# McGLUSKY THE REFORMER

BY

A. G. HALES

WRIGHT & BROWN
12-14 RED LION COURT
FLEET STREET
E.C.4

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*The Authors' Club,*
*2 Whitehall Court,*
*London, W.C.*, 18/12/09.

*DEDICATION*

To *Fred Taylor, Esq.*,

*My dear friend, Fred Taylor, I am dedicating this book, "M'Glusky The Reformer," to you because I know you like live men, and I think you will find my hero very much alive. You are one of the few men whom I have met who have the saving grace of humour, and I think you will know a laugh when you see it on the face of M'Glusky as he goes about his work of reformation. Anyway, by the time this is in print I shall once more be away in the wilds of South America, and this book may conjure up a memory of old times as you sit by your cosy English hearth and read whilst I am "dreeing my ain weird" by the camp fire.*

*Yours ever,*

*A. G. HALES.*

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# M‘GLUSKY THE REFORMER

## CHAPTER I

### A MAN WITH A MISSION

In another book which has no connection with this one I have set out some of the life and adventures of my hero, who was an Australian by birth and ultimately drifted back to his native land. His father was a pious Scot of the rough, old, and rugged type, who at one period of his existence got hold of the idea that he could do better in a new country than he or his forebears had done in Scotland. So he married, and taking his wife with him, ventured across the world of waters to Australia, and built himself a home on the very summit of the Snowy Mountains, and there in a rough log shanty my hero was born. But old man M‘Glusky could not reconcile himself to the new soil. His very being craved for Scots air, Scots speech, and Scots mists and cold. So he crossed the seas again, working his way “hame” as a fireman, whilst his wife, with her child at her breast, revelled in the luxury of a steerage passage. Old M‘Glusky went back to his original home and settled down to purify the universe, and incidentally to make himself a thorn in the flesh and an unadulterated nuisance to all who came within his sphere of influence. So Ian M‘Glusky grew from babyhood to boyhood.

When he was quite young he got hold of the alluring idea that it was his mission in life to set the world right, not merely in regard to things spiritual, but in reference to every other matter which affects poor, frail humanity.

He meant to be a mighty temperance advocate and sweep liquor and liquor-selling shops off the face of the globe, and it also entered into his plan of campaign to extinguish the scarlet woman from amongst the sons of men, and raise the general tone of the world's morality.

In his early youth M'Glusky never doubted his ability to do all these things, because he did not know the powers of the forces he intended to do battle with. He was not then aware of the fact that the enemy at times enters the gates of the assailant and overthrows him.

At that early period of his career M'Glusky did not know the taste of liquor. He was to learn in due season the wizard call of the dice box, and to know what it meant to get to grips with the devil and be worsted in the encounter. A day was to dawn for him when the voice of the siren who slumbers eternally amid the yellow bubbles in the whisky decanter should woo him away from the paths of purity and peace. And above and beyond all, he was to learn the witchery that dwells under the scarlet robe, and to find that his strength was like the strength of Samson in the hands of Delilah.

M'Glusky's father and mother reared the boy on oatmeal and religion, with hard work and scanty clothing thrown in to make a man of him.

Margaret M'Glusky, his mother, was a huge, gaunt woman, with a cold, grey eye and an emotionless disposition; both she and the lad's father were mean to the very verge of miserliness. Once, in a fit of unusual kindliness, the mother put a double pinch of salt into the laddie's "parritch" at breakfast. His father, who was nursing his Bible on his knee, marked the verse he had been reading, by nailing it down, as it were, with his bony forefinger. Glaring first at the woman,

then at the boy, he exclaimed in a rugged whisper, “Margaret M‘Glusky, ye are nae fit to be trusted wi’ the upbringin’ o’ a mon chiel. Hoots, wumman, A’m ashamed o’ ye.”

“What’s wrang wi’ me the noo, Jamie M‘Glusky?” demanded the mother.

“What’s wrang wi’ ye, wumman? Dinna ye ken the wrang yersel’? Hae ye nae maternal instincts tae guide ye? An’ ye ca’ yersel’ a mither? Ye are settin’ a snare for the feet o’ the wee bit laddie, trainin’ him to walk in the paths o’ the unregenerate an’ ungodly. Ye are bringin’ him up tae love extravagance, wumman, dae ye ken that? An’ extravagance is the chosen chiel of the de’il himsel’. Twa pinches o’ saut in his parritch; A never heard o’ sic shamefu’ waste in a’ ma born days.”

Margaret M‘Glusky hung her head at this stern rebuke.

“Jamie, mon,” she answered guiltily, “A ken richt weel A did wrang to gie the laddie twa pinches o’ saut tae his ‘parritch’; but it’s his birthday, ye ken, an’ A had tae gie him a treat. It’s but aince a year, Jamie, mon.”

The father groaned out something concerning the perversity and contrariness of womankind, and turned his eyes once more upon the book.

That was the spirit that brooded over the home of M‘Glusky’s boyhood. Thrift, temperance, both in regard to meat and drink and rigid piety. No games were ever permitted in that austere home. Once an elder of the kirk remonstrated with the old man M‘Glusky, bidding him allow the boy to enjoy his life as other boys did.

“Gie the wee bairn somethin’ to play wi’,” counselled the elder.

Old M‘Glusky stood like one petrified with amazement for a minute or two, then language bubbled out of him.

“Gie him what?” he demanded. “Gie him bawbees tae spend on alley taws an’ sic like fulishness. Dae ye think A’m daft, mon? If he wants pleasure, can he no whustle as the birds God made do whustle?”

“Wad ye hae him whustle on the Sawbath?” demanded the elder, gravely.

“Na, na, elder,” said old M‘Glusky. “On the Sawbath he can walk in the fields wi’ me, holdin’ me by the han’, an’ he can commune wi’ his ain soul, an’ look into his ain heart an’ fin’ oot hoo desperately wicked his heart is, an’ in the evenin’s he can sit atween me an’ his mither an’ mak’ a joyfu’ noise before the Lord, singin’ a psalm. What mair cud a body require?”

Old man M‘Glusky was a just person. He would have starved rather than not pay his debts. He worked early and late. Before he was his own master he made a practice of doing more labour behind his master’s back than in his presence; but he was a bigot, a savage, uncanny creature, wrapped up in his own godliness and good works. He never told a lie, never warmed the core of his heart with a drop of liquor more serious than skim milk, never cast a sidelong look in all his days at any woman other than the great gaunt she-wolf of a woman to whom he was lawfully mated. He never missed tramping to kirk, wet or dry, hail or snow. He was one of those men who never slip from the narrow way all their days, and he never found room in his heart for pity for anyone who did, whether man or maid. He knew his Bible backwards from cover to cover, yet all its most beautiful lessons were lost to him. His egotism was as boundless as the

heavens. He had become possessed of the idea that the Bible had been mangled in translation, and he was waiting for inspiration in order that he might re-write it.

"Mon," said he to his pet gossip elder, Adam Gordon, "ye ken the Songs o' Solomon. Vera beautiful the language ma' be, but the way Solomon mak's free wi' the anatomy o' wummen, mak's ma bluid rin cauld in ma veins. A'm a mairrit mon, as ye ken, mairrit this sax-an'-thirty year come next Martinmas, but if A were tae write a sang tae ma Margaret in the same terms as Solomon uses concernin' his beloved, she wad swat me ower the lug wi' a dirty cloot, an' gang off hame tae her mither."

The elder admitted that in some of his similes Solomon was painfully free, but he added, "Ye ken, M'Glusky, Solomon had sae mony wives, tae say naethin' o' conkubines an' sic trash, that we maun a' mak allowance for him."

Old man M'Glusky sniffed disdainfully. He was not prepared to make allowances even for Solomon, and he determined to so train his own son Ian that he should grow up with all the wisdom of Solomon and none of his faults, forgetting, or not knowing, that it is from a man's very faults and weaknesses that his wisdom often springs, just as a snow-white lily will spring from the very midst of a dirt heap and flourish in all its pristine loveliness.

Young M'Glusky imbibed his father's religious ideas and adopted most of his views, which was only natural, seeing that such things made up the greater part of his early life. He tramped to and fro, attending the village school, which was seven miles from his home. It did not matter what the weather was like, he would no more have thought of remaining at home on account of a storm than a Highland

shepherd would have thought of leaving his flock on the mountain side because of a hurricane of snow.

Always thinly clad, the cruel winds of winter often cut him to the bone, and made him envy any animal of the fields that wore a warm pelt. Only once did he mention this matter to his father.

"Cauld," said the old Scot, grimly, "ye say ye are cauld. Didna the guid God wha dis a' things weel mak' the cauld wind that blaws on yer body? An' did He no gie ye legs tae rin wi', in order that ye micht warm yer bluid?"

Young Ian said that these things were indisputable.

"Then," was the stern retort, "dinna ask me or yer mither for a new pladdie tae keep oot the cauld; but when the wind bites ye tae the bone, then rin, laddie, rin as fast as yer legs'll carry ye, an' by-an'-by ye'll maybe mak' a mon."

And in order to point a moral and adorn a tale, he would tell how John the Baptist went into the wilderness and lived upon locusts and wild honey, dressing himself in skins, in order to perfect himself for the great work of reformation that lay in front of him. So he inculcated a stern moral lesson and saved the price of a new plaid.

After and before school hours the boy had to help on the tiny homestead, and if ever a boy knew what toil was that boy was Ian. He grew up long and gaunt, like his old she-wolf of a mother, big of bone, large-jointed, with big, hard hands that had almost a man's strength in them at an age when most English boys find all their work cut out for them in the swinging of a cricket bat.

In those early days he was not nice to look upon. He was all corners and angles, so much so that even the lasses at the school made a mock of him, and pretended to run away in

affright when he came near them, and they were used to seeing boys rough and scraggy as mountain ponies.

But little heed did he pay to the jeers of the lasses. Already the poison of his father's doctrine had begun to work in his blood, young as he was, and he thought more of cleansing the world of its evils than of enjoying the boyhood that was his birthright.

As he grew older his jaundiced eye saw in every blithe and bonny lass (God's grandest gift to man) a possible daughter of the horse leech. Their smiles were snares, their pretty little coquettish ways were the wiles taught by the serpent to Mother Eve, handed down by her to all her daughters, and he shunned every lass as if she had the plague, yearning all the time to be up and doing. He wanted to go forth and find serpents to slay. For his father had forgotten to tell him anything about the flowers and the fruits and the birds and the beautiful things that the garden had contained. To him Eden was a place with one malignant apple-tree in it, with a wanton woman peering eternally at forbidden fruit, whilst a gigantic serpent sat up on its tail and whispered vile things in her ears.

At last there came a day when old M'Glusky called the lad to him and told him that he was to go forth into the world to earn his daily bread. He spoke as if the laddie had been living on the fat of the land, basking in the lap of idleness all his days.

"A'm sendin' ye forth that ye may be tried by fire," said the veteran, solemnly. "See tae it that ye dinna fa' intae the pit. A'm sendin' ye tae my brither John, wha is in chairge o' the coal mines at Lough Slough. John is a God-fearin' mon in his ain wey, but a weaklin'; he has put siller in his pooch, but

A verra much fear he has na laid up much treasure in the better warl."

The old man put a tiny parcel of money in the lad's hand. Then he thrust his own old worn leather-covered Bible into his son's other hand, and rising, stretched forth his arms.

"Go forth," he shouted in stentorian tones, "go forth into the wicked warl, bear yersel' brawly like a soldier in the thick o' the battle. Dinna forget in the hour o' yer temptation that ye're a son o' the Lord, and o' James Dougal M'Glusky and Margaret, his wife. Dinna hide yer head before sinners. Dinna fear tae speak boldly when ye see sin an' shame an' wickedness, humble the prood an' the michty when they wallow in sin. Fear ye neither mon nor de'il; pull doon the idols o' Baal, an' be ready wi' han' an' word to uphold the faith A hae planted in yer heart. Go forth like a prince o' the hoose o' Judah an' smite the ungodly hip an' thigh." The old man paused, his white locks flying behind him on the breeze. "An' if ye fail tae dae these things, Ian M'Glusky, son o' Jamie M'Glusky an' Margaret, his wife, may the Lord hae mercy on ye, for A'll hae nane if ye come within the sweep o' my arm."

His mother did not say much, but what she did say was very much after the same fashion, only not quite so tender, for she was a grim woman, both in body and soul.

The next day the lad went from the old roof-tree. He carried his slender pack on his back, containing his one decent suit of clothes for Sunday wear, a change of linen, that wonderful old leather-bound Bible with marginal notes all over it in his father's handwriting. Wonderful notes they were too. In some of them old Jamie M'Glusky patted the Almighty on the back, so to speak, and let it be known that he

agreed with the text. In other places the notes seemed to show the old Scot in an attitude of reproof, shaking his finger, as it were, at the Creator, in a reproving sort of way.

