felt all his sterling worth, over the artificial flutterers who had surrounded her so long; and his superior officer, the fashionable Jack Belton, informed me with undisguised chagrin, ‘that while my demmed fellow was present on deck, Miss Clavering seemed to have eyes for no one else.’

The end of all this coquetting, promenading, piano

playing, and music-turning, et cetera was, that our lively flirt consented one evening to become the lawful spouse of John Belton, Esq., of Her Majesty's—th Highlanders, but—after secretly pounding enough out of her many thousands to buy her Celtic lover a commission in the Turkish contingent—she levanted before daybreak, and was privately married at the chapel of the British Embassy to—*Callum Dhu!*

This little mésalliance rather soured Sir Horace, and intensely disgusted Jack, who quite forgot the fag-end of his mess-room ditty, *anent* being 'sad about trifles,' and started in a rage to join our first battalion at Balaclava.

I have procured sick-leave, as the doctors aver that the devil of a bullet made such a hole in my side that nothing will close or cure it but my native Highland air.

I am to return home—home to Glen Ora in the *Fairy Bell*, the yacht of Sir Horace, and *we* are to be married in due time after our arrival; for the worthy baronet, after mature consideration, was pleased to reiterate his consent, without apparently caring a jot about what that bugbear 'the world,' would say.

The old M.P. had met this personage—'the world,' in Parliament, and in the borough for which he is Member; he had met him at Almack's; at Crockford's; at Véry's; at the Opera; at Meurice's in Paris, and he marvelled in secret what this awful inquisitor, whose whereabouts is so dangerously vague, would say to the fact of his only daughter and heiress not becoming the wife of any of the *blasé* Honourables or sporting Peers to whom gossip had alternately assigned her; but simply plain Mrs. Allan Mac Innon, the wife of a hero, with only Her Majesty's 6s. 6d. per diem.

He took another glass of Moselle; pondered a little, and thought it was all for the best.

And so think I! With Laura for my bride, I would not envy Alexander of all the Russias on his throne.

The hearths of the people shall again be lit in Glen Ora; from the wilds of the Far West I will call the survivors home; and there, at least, the image of God shall no longer give place to grouse and deer—to sheep and dogs!

Reality never equalled anticipation, say casuists and moralists; but those fellows seldom smell gunpowder, and moreover never saw, never loved or were beloved by such a girl as Laura Everingham.

THE END.

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