He made a special marginal note against the verse which said that Timothy was to take a little wine for his stomach's sake. Against this the ancient Scot had written, "Timothy maun hae been a puir, feckless body, wi' nae backbane. He must a' kenned richt weel that wine is a mocker, which biteth worse than a serpent's tooth in the end. Yet he held a can'le to the de'il, because he had the whimsies in the stummick. A wadna hae gied Timothy hoose room masel'."

The last memory young Ian had of his home was of a little white cottage with a thatched roof, perched upon the side of a rocky hill, whose steep slopes ran down almost perpendicularly to the vale below. At the open door stood his big, bony mother, with her hands folded in front of her, her hair hidden away under her hood. By her side stood his father, his white hair blowing from under his blue Scot's bonnet, his hands raised high in supplication, his eyes turned towards the cold, grey sky.

He paused a moment at the spot where the narrow path took a turn round the hill. Turning his face upwards, he gazed at the spot that had been home to him so long, and a mist came over his eyes. Suddenly his mother's voice came to him on the morning breeze.

"Fare ye weel, ma son, fecht the guid fecht, an' beware o' whusky an' the de'il's dice box."

Then came his father's last words in deeper tones: "Gang yer ways monfully, ye who are the fifth rib o' the body o' Jamie M'Glusky. Haud yer head high, like a young pine tree,

smite the scorner, hew doon the idols, an' for the love o' the Almichty beware o' the scarlet wumman."

The weather was rough and stormy, and the way to Lough Slough was long, but the lad tramped it every inch. Once a good-natured carrier, taking pity upon his youth, and noting that the rising gale nearly lifted him off his feet, offered to give him and his pack a lift over about fifteen miles of the journey for sixpence.

"What's that?" demanded M'Glusky, his hand up to his ear, "gie ma a ride ower a sma' matter o' fifteen miles for saxpence? Dae ye think A'm mad, mon, or hae ye mistook ma for a millionaire? Saxpence is saxpence, an' is no sma' matter to part wi' in one bang."

"I'll toss you a shillin' or nothin'," answered the carrier, with a laugh.

"Tossin' is gamblin', and gamblin' is de'il's work, an' A verra much misdoot if ye air no' a chiel o' the evil ane," shouted M'Glusky, who was delighted to be able thus to start upon his career as a cleanser of the world.

"Ye're a mean young pup, whoever bred ye," snapped the burly carrier; "too mean to wash yer shirt for fear of partin' with the dirt."

"Gang yer ways, mon, gang yer ways," cried M'Glusky, "ye wha wad rob a puir body o' a hale saxpence, an' tempt him to evil as weel. If ye dinna mend yer ways ye'll sink to perdition, an' sit on the ash heaps o' Gehenna through eternity."

The carrier was holding his whip in his hand, the lash doubled down the handle. He saw in front of him a lanky, ungainly, half-grown creature in rough Highland dress.

“Hold yer accursed tongue,” he said shortly, and struck the reformer lightly across the face with lash and handle. The blood rushed from M‘Glusky’s heart to his head, like flood-water through a broken dyke. No man, excepting his father, had ever struck him in all his days. He tried to speak, but all his words jumbled one on top of another, so that he could not form a coherent sentence. He foamed at the mouth. The carrier, who was a thick-bearded man, stroked his beard with his disengaged hand and spat rather contemptuously on M‘Glusky’s shadow. He would have thought a lot more of a youth who had sprung at him with clenched fists than he did of this one, who merely foamed and spluttered like some old fish-wife in a fury. At last there came singing into M‘Glusky’s memory the old familiar text, “If a man smite thee on the left cheek turn to him the other also.”

He determined to be a martyr. Thrusting out a long, lean neck, he put his face as near the carrier as he could get, and said, in scarcely intelligible tones, “Ye are a servant o’ Satan, an’ a mon o’ sin frae yer youth up, I hae nae doot. Ye struck me on the left side o’ ma lug, noo dae the same wi’ the ither.”

The carrier gave a grunt of disgust. “The old Scots breed is played out,” cried he. “Time was, when I first came into these parts, if I had clouted a lad he would have fought me for an hour for it, but you are only a wench in man’s clothes, or else ye come of poor stock.”

“Mon,” whispered M‘Glusky, “if ye say that about ma mither an’ ma feyther ye’re a leear, an’ the truth is na in ye. Dinna speak ill o’ the absent. Here is ma ither lug.”

The carrier contemptuously smacked M‘Glusky on the other cheek, and the next instant he was reeling backwards from a blow that made him see more stars than he had ever

even read of in all his natural life. Down he went on the broad of his back, whilst the Apostle of Peace and Goodwill stood over him with clenched fists and blazing eyes.

"Man," shouted M'Glusky, "it is written in the Guid Buik, 'turn the ither cheek to the smiter,' an' A hae done so, but efter that there isna a word o' guidance in the buik, an' so A'll dae as ma speerit prompts me to dae noo."

The carrier arose, and M'Glusky dashed at him, both hands going like the flails of a giant beating grain.

In those early days M'Glusky did not know much about the art and science of fighting, but what he lacked in science he made up for in fury and activity.

The carrier had been a man of his hands all his days, and rather prided himself upon his fistic skill. He stood up and drove the raw novice back with terrible blows on the body that made the horses in the team grunt in sympathy with the laddie. But, nothing daunted, M'Glusky came for more and got it. At last the carrier cried out:

"Stop now, you young fool, do you want me to kill you?"

The lad was in a terribly battered condition, but his heart was still untamed. He stood in front of his adversary panting like a blown steer, and as he stood there he thought of all the Bible heroes he had ever heard of. Gideon, David, Joshua, and a host of others, and the memory fired his blood. He would not be beaten by this son of Belial, he would die on the field of battle first.

Giving vent to a wild shout, the slogan of his father's clan, he leapt at the carrier with both hands extended, and caught him by the whiskers; then, with his great fists full of hair, he dug his toes into the roadway, and commenced to whirl the carrier round and round like a Catherine wheel.

The carrier could not strike a blow; the agony that came to him as his whiskers started to leave his face by the roots took all the fight out of him. He yelled and cursed, and at every curse M‘Glusky gave a jerk with both hands.

“Haud yer sinfu’ tongue, ye blasphemer,” he stormed, “haud yer evil tongue, or by the cedars o’ Lebanon A’ll pu’ the lugs oot o’ ye.”

One handful of whiskers came away, roots and all, and M‘Glusky took a fresh grip and changed his step. He had been swinging his man round to the right, now he swung him to the left, and as he whirled the unhappy wretch in a giddy maze he broke into a chant,

“Lord let me linger here,
For this is bliss.”

At last the whiskers could not stand the strain any longer, they came away in a bunch, and the carrier fell headlong to the earth, shrieking with agony and painting the air a deep ruddy red with language of his own composition.

Then M‘Glusky fell upon him with redoubled fury. Kneeling on his foe he said fiercely, “Man, I hae pulled yer whiskers oot root an’ branch, an’ as ma soul liveth, if ye dinna stop sic awfu’ swearin’ A’ll put them back again, wrong end first!”

At this awful threat the carrier fainted away.

Then M‘Glusky sat upon him and offered up a short prayer full of thanks, and when this was finished he arose, murmuring, “It has been written in the Buik of Buiks, ‘Love yer enemies, an’ do guid to them that treat ye ill,’ an’ A’ll no leave this mon to dee by the wayside.”

# CHAPTER II

## HIS MEETING WITH JEZEBEL

HAULING and dragging he at last got the carrier into his own van. Then mounting, he took the reins and drove him to his destination, so gaining a ride of fifteen miles for nothing.

The carrier had come to his senses by the time M'Glusky was ready to depart. He looked like a half-plucked emu that had been in a cyclone and a sandstorm and had not had time to wash. His cheeks were swollen and bloody, his eyes were wild and staring.

"A bear ye nae malice, frien'," said M'Glusky, holding out his hand, "an' A hope ye'll be a saved mon frae this day forth; promise me ye'll no swear or gamble again."

The carrier wagged his head feebly; he was ready to promise any mortal thing, at anyrate until his whiskers grew again.

"Praise the Lord!" shouted M'Glusky; "ye're saved. I hae pluckit one brand from the burnin'. Man, when ye met wi' me on the highway ye met an angel unawares."

The carrier sank back and prayed fervently to all his gods that, if M'Glusky was an angel, he might go to a land where angels are unknown when his time came.

M'Glusky went off and caught sight of his own face in a shop window.

"Lord save us!" he said. "I hae got fower big, knobby lumps on ma lug, an' ma nose isna whaur ma mither put it, an' I hae lost a tooth. Maybe it's in the shoulder o' the carrier mon. Weel, weel, I'll nae gang back for it. A'm thinkin' ma

feyther wadna be ashamed o' me this day. I hae pluckit a brand frae the burnin'. I've had a ride o' fifteen miles, an' A've saved saxpence. There's somethin' in a mither's prayers efter a'."

"I hae saved saxpence," reiterated M'Glusky, "an' hae surely pluckit a brand frae the burnin'. There'll be joy amang the angels this day, A'm thinkin'," he added with supreme egotism, just as if he fancied that all the hosts of heaven were watching him and his doings among the sons of men.

If he had heard the carrier telling his cronies of the adventures of the day M'Glusky might not have felt quite so sure of the joy in heaven. A wondering throng of townsmen gathered round the carrier as he sat propped up by many pillows in the chief armchair by the fire in the little inn where he boarded.

They looked with awe at his bruised and beaten face, and at the bare patches where his whiskers had been, and with one accord they demanded to be told what had befallen him.

"Did ye get run into by the express tram as ye crossed the railway line?" demanded one.

"Was it a parcel of dynamite ye were carrying that exploded and blew ye higher'n a hill?" queried another.

The carrier shook his head, or all the head he had left, and replied, with many groans and roadside oaths, that it was something worse than those things combined. He told of the battle by the wayside, adding, "The young whelp pretended it was his religious principles he was fighting for, but it was not; it was his sixpence—a Scotchman's sixpence. Thank God," he mused piously, "it was not a shilling. If it had been he would have killed me right out."

M‘Glusky had heard much concerning the “scarlet woman” from both his father and his mother, but up to the time he set foot in that town he had never set eyes upon one in the flesh. He had an idea that each of them wore quaint garments utterly unlike other women.

As he sauntered along there met him a damsel, young and pretty, dressed much as other damsels dress. She paused in front of M‘Glusky and asked him softly if he could tell her the time.

“I hivna a watch o’ ma ain, lassie,” said M‘Glusky, “but there’s a clock richt afore yer een, near as big as the wheel o’ a waggon.”

The lassie laughed impudently, for she knew that clock as well as she knew her own face. She had only asked the question in order to stop him and engage him in conversation.

“Are you looking for lodgings?” demanded the lass.

“Na, na, A’m passin’ through the toon, on ma way to Lough Slough; A’ll bid ye guid-nicht, an’ sweet dreams.”

He turned to go, but the wanton one plucked him by the sleeve, and using her eyes as a battery for assault, demanded to know what was the cause of his hurry.

M‘Glusky was strangely stirred. He did not know the meaning of it all, but some sixth sense within him warned him to be on his guard.

“Why go on?” continued the Jezebel. “The road that leads to Lough Slough is rough and dark and lonely, and you are over young to face it on a night like this.”

Then she used her eyes and voice as a lure, and hooked one arm in his and smiled up in his face bewitchingly.

Then light broke in upon M‘Glusky’s darkness. He hurled her from him as if she had been a serpent seeking to twine its coils round him. The wanton reeled back until she struck the wall of a house with her back, else she would have fallen on the footpath.

“Awa’ wi’ ye! Awa’ wi’ ye!” yelled M‘Glusky, flinging out his long, lean arm fiercely. “A didna ken ye were a dauchter o’ the scarlet woman or A wad hae ordered ye to yer maister, the deevil.”

The girl began to whimper, for she thought she had run against the advance agent of a lunatic asylum. M‘Glusky advanced towards her and caught her by the wrist in his iron grip.

# CHAPTER III

## M‘GLUSKY A PRISONER

“Dae ye ken whaur the doonward road ye are on will land ye?” M‘Glusky demanded, his voice vibrating with passion.

“Let me go, you crazy Scots loon!” shrieked the girl.

“A’ll no leave ye tae yer sins withoot a warnin’ word. Ye’ll no rise up against me at the day o’ judgment tae tell me that A nivver gave ye fair an’ timely warnin’. The wages o’ sin is death, wumman,” he yelled.

“You’re as mad as a moon fish,” shrieked the wanton. “Let go my arm, you big brute,” and she kicked him on the shins with all her might.

A crowd collected and cries were raised.

“Let the woman alone; let her go!”

“A’ll no!” cried M‘Glusky. “Ye are as mad as she is; ye are a’ gaun doon tae the pit. She goeth forth in the highways and byways settin’ snares for the feet of the unwary. She is a lure to draw the simple into the pit whaur the worm deeth not.”

At this juncture a big Irish policeman coming on the scene grasped the new apostle by the scruff of the neck and shook him. M‘Glusky wriggled out of that strong grasp and faced round with flaming eyes.

“Haud yer han’s aff me, mon,” he cried in a voice full of smothered fury.

The constable advanced upon him in all the majesty of the law, and struck him with his baton, bringing him to his knees.

M‘Glusky, rising quickly to his feet, yet keeping in a crouching position, charged straight at the constable, head

down, like a mountain bull. His thick skull landed in the centre of the officer's stomach, and the shock turned the gentleman in blue head over heels. Then M'Glusky made a dash at the crowd, with the intention of bustling his way through the mob and making off towards Lough Slough; but the people clung tightly to him, for by this time it had become bruited about that the wild Scot had committed robbery with violence.

The girl was shrieking that he had stolen her purse and her watch, and Heaven only knows what beside, so the unthinking mob barred his progress. Women screamed, "Hold him! Hold the young villain!" Men roared to one another to "Floor him, trip him up, down him!"

M'Glusky shouted in stentorian tones, "Oot o' it, oot o' it! A'll shake the dust o' this city o' sin an' shame off ma shoon. Ma mither warned me agin the scarlet wumman."

He was breaking his way through the surging crowd like a strong swimmer through heavy surf. Men began to buffet him right and left. Shrill cries rose on the air. "He's a madman escaped from the asylum. He's a thief, he's just broke into the jeweller's yonder. He's a murderer! He's just killed a girl in the archway yonder!"

"Ye leears!" roared M'Glusky. "A only tried tae save her sinfu' soul."

A yell of derision greeted this outburst, and the mob fell upon the Scot tooth and nail. Then, for a season, M'Glusky shed his religion as a snake sheds its skin, and the blood of the fighting breed that was in him woke to life. He seized one man by the hair, and another by the ear, and banged their faces together, whilst the rest pommelled him fore and aft.

“A’ll beat the grace o’ God intae ye afore A’m through wi’ ye. A wull that, unless,” he added as an afterthought, “unless yer ear comes oot.”

It is not chronicled in the archives of that town whether the ear came out or came off, but something must have happened, for a few minutes later M‘Glusky had clutched another man by both shoulders and was doing his best to maim him.

“Ye’re a child o’ Satan,” he roared, “an’ A’ll mak’ yer face the image o’ yer maister’s!”

They got him down at last and bound him with many bonds, and dragged him off to the lock-up, where the constable he had assaulted made up the score by kicking him violently in the ribs as he lay on the stone floor of his cell. Then he was left to himself to ruminate over the doings of that day. Most men would have been sadly downcast under the circumstances, not so M‘Glusky.

“A cam’ oot into the vineyard tae pick the weeds an’ the thustles,” he soliloquised, “an’, ma certie, it was aboot time, for there’s mair thustles an’ thorns than grapes an’ fig trees, A’m thinkin.”

Then he began to pray, describing himself in his prayers as a lamb that had fallen among ravenous wolves. He did not look much like a lamb as he knelt there in the semi-darkness of the prison cell. He was more like a young wild boar that had been harried by the hounds. Then he asked the Lord to forgive him if he had allowed the old Adam to take possession of him to some slight extent.

The police, who were listening outside his cell, grinned joyously at this, because they had been busy taking his late antagonist to the infirmary, and they prayed that if this was

only a little of the old Adam that he displayed it might not fall to their lot to have dealings with him when he felt like letting the whole spirit loose.

Proceeding with his prayer, he asked the Lord to forgive him if, in the heat of the fray, he had "hurtit" any man more than was absolutely needful, and said that if he had pulled a sinner's ear off it might prove a blessing in disguise to the aforesaid sinner, inasmuch as, now he was in that condition, the quickening word might the more readily enter his head and reach his spirit.

Then, like a good apostle, he prayed for his enemies, including the policeman who had kicked his ribs until they were bent. But most of all he prayed for the daughter of Jezebel who had brought about all the trouble.

Having done his duty in the matter of prayer to the best of his ability, he sang, in his rich, sweet baritone, the whole of "Rock of Ages," and then stretching out his weary limbs went peacefully to sleep, to dream of the little white-washed cottage on the mountain side, with the big, gaunt, grey-haired woman at the door. In his dreams he heard again the bleating of the lambs and the lowing of the cows, mingled with the barking of the faithful old short-tailed sheep dog that kept watch and guard over them.

The next morning, when he appeared before the court, he was utterly dumbfounded to hear the charge that was preferred against him—blackmailing, and violently assaulting the police and sundry citizens without cause or provocation.

The girl whom he had tried to pluck like a brand from the burning not only swore that he had accosted her as she was peacefully making her way home, but that he had followed her into a rather lonely part of the town and robbed her. She

identified every coin that had been found upon M‘Glusky as her personal property, even the sovereign which M‘Glusky had bitten with his own teeth for luck, as it was the first piece of gold he had ever owned; she swore to the very mark upon it, saying that her dead father had given it to her and had bidden her bite it to test its genuineness.

The constable who had made the arrest gave the girl an excellent character, but the character he gave M‘Glusky would have made the feathers of a fowl stand on end. He took his solemn oath that he had seen the prisoner prowling about the slums with lawless characters for days; and when M‘Glusky shouted, “Ye leear, A hadna been in the town twa hoors when ye arrested me,” the magistrate sternly demanded that if it was so how did he know the girl was a wanton, as he had declared.

“Look at her the noo!” stormed M‘Glusky. “Look at her the noo! Use the few wits God Almichty has gi’en tae ye, ye great gommerel. Ye can see the brand o’ the beast printed on her forehead. She is ane o’ those ye read aboot in the Buik o’ Buiks wha lead fules along the doonward path. Look at her, mon! She has got Jezebel writ large a’ ower her!”

The magistrate did look, and all he saw was a rather pretty lass, who stood with downcast eyes and modest mien, a very picture of injured innocence.

Then the man in authority turned his stern eyes upon the reformer of cities and said things to him that made M‘Glusky tingle all over as if he were being flayed alive.

“I see nothing on the face of that poor injured girl,” he said, towards the finish of his remarks, “but a bruise on her forehead made by your cowardly hands, you canting, hypocritical scoundrel. You not only robbed her of her hard-

earned savings, but now you rob her of that most priceless jewel to a woman, rob her of her good name."

At this the lass drew her handkerchief from her pocket and wept softly.

The wise man on the Bench beamed upon her in his most fatherly manner, and at once ceased his remarks to the prisoner.

Turning to the girl he told her that she need not weep, for nothing that the prisoner might say could damage her real reputation, which was much nearer the truth than the wise man often got, even by accident.

Then he sentenced M'Glusky to six weeks' hard labour, and regretted that it was not in his power to add a flogging to it.

Somehow the sentence did not bow the Scot down with shame. He felt he was being martyred, and the world is full of folk who will suffer almost anything so long as they can tack that title on to their souls.

With a majestic wave of his arm towards the Bench, he cried in ringing tones, "Haud yer blether, mon, haud yer blether. If A maun suffer for righteousness sake A needs must. A mon canna hope tae purify a city an' no suffer in the daein' o' it. The Lord only kens how He allowed sic a puir, feckless booby as yersel' tae sit in judgment on His people, for ye hae gotten nae mair sense than an auld coo wi' the colic. Gie me back ma bit o' siller, an' the sovrin' that ma mither gied me when A was leavin' hame. A wadna part wi' it unless A was in extremity, ye ken, for it has been in oor family for twa generations. There was never a M'Glusky yet wha wad waste siller by breakin' it intae coppers, let alane

waste a gowd piece, sae gie me back ma sovrin an' let me awa' tae ma sax weeks' preeson."

He had tried to speak with what he considered lofty and disdainful dignity. But when the Bench informed him that the money found on him, including the golden sovereign, his mother's parting gift, was to be given to the girl, as the court in its infallible wisdom ruled that it was hers, the storm burst.

To be robbed of his honour, his good name, his liberty, was gall and wormwood to his soul, but to be robbed of one pound nine and eightpence into the bargain was too much even for an apostle. He clutched hold of the rail in front of the dock, and in deep, sonorous tones sketched an outline of his own opinion of the magistrate's mental and moral nature. The police tried to drag him away, but it soon became evident that when he went he would take part, at least, of the dock with him, if not the whole of it.

He went minutely into the ancestry of the magistrate, and traced his pedigree back, without a break or a flaw, to the ass that Baalam rode, and yet managed to mix the family up with Judas Iscariot and the impenitent thief. He made him own cousin by blood to Barabbas and Ananias and most of the other bad characters in the Old and New Testaments.

Every now and again, as the police tugged and pulled at him to get him out of the dock, M'Glusky left the subject of the magistrate's genealogy and shouted, "Gie ma back ma mither's gowden sovrin. Gie ma back ma siller, ye robbers, wha sit in high places; ye wolves in sheep's clothing."

The front of the dock gave way at last, and half a dozen stalwart men in blue bore M'Glusky off to do his six weeks' hard labour.

That night in his cell he tried to pray, but every now and again, in between his petitions, there rose from his lips a bitter wail, “Oh, ay, ma siller, Oh, ay, ma mither’s gowden sovrin. If ma feyther kenned what had become o’ it he’d drop deid wi’ grief.”

The warders took little notice of his grief. They were stern, hard men, and bade him do his work and hold his tongue. One warder, who was not old at the business, fancying that the Scot must have lost a mint of money because of his eternal wail, asked him how much he had lost.

M‘Glusky gasped with wonder to think that anyone could be ignorant of so great a calamity.

“Was it no in the papers?” he whispered huskily.

“Might have been, but I don’t often read police news,” was the reply. “Did you lose much?”

“Lose much?” M‘Glusky’s voice sank to a low, deep murmur. “Did A loose much? Mon, A lost enough tae bring tears o’ bluid oot o’ a stane image.”

He drew near to the warder.

“Ye’ll no believe me on ma bare word, ma monnie, but the inspector’ll bear me out, A lost a mint o’ money. Wan poun’, nine siller shillin’s, an’ eightpence, an’ the claes torn off ma back tae boot.”

The warder stumbled back laughing.

“What ails ye, mon?” cried M‘Glusky. Then, after a moment’s steady reflection, he continued:

“Oh, ay, I ken fine what’s wrang wi’ ye. The story o’ ma michty loss has turned yer brain an’ made ye daft like, but bide a wee an’ ye’ll come roon tae yer senses.

“It nearly killed me,” he added pathetically, “but A’m a’ richt the noo. But if ever A meet that leein’ polisman, that swore ma siller awa’ frae me, A’ll squeeze him into a tea-kettle an’ pu’ him through the spout, A wull, as sure as A’m the son o’ a God-fearin’, peace-lovin’ deacon o’ the kirk.”

After that the warders decided to let him alone as long as he did his work, and he might have got through his term pretty comfortably if he had been as other men are. But one night as he sat on the side of the pallet, brooding over his loss, he had, or thought he had, a vision. He saw the form of his old father, and heard the stern old voice saying, “My son, ye have been cast into prison for a good purpose. Fear not, but speak the good word in season to those who are in bondage with ye. Sow the good seed broadcast even in the hearts of criminals.”

A glad cry leapt to the lips of the reformer.

“A wull, A wull. Noo I ken fine why I was driven tae herd wi’ sinfu’ men. A’m pickit oot by the Lord tae save these ootcasts. A’ll nae mair repine. A’ll gladly sacrifice ma wealth to the work.” Then, with a childlike smile, he turned over on his pallet of hard-punched straw and slept the sleep of a child.

The next morning when he went out with his particular gang into the yard he was on the alert to reform someone. So heavy was his mind on this subject that he allowed a heavy crowbar to fall upon the toes of No. 47, a hardened reprobate, whose conversation at the best of times was tropical.

When the crowbar crashed down upon his foot, No. 47 picked his injured member up in both hands and began a war dance on one leg, and profanity gushed out of him like refuse from a sewer.

“A’m verra sorry,” murmured M‘Glusky, “if ye’re hurtit, but, mon, dinna swear. It’s a fearsome thing tae tak’ the name o’ the Lord in vain as ye are daein’ this meenit.”

“Silence there, No. 22!” shouted a warder.

No. 47, still holding his injured member in his hands and balancing himself on one leg, said some things concerning M‘Glusky’s mother that must not be set down in print.

“Mon,” whispered M‘Glusky, soothingly, “A’m verra sorry A drappit the bit iron on yer fute, but if ye say that aboot ma mither again A’ll push the bar doon yer dirty throat, an’ stuff a han’fu’ o’ gravel after it tae keep it doon.”

A couple of warders seized the truculent Scot and marched him off, and he got three days’ solitary confinement for insubordination.

When he came out he started his crusade once more. This time the object of his endeavours was a warder.

This man had a decided animosity towards one of the prisoners, whom he harried on the smallest pretext, or without any pretext at all. He accused the poor wretch of malingering. He charged him with talking when he was silent. He swore the convict was insolent if he only raised his eyes when spoken to, or of being sullen and truculent if the fellow did not look up when addressed. He never lost an opportunity of persecuting the man.

M‘Glusky, on this particular occasion, heard the warder charge the convict with signalling to another member of the gang, and he knew the charge was false.

To the utter astonishment of everybody M‘Glusky pushed his face into that of the warder and said solemnly and slowly, “It is written in the Buik o’ Buiks, ye shall no’ bear false

witnees agin thy neebor! Ye'll hae tae answer for it at the Day o' Judgment."

The warder glared, a titter ran along the line of convicts. "Silence, No. 22," thundered the warder.

"A'll no say anither word. I hae done ma duty. A hae warned ye o' the wrath tae come," said M'Glusky, calmly.

The warder sprang towards him, and in doing so caught his toe on the end of a plank and went sprawling on his face right at the feet of the convict whom he had been goading to madness. The fellow saw his opportunity and seized it. He was holding a heavy hammer at the time, and he dropped it, intending to let it fall upon the warder's skull, but M'Glusky thrust out his leg and diverted the course of the falling sledge. It fell on the warder's neck, instead of on his skull; even so, it injured the officer rather severely. The guards rushed up in an instant, and the gang were promptly marched back to cells under a heavy escort.

M'Glusky was elated; he had scattered the good seed with a fearless hand, and hoped it would bring forth a bountiful harvest. It did, but not exactly the kind of fruit that he had hoped for.

He was meditating in an ecstasy of pure self-righteousness in his cell, when he heard the quick, heavy tread of the guard in the corridor. He started, because he knew that when a patrol came like that it meant trouble for somebody.

"A'm thinkin' some puir wretch is in for a bad time," he murmured. "A hope they'll no' be ower hard on him."

The next instant the footsteps ceased in front of his own cell and the door was thrown open with some violence. The warders filed in and surrounded him, and he was hustled

away with as little ceremony as if he had been one of his father's steers.

"Dinna haud ma arms, mon," he said fiercely, for it was characteristic of him that anything in the way of personal restraint always stirred the devil below the surface of his religious temperament.

They only gripped him the tighter. So he stopped suddenly, sticking out his feet like a jibbing mule. Promptly the two guards who had hold of him treated him to a taste of prison discipline in the shape of arm wrenches that nearly dismembered him.

Then, for the first time in his life, profanity broke from him. Struggling like a madman he was hauled and pulled into the governor's room, where he stood surrounded by his gaolers, breathing hard and glaring like a wild creature. There he was charged with mutiny and with assaulting a warder with a hammer.

The principal witness against him was the very convict whose part he had taken. This man swore that it was M'Glusky who had dropped the sledge hammer upon the warder's neck, and the warder took his oath that M'Glusky had tripped him up with a view to attempting to escape.

"A didna!" cried M'Glusky; "ye stubbit yer fute in a plank an' fell face doon, an' A saved yer life."

A long period of solitary confinement was the sentence passed upon M'Glusky, and an additional month was added to his former sentence.

Dazed and wondering, they led him away; but one gleam of comfort came to him to cheer him on his pilgrimage, one little taste of sweetness, for as he was passing along the corridor with the guards he came close to the convict who

had dropped the hammer, the fellow who had given false evidence against him. The convict grinned at M‘Glusky, and put his tongue in his cheek.

This was too much for human patience, even when fortified with religion. M‘Glusky said no word, uttered no sound. He just leaped through the ranks of his guards and struck one blow—a wild, whizzing, upper-cut—which landed under the convict’s chin, and sent his teeth pretty nearly through his tongue. The man fell with a scream, and M‘Glusky stepped back into the ranks as quietly and almost as quickly as he had left.

“A’m thinkin’,” he murmured to his guards, “A’m thinkin’ that mon’ll no gie false witness agin his neebors agin—no’ until his tongue grows the gither again, onywey. He’ll no’ sup his parritch wi’ pleasure the nicht, A’ll bet ma buits.”

The convict who was injured was well disliked by most of the warders, so they did not report this fresh outbreak of M‘Glusky to the authorities, partly by reason of their dislike to the injured man, and partly because they knew they would receive a “dressing down” from the Governor if it became known that they had permitted a prisoner under escort to break their ranks and assault a comrade of the criminal class. There was also a lurking idea in the minds of a good many of them that the brawny young Scot had not received all the fair play that was due to him, concerning which matter, however, they held their peace, for no class of men cling together and hide one another’s faults so tenaciously as prison warders. There was one good fellow among them, an Englishman named Sergeant Rolf, who had hailed from Essex, a clean, honest, straightforward man, who took pity on M‘Glusky in his hour of tribulation.

“Look here,” said Rolf one day to the Scot, “why don’t you drop this reforming business and look to your own concerns?”

M‘Glusky shook his stubborn head.

“A hae set ma han’ tae the ploo, an’ A’ll no’ look back,” he answered.

“Well, drop it whilst you are here, for if you go on like this much longer they’ll clap you in a lunatic asylum when your sentence is up. They are beginning to say already that you have a bee in your bonnet, so drop your crusade until you get outside these walls, and take my advice, lad, when you *are* out, leave the reformation of the scarlet woman alone. You’re too young to understand that matter, and I’ll tell you plainly, you are a big bit too self-righteous to make a good reformer. You don’t know anything about sin and evil from your own experience. You only know what you’ve been told. You will have to know sin and sorrow first-hand before you will be fit to reclaim sinners. A man can never tell how sweet honey is until he has filled his mouth with gall, and until you have shed your self-righteous skin, you won’t be worth your salt. You’ll have to stumble and fall, and slip out of the strait and narrow way pretty often before you will understand the hearts of men, let alone women, and,” he added, with a laugh, “M‘Glusky, my son, I see more trouble ahead for you with women than with men. You have too much of the old fighting blood in you not to have the love of woman in every bone of your ugly body, for there never was a fighter yet who did not turn to women as a duck turns to a stream.”

“A’m no’ a fechtin’ mon, sergeant, A’m a lover o’ peace and guidwill,” whispered M‘Glusky, huskily.

"Are you?" grinned the sergeant. "Then all I have to say is —God help the man who runs up against you if you ever develop warlike tendencies. M'Glusky, you do not know the devil that is in you."

. . . . . .

"Ma certie, A'm thinkin' there's mair kicks than parritch in the life o' a reformer an' a moothpiece o' the Lord," muttered M'Glusky, as he stood outside the gaol one bleak morning, having completed his time as a convict.

He felt all over his clothes to try and find at least a few pence, but the prison people had gathered in every stiver.

When he had made quite sure of this disconcerting fact, M'Glusky gritted his teeth hard.

"The Philistines hae gotten the lot. They hivna left me a bawbee tae tak' me on ma journey. A wonner the Lord disna strike this evil toon wi' thunner an' lichtnin'. A nest o' scarlet wummen an' thieves, it is, robbin' a puir body o' a fortune. One poun' nine an' eightpence, a' gone bang, an' the toon is as undisturbit as if nae sic tragedy had happened. A cud fin' it in ma hert tae follow the example o' ancient Job, an' curse ma Maker, an' lay doon an' dee."

He was still bemoaning his terrible loss of fortune, when his eyes fell upon the form of the Jew pedlar coming along the highway. The Jew was bowed down beneath the weight of an enormous pack.

"Man," cried M'Glusky, "wull ye point me the road to Lough Slough?"

The Jew put down his pack and looked at the Scot.

"Vy should I give you somedinks for noddinks?" he growled. "Daht ish nod bishness. Noddinks for noddinks is

bishness, an' a leedle bit off for gash."

The light of battle leaped at once into the eye of the Scot, the national love of a bargain awoke in him, and roused his hostility, just as the sight of a mongoose will cause a rattlesnake to quiver in every coil.

"Mon, A'm thinkin' ye didna hear me aricht. A didna ask ye for ony o' yer gear."

"You asked me for invormation, an' invormation is valuable," retorted the Hebrew.

M'Glusky drew himself up to the full limit of his inches, and a look of scorn flashed into his rugged face.

"A may be eentirely wrang in ma surmise," he cried, pushing his head forward in a manner peculiar to him when he meant to be more than usually aggressive. "A may be wrang, but A'm o' the opeenion that ye'll never dee if ye can hang on tae life. Ye'll be ower mean, ma mon, tae pairt wi' yer last breath. A dinna want ye tae gie me sae much as a word. Jist point the wey tae Lough Slough wi' yer finger an' A'll ask nae mair."

The Jew shook his head.

"I vill told you der vay vor a penny."

"Oot an' awa', mon!" yelled M'Glusky. "Oot wi' ye the noo or A'll kick ye oot o' yer breeks."

He advanced as if to put his threat into execution, and the son of Israel, not wishing to be helped on his journey in that lusty fashion, dropped his pack and sat upon it.

"Vy vill you keek me?" he exclaimed. "A Scotsman never gives anything for noddinks; vy should a Jew?"

So they argued for quite a while until at last it dawned upon the Hebrew that the Gentile was penniless.

“Id is a long vay to Lough Slough,” he said. “How vill you get food by the vay?”

This thought had been worrying M‘Glusky and the pointed question did not set his mind at rest.

“I know the vay. I haf dravelled it by daylight an’ dark for years,” was the Hebrew’s next comment, and he added, leaning forward and pointing a dirty finger towards M‘Glusky to emphasise his points, “and if you vill dravel vith me, I vill show you how you may get your food an’ make some money as vell.”

The Scot nodded to him to proceed.

“You vill valk mit me an’ garry my pack. Din they think you vas a pedlar th’ same as I vas, an’ at night-time ven des folks ais ashleep you can go out an’ stheal der clothes off der clothes lines, an’ I vill sen’ ’em to some of my gountrymen dot vill bay you more dan double der value of dem begause you air my friend. Vat do you say do my plansh, eh? A goot plansh an’ clever, eh?”

A dusky glow had crept into the face of the Scot; his breath was coming hard, in short, uneven gasps. The Hebrew thought that his bait had taken.

“Vy don’ you shpeak, man?” he cried, rubbing his hands together. “Have I strug you dumb vith joy?”

Perhaps he had, but if the next few minutes’ performance was M‘Glusky’s usual method of demonstrating his delight, few people on this planet would have cared to meet him in his merry moods.

“Ye unbelieving Jew!” he raved. “Wad ye mak a son o’ Jamie M‘Glusky, elder o’ the kirk, a wayside thievin’ loon?”

By the time he had uttered those words, he had the child of the chosen race by his black hair.

"A'll shak' the deil oot o' ye," he stormed, and, suiting actions to his words, just as a good composer suits music to poetry, he began to jerk the head of the Jew to and from all parts of the compass. The Hebrew could do nothing but kick and scream.

"Wull ye tempt a puir body tae dae what ye ken well is sinfu' in the sicht o' the Lord. Wull ye, ye spawn o' Judas?"

The Jew screamed forth protests and promises.

"Aye, aye, A ken ye fine. Ye'll promise, an' promise, but gin A let go yer scalp ye'll be knee deep in damnation agin, ye lineal descendant o' the frolicsome serpent o' the Garden o' Eden!"

At last he threw the Jew from him with a gesture of intense disgust. The pedlar fell into a ditch by the wayside where brambles and thorns were many.

He was crawling out again, using language that would blunt a plough, when M'Glusky strode over to him. The Hebrew cowered down in the ditch again, like a rabbit that has been mauled by a terrier.

"Mon," said M'Glusky gravely, "why dae ye use sic words as yer usin'? Hae ye nae fear o' hell-fire?"

The Jew raised his terror-filled eyes to Heaven, and gave M'Glusky to understand that he was ready at a minute's notice to face the terrors of the region mentioned, provided there were no Scotsmen there.

M'Glusky shook his head very sorrowfully.

"A'm afeard, mon, if yer seekin' a hell withoot Scotsmen," said he, "ye'll hae tae mak yin o' yer ain."

He looked at the terror-stricken wretch at his feet pitifully, and a holy glow flushed his face.

“If ye were converted ye wadna swear an’ ye wadna steal. A’m a mon o’ peace an’ lover o’ a’ things made by the Almichty; an’ as ma soul liveth, A’ wad reason wi’ ye awhile on the beautiful truths o’ the Christian releegion.”

The Jew spat on the ground contemptuously.

“Dinna dae that agin,” said M‘Glusky in a husky whisper. “Dinna dae it agin, or by the Cross A’ll kick ye in the pit o’ yer unbelievin’ stummick. Sit ye down on yer pack an’ A’ll discoorse wi’ ye on the beauty an’ simpleecity o’ oor faith, which hath pow’r tae turn an evil mon intae a saint, as sure as the weaver’s shuttle wull turn a bit o’ yarn into a new shirt. Aye, it wull that, and mair; it’ll mak the mon o’ savage temper as gentle as a hand-fed lamb.”

M‘Glusky continued solemnly, spitting into the palm of his right fist as a preliminary act of grace, “Dae ye deespute the autheenteecity o’ the glorious buik o’ Revelations?”

The Jew fell backwards off his pack on to the highway.

“I disbude noddinks,” he shrieked, “id ish all drue, every vord ov it.”

“Mon,” whispered M‘Glusky, in an awe-stricken whisper, “Mon, ye’re doubly blessed. Ye hae had inspiration, ye hae seen the licht. A’ll doon on my marrow bones an’ offer up a wee bit o’ prayer for yer guidance.”

He knelt down by the hedge, his back to the Jew, who waited only long enough to hear the first shout of triumph over a brand plucked from the burning ere he rose stealthily, and, shouldering his pack, stole away on tiptoe at his best speed, and M‘Glusky saw him no more.

The Scot looked around him wonderingly. He had prayed with fervour for about half an hour, and that had given the pedlar ample time to get a long way back on the road he had come, for the Hebrew had no intention of travelling to Lough Slough since he knew that that was the destination of the young reformer.

"Weel, weel," mused M'Glusky, "A'm sorry he has fleed. A wad hae liked tae hae been his companion on the wey. A wad hae been able tae cheer his speerit up betimes if his puir soul felt like faintin' by the way."

So taking chance by the forelock he struck out with long strides in the direction in which he believed Lough Slough to lie.

# CHAPTER IV

## STONING THE PREACHER

AFTER a while he met a gipsy who told him to "follow his nose," and it would lead him to his destination.

Too proud and independent to beg his food, he asked for an hour or two's work when he saw a chance of getting it, and in return for his labour he took a meal.

Here he dug a garden; further on he split up a pile of firewood and stacked it neatly; at another place he doctored a sick cow; and later he cleaned boots and knives and forks, and carried water.

The Sabbath found him in a nice little village, and it struck him that on this day he could work for the Lord, so he commenced at a street corner by singing a hymn, and his beautiful voice soon attracted a crowd, amongst whom he saw the local policeman and the parson.

The latter listened to M'Glusky's discourse with very evident disapproval. He did not like this new poacher on his preserves. It was a strange doctrine that the young enthusiast let loose that day. He had no sense of proportion. There was no half-way house on his spiritual highway. With him it was a case of brimstone or bliss; his hearers had to take their choice. Either they were heirs to a halo and a shining white robe, with beautiful wings thrown in, or they were doomed to the ash-heaps of Hades and a perpetual, never-dying thirst. Men and women were either very good or very bad; he admitted of no neutral tints.

"Ye're a' he goats, doomed to herd on the left han' o' the Throne, or ye're lambs chosen to haud yer heids high on the

richt han',” he exclaimed at the finish, which was scarcely correct from any standpoint. They could not well be all “he” goats, seeing lots of them were women.

When the service was concluded, M‘Glusky held out his Scots bonnet and waited for the villagers to put in their offerings, but not a penny came from the crowd.

He glared about him indignantly.

“Ye’re a perverse an’ a stiff-necked generation,” he growled. “He goats for the left han’ o’ the Throne, every man an’ wumman o’ ye.”

“Don’t you call my old woman a he goat!” shouted a burly labourer in the front rank. “You ought to be ducked in the pond,” he added.

M‘Glusky strode over to the speaker, and, thrusting the empty bonnet under his nose, cried: “Is the servant no’ worthy o’ his hire? I hae preeched tae ye on an empty stummick. Will ye send the servant o’ the Lord awa’ fastin’, ye misbegotten sons o’ sin? I hae brocht ye glad tidin’s o’ great joy, an’ no’ ane o’ ye a’ wad fill ma mooth wi’ a junk o’ bread an’ a morsel o’ cheese, or a sup o’ parritch, though ma innards are cryin’ oot like ravenin’ wolves, an’ ma breast-bane cleaves tae ma backbone like skin tae the ribs o’ a starvin’ steer.”

The parson said something to the policeman, and the bucolic representative of the majesty of the law pushed his way to the side of the preacher.

“You clear out of this. We won’t have none o’ this here,” he said. “You’re beggin’ on the highway, that’s what you are.”

“The scoundrel ought to be flogged at the cart-tail,” interpolated the parson, “begging in the streets on the Sabbath.”

“If A’m beggin’ in the streets,” shouted M‘Glusky, “what dae ye dae every time ye pass aroon’ the plate in the kirk, ye whited sepulchre? Ye hae nae true releegion in yer carcase; ye’re nocht but a heap o’ dead men’s bones.”

At this, someone pelted a clod of dirt full into the mouth of M‘Glusky.

“A asked ye for bread,” said he, mournfully, “an’ ye hit me in the lug wi’ a clod o’ earth. Dinna throw ony mair muck at me,” he sneered; “it’s what ye’re a’ fashioned oot o’ in these pairts, an’ ye may be guilty o’ the sin an’ shame o’ peltin’ yer ain dead an’ gone faithers an’ mithers at the heid o’ a stranger.”

A perfect volley of clods of dirt was the answer to this speech.

“Ma certie,” growled M‘Glusky, “it’s no’ only yer faithers an’ mithers ye’re throwin’, but yer whole family, the pig included, though A’m no sae sure the pig is no’ the cleanest o’ ye a’.”

Just then something harder than dirt hit the Scot on the ear. He rubbed the spot ruefully, whilst the man who had thrown the stone wriggled about, laughing joyously.

M‘Glusky pushed out his chin and went towards the man menacingly, like a Highland piper preparing to dance a fling.

“It is the Sawbath day,” he murmured, “an’ on sic a day A maunna use carnal weepons, an’ A’m a lover o’ the gentle word, but if it wisna the Lord’s day A wad push ma arm doon

yer throat, an' draw yer last nicht's supper up. A wad, as sure as A'm a sinfu' mon."

There was something so menacing in his looks and attitude as he uttered these words that the crowd fell back a few paces and allowed him to pass; but they followed him at a good distance, hooting, and at odd intervals sending a shower of stones at him. All the small boys and all the dogs in the village joined in the man-hunt, the dogs barking and yelping at his heels, the boys pelting him with old tins. But M'Glusky strode along, his shoulders squared, his head erect, going neither fast nor slow. He would not loiter to provoke trouble, because it was the Sabbath, but, for all that, he would not walk furiously fast.

He muttered to himself as he went. "A owe it tae the Lord no' tae hit ane o' them the day, but A owe it tae the lan' that bred me tae show the rabble that A dinna fear them. Fear them!" he added, with a bitter sneer as he faced around and noted how the mob at once halted. "Fear sic a puir feckless body o' louts! A wad cut better men than they oot o' turnips wi' a blunt pocket-knife. If A was a mon inclined for war, an' A had Jock O'Neil, the tanner, hauf foo o' Hielan' whusky, an' Allan M'Gregor, the piper, alangside o' me the noo, an' it wisna the Sawbeth, A wad prance back an' gie the lot o' them sic a skelpin' they wad never forget, A wad that," he muttered.

As a big stone, well aimed by a small boy, took him in the small of the back, he added a word which he had picked up in prison, a word which was unquestionably one which no deacon ever uses unless he is referring to the artificial stoppage of a river.

The word slipped out quite unconsciously, and seemed to relieve him greatly, though it is doubtful if he even knew that he had used it, so certain is it that evil companions corrupt good language.

A moment later a big, strapping lump of a lass ran close up to him with a big stone in her hand. She poised it ready to fling.

M‘Glusky looked at her very hard.

“Dinna try tae throw that bit o’ rock at ma heid, lassie,” he said seriously.

“I will,” avowed the lass, truculently.

“Na, na, lassie, ye had better no’ try. A lass canna throw a stane straucht enough tae hit a hoose, let alane a mon. Gang yer ways back an’ throw yer cap at some lad. That’s mair in a lassie’s line o’ life. Three things ye canna dae. Ye canna throw a stone straucht, ye canna rin better than a duck in a storm o’ dust, wi’oot kiltin’ yer coats mair than a decent body wad dae wi’oot shame, an’ ye canna whustle a tune wi’oot spoilin’ yer lips for kissin’.”

The wench dropped the stone and began to giggle. Then she ogled the young Scot. “They told me you were a mad preacher sort o’ a man,” she said, between giggles.

The rest of the crowd stood afar off; the girl was close to M‘Glusky. She looked him up and down, and his powerful frame and fearless bearing, so different to that of the village louts, filled her woman’s eye, and as they talked she began to make love to him with her eyes.

“Stay near the village to-night,” she whispered, “and I will bring you some food, and some water to wash the blood from your face.”

“May the Lord bless ye. Ye’re the only pinch o’ saut in the whole village,” he answered. “A’m sure ye wad treat me as a mither, an’ A wad be a brither tae ye.”

The wench tossed her not uncomely head and pouted. She evidently did not want to be a mother to him, nor to have him for a brother.

Again she brought her woman’s weapons to bear upon him, flattering him with her eyes, and decoying him towards her with those nameless little coquetries which are the birthright of some damsels, whether town or country bred.

But M‘Glusky saw and felt the lure, as a bird once caught sees or divines the lure of the fowler. He remembered the look on the face of the girl who had caused him to be imprisoned.

“Losh,” he muttered to himself, “it’s the auld de’il himsel’ in petticoats again. A’ll tak’ deescretion for ma guide this time, an’ mak aff.”

He turned on his heel without another word to the wench, and she, divining that she was scorned, stooped down, and picking up the big stone she had dropped, hurled it after the Scot. But the missile flew wide of the mark, as M‘Glusky had prophesied. M‘Glusky heard it rattle in the hedge, and he smiled.

“A’m no feared o’ that sort o’ thing frae a wumman, auld or young, but A’m feared o’ their een. Losh, the wench was undressin’ me wi’ her een a’ the time A wis jabberin’ wi’ her. Nae doot she’s the de’il or his dochter. A’m weel oot o’ that hornet’s nest, A’m that.”

So with varying fortunes he pursued his way until at last he reached Lough Slough.

It did not take him long to find the home of his father's brother. The size and importance of the house did not daunt him in the least. The servant who came to the door looked askance at the long, ill-clad, ungainly figure on the doorstep, and would have turned him away had he not thrust his foot between the door jamb and the door, and said harshly, "Tak' ma name tae yer maister, an' dinna stan' glowerin' there, ye over-fed gommerel."

"Have you an appointment?" queried the lackey with a sneer.

"A hivna."

"I thought you hadn't," was the saucy retort. "You don't look like the sort of people who come here—by the front door anyway."

M'Glusky reached a long, bony arm through the half-closed door and caught the flunkey by the collar.

"If ye ken when yer weel aff ye'll dae ma biddin'. If ye dinna, mon, A'll push yer lang red nose intae the keyhole o' the door an' draw ye through the ither side, or brak' the keyhole."

He let the fellow go, and the flunkey, retreating out of reach into the depths of the hall, plucked up courage enough to be insolent once more.

"Have you a card? If so, I will send it in to Mr John."

He spoke with the superciliousness of his class and kind when in the presence of rugged poverty. He might as well have asked, "Have you a tiara?"

"Hae A what?" demanded M'Glusky, with lowering brows.

"Have you a card?"

“No, A hivna,” blurted out M‘Glusky, “but A hae a fute wi’ a number nine buit on it, an’ losh, ye’ll feel it the noo.”

He dived into the hall, but the scared flunkey fled headlong to regions where hairy savages and number nine hobnailed boots do not often penetrate.

A moment later M‘Glusky heard the rustling of skirts, and wheeling round found himself face to face with the blithest, bonniest-looking lass his eyes had ever rested upon.

“Have you lost anything, sir?” queried a sweet voice that was fairly shaking with hardly repressed mirth.

“A hae that,” was M‘Glusky’s grim reply. “A hae lost a mon ape that had naething mair reasonable tae dae than tae stan’ at the door o’ ma reelatives’ hoose an’ toss insults doon ma throat. Losh, lassie, if A cud hae got ma buit unner him just aince A wud hae spoilt the ceilin’ wi’ him, or A wud hae brak ma buit.”

This was too much for the gravity of the lassie. She had overheard all that had passed at the door, and had been struggling manfully with her mirth for a long time, but M‘Glusky’s speech broke down all barriers. Her laughter rang out merrily like a peal of tinkling bells.

“Weel, weel,” remarked M‘Glusky, after he had listened to her for a good while with wonder and surprise written large all over his face. “Weel, well, A didna ken ma reelative kept a whole hoose fu’ o’ curiosities. Wull ye tell me if A hae struck a menagerie or the hoose o’ a God-fearin’ mon wi’ commonsense unner his bonnet?”

Again the blithe lassie laughed, and M‘Glusky could see that her eyes were dancing in her head with merriment.

“A never thocht tae see sic a coil,” he muttered. “First theer was a mon ape at the door, who held the nose o’ hissel’ for fear the wind blawin’ ower me micht offend his nobeelity, an’ noo a daft lassie, wha winna speak in answer tae a ceevil question, but laughs and laughs as if she wud crack her stays wi’ merriment, at ma expense. A’m theenkin’ A’m no welcome wi’in the shadow o’ ma kinsman’s hoose.”

The lass made a beautiful picture as she stood in front of the dour young Scot. Her black hair crowned her shapely head in shining masses. Coil upon coil the silky, wavy wealth of hair was woven in some mysterious fashion, known only to the feminine mind, and yet enough of it was left free to cover her slender shoulders. Her red lips were moist and lovely, like pink coral on Pacific coasts. Her brown eyes were like liquid velvet, and her white teeth large and even. Almost any other man in the world would have seen all these things at a glance, but in those days Ian M‘Glusky had the scales of prejudice over his eyes. His bigot creed made him think that beauty in matron or maid was a snare of the evil one. It had not dawned upon his narrow mind at that time that a beautiful woman is God’s masterpiece.

So it was that he glared at Elise Hillberg sourly, not knowing that he was in the presence of a maid who was to prove one of his good angels.

She was only a slip of a lass in her first girlhood, and to her the humorous side of things was always uppermost. M‘Glusky’s entrance, his utterances, his wild and untamed appearance, his grimly resolute, stubborn face, all tickled her. Most other men who came near her flattered her with lips and eyes, especially the old bald-heads, who ought to have been thinking whether they would have daisies or daffodils on

their graves, but 'tis often a fact with men—"the nearer the tombstone, the further from virtue."

Elise heard M'Glusky's uncouth reference to the danger her mirth might prove to a certain garment that men do not often mention in the presence of women, and a fresh fit of mirth took possession of her.

Suddenly there was a sharp cracking sound, like the snapping of whalebone: M'Glusky's prophecy had come to pass with startling suddenness. The lass clapped her hands to her sides, and her face flushed rosy red.

M'Glusky looked her up and down critically.

"Didna A tell ye," he said solemnly, "sic a thing couldna hae happened tae ma mither." He had not the saving grace of humour in his composition. "Lassie, it is written in the guid buik, 'the laughter o' a fule is like the cracklin' o' a furze bush unner a parritch pot.' " He saw a chance to sow good seed in season.

"Ye hae crackit yer wearin' gear, A'm thinkin', wi' unseemly mirth, but if ye dinna watch oot ye'll be splittin' mair things than the bit gear ye hae spoiled. A wad warn ye, the Lord loveth a sober face in mon or maid. It's a sinfu' waste tae spoil guid claes wi' daft merriment."

This was too much for Elise Hillberg. With a swift flutter of petticoats she fled, and M'Glusky heard her giving vent to her feelings even though the door was closed behind them. "A'm thinkin' A hae come tae the wrang hoose," he muttered. "This must be a hame for puir daft bodies wha dinna ken richt frae wrang. Losh, but A heerd claes gae bang. What a sinfu' waste o' siller. A'll be bound, she'll no pit the damage richt unner saxpence. It's enough tae freeze the bluid in the

veins o' a mortal mon. A wonner ma reelative is no rooined wi' sic extravagance."

He was slowly making his way to the door when out of a side door stepped a big, burly man. He advanced to M'Glusky with hand outstretched. His face was twitching with mirth, which he managed somehow to keep under control.

"Are ye the son o' ma brither, Jamie M'Glusky?" he cried in broad Scots.

"A'm that," was the curt reply.

"Come yer ways intae the room then, for ye're varra welcome."

M'Glusky tossed aside his bonnet, and without a word followed his host into the dining-room. His uncle had seen and heard all, or nearly all, that had happened, though he was careful to conceal that fact from his nephew, because he knew the breed. Not for nothing had he lived some years with his brother James. Not only did he know his brother James, but his wife Margaret as well, and he felt convinced that such a pair could not breed and rear a son who would not be an oddity in his way.

When Miss Elise Hillberg came into the room he introduced her as a ward of his, adding, "She is a dochter tae me, the verra apple o' ma een."

M'Glusky did not thaw in the presence of the young beauty. He was thinking of the "sinfu' waste o' gear," as he called her pretty frock and ornaments. She saw his displeasure and guessed the cause, and yet in spite of his uncouthness she liked him.

“A got yer faither’s letter some time back, tellin’ me ye were comin’. Ye hae been ower lang on the wey. Whaur hae ye been, Ian?”

“Whaur hae I been? Ye may weel ask me that, an A’ll no lee tae ye. A hae been in gaol maist o’ the time.”

The lass gasped as she heard this frank avowal, and the twinkles in the eyes of the older man became more pronounced.

“A did nae wrang. A did naething A’m ashamed o’. A suffered for ma conscience sake an’ wad again.”

Then he told the whole story from beginning to end, and the old man chuckled gleefully when he heard of the fighting.

“Ye’re the son o’ ma brither Jamie, bone an’ bluid,” said he. “I hivna forgotten hoo he tried tae convert oor parish wi’ his han’s an’ buits when he was a callant o’ yer ain age.”

“He was a guid mon an’ a lover o’ peace,” answered M‘Glusky, hotly.

“Oh, aye, I ken that fine, but it was aye God help them that dinna keep the peace wi’ Jamie M‘Glusky.”

As soon as dinner was at an end on that first eventful evening at Lough Slough, John M‘Glusky said to his nephew: “A suppose ye’ll want tae come tae work in ma office tae get an insicht intae the business o’ coal minin’?”

“Ye’re wrang then, uncle, for A’ll no’ accept favours frae ony mon. A’ll come an’ dae ma work in the pit like ony ither mon in yer employ, an’ tak’ ma wage o’ Saturday nicht, the same as ye did yersel’ when ye first started in life; an’ if A’m no worthy ye can jist gie me the kick-oot, as ye wad ony ither useless body.”

John smiled at the young man tolerantly.

“Things air verra deeferent wi’ me the noo,” he said in his kindly way, “and,” he added, “A dinna see hoo ma brither’s only son shouldna share in ma guid fortune. A’ve nae son o’ ma ain.”

“A’ll no eat the bread o’ idleness,” was M‘Glusky’s ungracious reply.

“A dinna mean ye tae dae that, Ian, but ye can start higher up the ladder than A did masel’.”

“A dinna want tae. Ye cam’ here a puir laddie, an’ ye worked an’ won. A think A’m as guid a mon as yersel’. What ye hae done, A can dae. If ye’ll no gie me wark in the pit, A’ll gang tae them that wull. A want tae prove masel’ a mon, an’ A want nae favours. A dinna want the workmen tae point the finger o’ scorn at me, sayin’, ‘Ian M‘Glusky canna pu’ hissel’ up, but maun cling tae the coat-tails o’ his rich reelatives tae help him.’ They’ll no respect me if they think that o’ me, an’ if they dinna respect me, hoo wull A be able tae sow the guid seed in the barren places?”

“Ye mean tae be a preacher as well as a miner, then, Ian?”

“Na, na, no’ exactly a preacher. A mean tae be a reformer. The warl’ is fu’ o’ the lust o’ money, the love o’ strong drink, the speerit o’ gamblin’ is gaun aboot like a roarin leeon seekin’ whom it may devoor. The scarlet wumman sits enthroned in high places, the stable wants sweepin’ oot, an’ A mean tae be a broom in the hands o’ the Lord.”

When John M‘Glusky heard that, he groaned in his spirit, for he plainly saw rocks ahead, and he was sorry, for he had reached that time of life when peace and quietness is balm of Gilead to a man’s soul. He argued for a long time with his nephew, but gave in at last, and M‘Glusky had his own way.

He went to the pit to work like the other hired hands, and in his own way was grimly happy.

# CHAPTER V

## A QUIET SABBATH

It was not long before the miners got an idea concerning his nature. It was well known that old John M‘Glusky was religiously inclined, and when the nephew began to show that he shared his uncle’s religious bias, the word went forth amongst the men that the young fellow was a lickspittle and a time-server, a miserable hypocrite seeking to win his uncle’s favour by wearing a mantle of piety, and the men despised him.

They were a wild, rough, rugged lot of men; hard workers, hard drinkers, and for the most part hard swearers also. They did their work and drew their pay and curried favour with no man. A more godless or fearless set of creatures it would have been hard to find upon the earth’s surface.

M‘Glusky tried to make friends amongst them, but they would have none of him, partly because he was related to the “master,” and partly because they looked upon him as a hypocrite and a time-server.

“They may think me a weaklin’ in speerit,” he thought to himself, “but A’ll let them see A’m nae wastral in the flesh.” And he did, for in spite of his youth he was tremendously strong, and his vitality was at least equal to his strength.

Driven in upon himself, he sought solace from the old leather-bound Bible that his father had given him, and he studied it eagerly. All the strenuous episodes of Samson’s Philistian struggles recurred to his mind, but when he read of that great champion’s weakness for Delilah, he lost all patience with the slayer of thousands.

“A cud hae done better than that masel’,” he was wont to aver, when communing with his own soul, for up to that time he did not know the powers of woman over the flesh of man. He was to learn all that later on, and pay a good price for the learning, as all strong men do sooner or later.

“A dinna think it was quite fair,” when he studied the story of David and Goliath, he said to himself, “that big gommerel walkin’ aboot wi’ bits o’ boiler plate on his body, braggin’ an’ shakin’ his spear, while Dauvid pelted him wi’ stanes till he dee’d. It wisna a great victory. It was like the British army peltin’ the big mob o’ Dervishes wi’ Gatlin’ guns. If Dauvid had gone at the giant wi’ a sword an’ hamstrung him, A wad hae thocht a lot mair o’ Dauvid.”

None of the Biblical heroes came quite up to his ideal man. There was something wanting in each character. Job was too fond of his own troubles. Solomon had too great a weakness for purple and fine linen, to say nothing of his weakness for the softer sex.

“A canna see that Solomon was a’ thegither a wise mon,” he used to soliloquise. “He had wisdom o’ a sort, but he maun hae been a bit daft at times, or he wadna hae gone rinnin’ after the wummin like a he-goat browsin’ amang thustles. He maun hae had a kink in his heid somehoo. Wan wumman is mair than enough for ony sane mon, an’ twa wad be a feast for a fule.”

One Sabbath day he made up his mind to commence his work of reformation among the miners. He waited until after the mid-day meal, and then went down amongst the poor cottages that comprised the hamlet where nearly all of them dwelt. Many of the men were hanging about in a half-drunken state, having only partially recovered from the usual

Saturday night's debauch. Their bloodshot eyes and sullen faces were not encouraging.

M'Glusky spoke to some of them, hoping to induce them to come and hear him preach. But they did the preaching there and then, consigning him and his religion to a realm where overcoats are supposed to be at a discount. He went on, nothing daunted, until he came to a group who were watching two bull terriers mangle each other, and he knew that the dogs were fighting for a wager that had been made in the pit during the week.

"Haud the dogs aff!" he cried sternly, "haud the puir beasties aff!"

He burst through the circle and gazed around him indignantly.

The two owners caught sight of their dogs and both cursed M'Glusky for his interference, each declaring that the interruption had come at a moment that was critical, and in favour of his dog. The animals were baiting for a bet of a sovereign.

"Let the dogs alone! Get out of the ring! Clear out, you psalm-singing hanger-on to a rich man's coat-tails!" A score of such cries and taunts reached M'Glusky's ears.

The flushed faces of the angry mob were all staring towards him.

"The twa dogs dinna want tae fecht. They wadna fecht if ye didna set them on tae ane anither. Dae ye ca' sic a thing by the name o' sport?" he demanded, his voice ringing out scornfully.

As if to give him the lie, the brindle dog slipped from its owner's hold and dashed across the ring towards the white

one, and the brutal fight commenced once more.

"Ye ca' yersel's men tae look on at the puir beasties manglin' ane anither," stormed M'Glusky.

But the sight of the two game brutes worrying each other woke the devil in the crowd, and they yelled encouragement to the animal they fancied or had backed.

"It's no Christian, an' ma certie, it's no manly, an' A'll stop it," roared M'Glusky.

He moved to carry out his threat, when a virago of a woman on the inner circle struck him full in the mouth with her clenched fist and drew the blood, which trickled down on M'Glusky's shirt front.

"Well hit, well clouted, old lass!" yelled the mob.

Then they jeered the Scot, telling him that even a woman had more pluck than he.

He drew back a pace, his face deadly pale, his eyes snapping fire. They thought he was afraid, but they did not know him in those days as they knew him later.

Suddenly he thrust his right hand into his breeches pocket and drew forth a sovereign. It was in his mind to offer to pay the wager and put an end to the battle, but the sight of the yellow gold unnerved him. He had slaved hard for that coin, and it called to his baser nature in a voice that he could not resist.

Slowly he slid it back into his pocket, and as he did so he knew that virtue had gone out of him. The crowd had seen the action and guessed at his motives, and a storm of jeering laughter broke from them.

"Sell your soul, but save your money, Scotty!" screamed the virago who had struck him.

“Out of the ring, you dirty Scot,” cried a man, “out of it, or we’ll put you out.”

The dogs were still ripping and rending each other.

“Two to one on the brindle!” roared a voice. “Two to one on the brindle!”

The white dog was thrown on its back, and the brindle, with its jaws sunk deep in the throat, was slowly but surely choking the life out of its foe.

Then it seemed to M‘Glusky that something red flashed before his eyes. He made one leap, and, stooping, tore the dogs asunder, and held them in his powerful grasp, at arm’s length, a couple of yards apart.

At that moment John M‘Glusky’s carriage drew up close to the ring. The pit owner was seated in it, with Elise Hillberg beside him.

“What’s the meanin’ o’ this blackguardly scene?” demanded the pit owner of one of the bystanders.

“Oh, it’s just a dog fight,” was the unmoved reply.

“If ye want sic disgracefu’ pleasure canna ye gang further frae the highway, and, in the name o’ a’ that’s wonnerful, what is ma nephew daein’ in sic company? Is he dog-fechtin’ tae?”

“Not he,” sneered the man, “he’s too great a milksop. He hasn’t grit enough in him for a fight of any kind.”

“Dae ye think sae, mon? Maybe when ye’re better acquainted wi’ the lad ye may alter yer opeenion.”

Scarcely had the old man uttered these words ere the owner of the brindle dog walked up to M‘Glusky and struck him across the eyes with the back of his open hand.

Old John M‘Glusky, looking on, flushed rosy red, and then turned pale. Time was when he would have limbed any man who had offered him such an insult, and, old as he was, he felt his blood tingle in his veins like new wine. Elise gave a little scream of dismay.

“Hush, ma lassie,” whispered the veteran, “A much doot if young Ian disna kill that mon.”

But M‘Glusky took the blow and did not retaliate.

“Won’t that make you fight?” demanded the miner.

M‘Glusky shook his head in the negative. “It is the Lord’s day,” he answered slowly. His words were distinct, though his lips were ash-white and trembling. A chorus of jeers broke from the mob, and a woman who had a spare petticoat dangling across her arm, which she had just taken from the drying line, flung the garment in M‘Glusky’s face.

“Wear that, ye coward!” she cried. “Wear it and stay among the women, for ye’re nae man.”

M‘Glusky held the garment at arm’s length for a moment, and then walking quietly to the woman he handed it back to her, saying simply, “Tak’ yer claes. A’m no’ wantin’ it.”

The owner of the brindle dog was standing directly behind the Scot, and swinging his heavy boot he kicked him hard and heavily. With a loud cry of suppressed fury M‘Glusky faced about, tore off his loose jacket and tossed it down in the ring. Then he dragged his shirt over his head as though he would rend it to fragments. The other man, who had been handling his dog in the fight, had his shirt sleeves already rolled up far above the elbows. He just took a pull at his belt and buckled it a hole tighter, and advanced to the centre of the ring.

The crowd of men and women grew still, for nothing on earth pleased them better than a standup battle in the ring between two strong men, and both of these were young and powerful.

Old John M‘Glusky stood up in his carriage. Elise crouched down and hid her face in her hands to blot out the horrid spectacle.

“A’m thinkin’,” muttered John M‘Glusky to his coachman, “A’m thinkin’ young Ian’ll poond yon mon tae pulp. He micht hae forgiven the blow, but no the kick frae behin’. A maun stay an’ see that he disna kill the mon.”

The two foes were facing each other, ready for the fray. Each was breathing hard, and their great muscular limbs were tense with the energy that held them in check.

All at once there came floating upon the air the far, faint chimes of church bells, so distant that had the crowd not been as still as death itself the sound of the sweet chimes would not have been heard.

M‘Glusky flung up his head like a stag when the baying of hounds reaches his ears. A look of pain, of shame, crossed his face, and he drew back.

“What now?” demanded the man in front of him, “are you going to sham ill?”

“A’m no ill.”

“Then put up your hands, you hound!”

M‘Glusky raised one hand, palm outwards, towards his adversary. “Hush, mon!” he said, “dinna ye hear it?”

Everyone listened, no man but M‘Glusky knowing what it was he was straining to hear. Again the pealing of the bells

came on the breeze. More distinct this time, for the wind was freshening.

"I can hear the church bells if that is what you mean," said the man who was ready to fight. He grinned, and added something too blasphemous to be repeated.

"Haud yer tongue, mon, haud yer tongue. 'Tisna the bells. 'Tis the voice o' the Lord."

He picked up his clothing and pushed his way out of the ring amid a perfect babel of insults, and as he went, naked to the waist, he saw Elise Hillberg's face all aglow with contempt. He had not taken much notice of her beauty prior to that instant, but it came to him then that she was bonny and beautiful. But the look of contempt upon her face was as plain as the words of his tormentors, and they were ringing in his ears. He knew that the lass considered him a coward, even as the others did, and her glance somehow stung him like a whip stroke, though he could not have told why had he been asked.

Old John M'Glusky stood up in his carriage, trembling with rage and shame. "A wadna hae believed it if A hadna seen it wi' ma ain een," he murmured. "A coo-ard, a M'Glusky a coo-ard. A didna think ma brither Jamie cud hae bred sic a beastie."

He sat down, and his old eyes were full of tears. The lass took his trembling hands between her own soft palms and tried to soothe his pain, mutely, as women will at times.

"Losh, lassie," he said with a break in his voice, "did ye ken what happened? A kick frae behin' an' he didna strike a blow. Ye ken richt weel A dinna haud wi' brawlin' an' bickerin', an' A wadna encourage fechtin' for fechtin's sake, but there's sic a thing as a mon's monliness, an' a mon wha'll

no defend that shouldna be permitted tae mix wi' his fellow mon. He should be put in a byre wi' the coos." He gave a snort of disgust. "The coos! A'm thinkin' nae Scots coo wad own Ian M'Glusky as her cawf. A'll pack him oot o' this bag an' baggage the morn, A' wull that."

# CHAPTER VI

## THE OUTCAST

Not a word did Elise say in the young man's defence; she had nothing to say. For, womanlike, though she shrank from strife and all kinds of brutality, yet her gorge rose in rebellion against a craven.

Neither she nor the old man had heard M'Glusky's reason for refusing battle. They had both seen him kicked, and they had seen him fly from the struggle. They thought him a meddler, a boaster and a craven, and they despised him.

Only once more on the homeward journey did the old man speak. Then he said bitterly:

"A thank God He didna gie me a son. He micht hae been a puir-speerited body like ma brither's son."

Meanwhile young M'Glusky was walking into the hilly country with his shirt and jacket on his arm. He forgot that he was bare to the waist. He did not feel the wind though it was keen. His blood was boiling madly in his veins; his cheeks were flushed.

Holding his head high he strode on and on, taking no note of time and distance, and all the time it seemed to him that the scornful face of Elise hovered just in front of him.

At last he threw himself face down on the grass and lay like a dead man, clutching with both hands at the roots and dirt near him. He was fighting the devil within him. Fierce blood had come to him on his mother's side, the blood of one of the wildest clans in the Highlands of Scotland. And that which had come to him from his sire was not of the mildest.

As he lay there he felt the blow and the kick again and again, as if devils were tormenting him by repeating each an hundredfold.

At last he struggled up on to his knees and prayed the quaintest prayer that ever left the lips of a reformer of men.

"Lord," he whispered, and his voice sounded like the moaning of wind through a hollow log, "Lord, grant me patience, gie me the poower tae keep still until the Sawbath hae passed an' gane, an' then, Lord, grant Thy servant the strength o' Samson that A may mak' yon mon wish his mither had gane tae the grave childless. A didna min' the kick, for the kickin's sake. A hae had worse mony a time frae oor auld poley coo at hame at the milkin' pen, but A canna haud ma heid again until A hae proved ma monliness. The people'll no listen tae the guid word frae the lips o' a mon they think a weaklin'. Gie me the power tae prove masel' worthy tae pluck the thorns an' thustles frae Thy vineyard, an' when A hae whippet yon mon as ma feyther beats the grain oot o' the ear wi' his flail on the threshin' floor, then, Lord, A'll nurse and tend him an' bring him back tae health an' strength, tae show him A did it for love, an' for the guid o' his sinfu' soul."

He felt better after that prayer. Rising up he put on his clothes, and then happening to put his hand into his breeches pocket his fingers touched the sovereign that he had fingered in the ring at the dog fight. He drew away his hand as if the contact with the gold had burnt him. He knew in that moment what his besetting sin was. The knowledge came to him like a flash of flame on bare skin. He knew that the love of money was his great stumbling-block.

’Tis a pity the Almighty does not give the same knowledge to many other men, for ’tis the curse of the world to-day.

He drew the yellow coin forth from its hiding-place and looked at it long and lovingly. It seemed to smile up in his face temptingly, like a little yellow devil. He fondled it, and nearly put it back in his pocket. It was the first piece of gold he had ever earned and saved. All the rest of his earnings had gone to purchase food and clothing, but this he had saved, and he loved it.

Suddenly he set his jaws tight together with a snap, for the thought had come to him that if he had given the sovereign in the ring to stop the dog-fight he would have been saved all the humiliation that followed.

“It’s an awfu’ lot o’ money,” he muttered.

Then he looked at it again.

“Ye wee bit deil, ye’ve gotten haud o’ ma lug, an’ ye’ve gotten haud o’ ma he’rt, an’ if A dinna watch oot ye’ll drag me doon tae the pit.”

He jerked his arm and threw the piece of gold far away on the hillside, and strode off homewards, but as he went he muttered to himself, “A’ll no look back. A’ll no fix the spot in ma mem’ry, or maybe A’ll walk in ma sleep tae seek it again. It’s an awfu’ lot o’ gear, but A’ll mak’ it an offerin’ tae the Lord. Mony a Scotsmen wud hae dee’d o’ a broken he’rt frae less cause; but A think A’ll live. A didna think it wad hae hurtit sae muckle. A ken weel the noo hoo a mither feels when her first-born bairn dees in her airms. Losh, but it’s jist awfu’.”

When he reached his lodgings he found his few belongings outside the door. This surprised him, because he had been

getting along very well with the couple with whom he had been lodging.

They saw him through the window and came to the door.

M‘Glusky pointed to his baggage. “Ye hae turned me oot o’ hoose an’ hame. Is that it?”

“Yes,” shrilled the woman, “we don’t want no cowards here.”

“A paid ma way, did A no?”

“Yes, you paid, but we have heard all about you. My man won’t sit down to eat with you. The sight of you would make him ill.”

M‘Glusky said never a word. He just undid his pack and took out his watch and the old Bible, and sat down, using his bundle as a seat.

The folks passing to and fro jeered at him, but he took no notice of anyone. Every now and again he glanced at the watch in the fading light, and then he would clutch the old Bible and murmur:

“Gie me strength tae endure, oh, Lord; gie me strength tae endure.”

So the hours crawled away, and he moved not. A weird picture he made in the starlight, sitting there motionless.

Now and again, as the night wore on, a dog would come and sniff at him, and then run off yelping or barking. One poor creature, a big, ugly, half-starved mongrel, that belonged to nobody in particular, seemed to recognise in him a fellow waif astray in an unsympathetic world; for after sniffing at him for a good while it came closer, and at last pushed its cold muzzle into his hand.

“Ye puir beastie,” he whispered, “ye dinna ken A’m an ootcast an’ a pariah amang men.”

Nevertheless he lifted his big, rough, right hand and stroked the dog’s shaggy head.

At last that for which he had waited for came to him. The wind brought the sound of chimes to his ears, and then far off in the valley a church tolled the hour of midnight. He counted every stroke, beating time with his hand. Then he leapt to his feet, exclaiming:

“It’s twal o’clock—the day is dune. It’s nae mair the Sawbath. Lord, A thank Thee for a’ Thy mercies. A thank Thee for gi’en ma the poower to haud back frae desecratin’ Thy day. An’ noo it is Monday, an’ if A dinna mak’ him that kickit Thy servant eat dirt, A’ll no longer ca’ masel’ a mon. A’ll dress like a wumman, an’ hire masel’ oot as a han’-maiden to dae wumman’s wark.”

He looked a nice sort of creature to hire himself out as a maid-of-all-work as he strode with long strides towards the home of the owner of the brindle bull terrier, the man who had kicked him.

The house lay in the very centre of the cluster of cottages that made up the village. He knew it well.

Without a moment’s hesitation he banged upon the door with his heavy fist, and not getting an immediate reply, commenced to bawl:

“Come oot, ye misbegotten son o’ a Philistine, come oot, for there’s ane waitin’ for ye like a bridegroom waitin’ for a bride.”

He must have possessed queer notions concerning a waiting bridegroom’s feelings if he imagined that his simile

was correct, for he was more like a wild boar than a bridegroom at that instant.

The door opened at last and revealed the man he had come to seek standing in the doorway, arrayed in a flimsy garment that just reached to his knees. Behind him, holding a burning candle in her hand, was his wife.

As the flickering light from the candle fell on the Scot's eager face, the miner began to spit out curses, wanting to know why his slumbers had been so rudely disturbed.

M'Glusky adopted a grand air, or what he thought was a grand air, in order to show his breeding.

Sweeping off his bonnet with one hand, he made a motion intending to convey exaggerated respect.

"I hae come tae ca' on ye the morn, ma fine buckie, tae settle a sma' maitter that is outstandin' atween ma an' you, so dinna stan' there spittin' oot curses an' foul words, an' takin' the name o' the Lord in vain; but get intae yer breeks the noo, an' come ootside. A wadna hae it said that A focht a fecht wi' a naked mon. Maybe ye'll be naked afore A hae done wi' ye, but we'll start the fecht fair and monly. Wumman, gie yer mon his buits an' his breeks."

The miner called him a verminous Scot, and wanted to know why he had not fought in the ring in daylight.

"A cudna," said M'Glusky, "A cudna dae it. Did ye no' ken it were the Sawbath?"

With an oath the miner hurled the door hard shut and turned the key.

Then M'Glusky went down upon his knees and said things to him through the keyhole that would have made a mountain goat butt a fence. He did not use profane or unchaste

language, but he made scathing reference to the parentage of a man who would kick a fellow man on the Sabbath and decline battle on the Monday.

Finding this of no avail, for his appearance in cold blood at that unearthly hour, seeking fight, had shaken the nerve of the other man, he turned the full flood of his eloquence on the man's wife, beseeching her, in almost plaintive tones, "tae haud the can'le close and mak' sure that her partner was in reality a mon an' truth a mon an' no' a mere mak'-shift."

By this time the miners were pouring out of their cottages like a swarm of bees, they and their wives, and none of them had worried overmuch concerning their toilette.

"Come out and whip him, Bill!" roared one of the newcomers; but William's heart had turned to water. He had read something in the face of the Scot that had warned him that he had made a terrible blunder in thinking this man a craven.

M'Glusky called to him coaxingly, begging him to come forth that he, Ian M'Glusky, might wipe out the stain of reproach that had been placed upon him.

As an inducement to battle, M'Glusky added, in his serious, full-throated voice:

"Dinna fear tae come forth an' fecht wi' me, mon, for A swear before the Lord that if A kill ye A'll work a' ma days an' keep yer widow frae wantin' bread."

Getting no response to this moving appeal, M'Glusky let his hot blood run riot. He drew back his foot and with one kick sent the door flying inwards. Then he sprang into the house, and catching sight of his foe, the man who had brought him to open shame in front of his fellow workmen, still standing in the candle light in his one garment, he

shouted, “A thocht ye were a leeon standin’ in the way o’ the neebors, but ye’re no a leeon, ye dirty pole cat. Wumman, whaur are his breeks?”

For answer the woman hurled the candle and candlestick full in his face and flew at him, clawing him like a she-tiger cat. He forced her aside and struck the husband, and the actual blow woke the miner’s courage, and he struck back in the darkness.

The crowd outside were howling for a fair fight in the ring, and M‘Glusky wanted nothing better. He did not strike a second blow. Shaking the woman off as best he could, he seized hold of the miner’s scanty garment by the tail, and twisting it until it was quite a handful, he heaved with all the might that was in him, and swung his foe off his feet and then dragged him outside the house and threw him headlong among his friends.

“Noo,” he cried, his voice rising in a sort of religious chant, “noo dress him, pit buits and breeks on him, an’ mak’ a ring; an’ if A dinna beat the grace of God intae him before dawn A’ll eat ma ain braces.”

There was something so eerie about M‘Glusky’s manner, as he waited for his enemy to get ready for the fray, that most of those who watched him began to think that he was possessed of a devil.

Certainly the man he fought with held that opinion a very few seconds after the battle commenced. So great was M‘Glusky’s fury as he remembered the open shame this man had brought upon him that he could not content himself with striking blows. Nothing so orthodox or commonplace would suit him. He rushed at his man and seized him round the middle, then putting forth all his strength he whirled the

fellow off his feet, and holding him by the hips as if the man were a wheelbarrow, he rubbed his nose in the dirt, crying as he did so:

"A said A wad mak' ye eat dirt, an' I wull as sure as ma soul leeveth."

One of the onlookers complained that the Scot was not fighting fairly.

"What's wrong wi' it, onywey?" demanded M'Glusky.

"You are rubbing the man's face among the pebbles," was the answer.

"A am, am A? Weel, dinna think it'll dae him ony hurt tae broose on a wee bit gravel. Let him bite a bit, it'll keep him frae cursin' an' swearin', an' ither things that are an abomination tae the Lord."

A little later M'Glusky rushed at his dazed and bewildered foe. Both his big arms were going like flails.

"Rin, rin!" he shouted, "afore A lose ma temper, an' hit ye hard, and dae ye a damage."

The man had not the sense to run or to duck, or do anything except to hit back feebly.

M'Glusky's bony fist, coming along in a sort of sweeping half-circle, fell on his neck with the force of an avalanche and almost killed him.

"Ye belong tae a perverse an' stiff-necked generation, ye mon o' sin," growled M'Glusky, as he stood over his foe.

"If he isn't stiff-necked after that blow he must be made of railroad iron," cried a spectator.

M'Glusky turned at once upon the interrupter. Pushing his head out like a cock emu in the mating season, he pranced over to this person and said:

“A’ll thank ye tae attend tae yer own affairs, ma buckie. A dinna want the likes o’ ye tae come hagglin’ roon when A’m inculcatin’ a gran’ an’ a bonny truth intae the soul o’ a sinner. A said he belonged tae a sinfu’ an’ a stiff-necked generation o’ vipers. So he does, an’ by ma soul, so dae ye, ye unwashit lump o’ unleavened onrightiousness. Ye’re a bairn o’ the pit.”

The man he was addressing was a surly customer, unused to be spoken to in such terms of endearment.

Without a word he smote M‘Glusky with all his force on the bridge of his nose, tumbling him on his back amongst the feet of the crowd. For a second or so the reformer lay still; then he felt with his left hand very gingerly for what had once been his nose.

“Ma certie,” he murmured, “A’ve nae mair nose the noo than oor auld roan mare. It cud be as easy wipeit at the back o’ ma heid as at the front. A’ll hae tae smell the new-mown hay wi’ ma ears after this, A’m thinkin’.”

Then he rose slowly to his feet, and not knowing which man had smitten him, he let go with all his might at the man nearest him, who happened to be a person quite innocent of all wrong-doing.

The man went down, and one of his friends tried to straighten M‘Glusky’s bent nose by hitting it with a shovel from the other side.

With a strange chuckle of delight M‘Glusky turned, first on one enemy, then upon the other, and if ever a man got a sinful time he did. His garments were rent clean off the upper part of his body and hung in strips from his loins downwards. When a harder blow than usual sent him reeling upon an old oaken clothes press he said to himself:

“They are aucht or ten to ane, but wi’ the help o’ the Lord an’ the han’le o’ a pick A’ll teach them tae respeck me. They’ll no ca’ me a weaklin’ ony mair.”

They called him many things as the fray progressed but they did not call him a weakling.

At last, bruised, battered and bleeding, he was hurled headlong against a cottage door. The door crashed inwards, and M‘Glusky saw a lamp burning upon an old oaken clothes-press. He was beginning to feel faint and exhausted because of the treatment he had received, but his spirit was indomitable. He was made of the stuff that real reformers are built of. As he staggered across the rough brick floor he lifted up his voice in lamentation.

“Lord!” he cried. “A’m Thy ewe lamb, an’ A hae fallen amang ravenin’ wolves.”

He did not look over much like a ewe lamb, or a lamb of any sort, and the disfigured faces of the mob that rushed in pell-mell after him were not eloquent testimony in favour of his meekness.

Suddenly his eye fell upon the massive legs of the old oak press. With a low, glad cry he rushed forward, and stooping down he grasped a leg with both hands and tore it out of its fixings. Then, wheeling round, he worked his wicked will upon his enemies. Those who were in the room could not get out because of the press of men behind them.

“Ca’ me a weaklin’, a milksop, ye children o’ Beelzebub. Ye wad, wad ye?”

He punctuated his protest with a swinging blow of the big, oaken leg.

“A cam’ tae ye an’ ye wadna hae ma.”

Again the leg of oak came down on a man.

“A socht ye oot in love an’ sweet humility tae plant the guid seed amang ye, an’ ye scorned me.”

Once more the leg of oak was busy.

“A wanted tae turn yer thochts awa’ frae dog-fechtin’, an’ gamblin’, and swearin’ an’ a’ uncleanness, an’ mak’ yer souls whiter than the snawdrap, ye deil’s buckies. An’ noo tak’ that, an’ that!”

As he spoke he charged into the midst of them, and those who got the oak leg wished with all their hearts that they had found salvation by some other channel.

As soon as they managed to get out every man fled to his own house and barred the doors by putting furniture up against it; and M‘Glusky, full of his love for the good work of reformation, pranced up and down outside the dwellings, quoting many Scripture texts and fondling the oak leg lovingly.

“A wad be a shepherd tae ye. A wad bring ye a’ intae ma Maister’s fold if ye wad come. If A struck ony mon wi’ this bit o’ auld oak harder than was needfu’ A repent. A’ll pray wi’ that mon the noo if he’ll come oot an’ kneel doon wi’ me. Wull ye no come?” he called coaxingly, but not one sinner answered his moving appeal.

“A bear ye no malice,” he shouted, “though ye hae made ma face a sicht to fricht a horse awa’ frae an oat-bin, an’ the nose ma mither gied ma ye hae flattened oot like a Scot’s thustle that a steer has trod on; an’ ma claes, ma guid Sawbath claes, that A hae worn only aince, an’ cost a poower o’ siller, ye hae turned intae rags, but A’ll no tak’ ma han’ frae the ploo, A’ll no look back. Next Lord’s day A’ll come amang ye again an’ sow the guid seed, an’ ye’re a’ invited.”

Then he strode off with a holy light in his eyes, feeling that he had vindicated his character as a man and laid the foundation for future work. As he went along chanting a psalm doors opened cautiously and the miners put their heads out a few inches to see if the apostle of peace had really gone, and to this day they talk of the way the reformer came to Lough Slough.

When M‘Glusky reached the house where he had been lodging he found the door wide open; his things had been carried into his bedroom again, and the landlord was sitting on the thatch roof sharpening a big scythe with a whetstone, ready for defence.

“Come yer weys doon, mon!” he shouted. “Dinna sit up there sae scantily clad. It’s no dacent. The win’ is blawin’ yer bit nicht shirt twa weys at aince, an’ it’s nae a sicht tae be desired in a Christian community; sae doon aff the roof rin ye this minnit, or A’ll pelt ye wi’ stanes.”

That morning when he went to his work he saw John M‘Cormack standing at the pit-mouth looking fiercely angry. He would have passed his uncle without a word, but the old man bade him stand.

“Ye’re wantin’ tae speak wi’ me,” was all M‘Glusky said.

“The fewer words the sunest mended,” was the short reply. “A cam’ tae tell ye that A dinna want tae look on yer face again. A wad wish ye tae leave ma service, an’ leave noo. Mon,” he added fiercely, “ye ca’ yersel’ a M‘Glusky, an’ ye’re a mean, peetiful cooard!”

For a moment M‘Glusky rocked himself backwards and forwards on his heels and toes. Then he said softly:

“Ye’re an auld mon, an’ a feeble, an’ A wadna say a harsh or a cruel thing tae ye tae hurt yer feelin’s for the warl’. On

accoont o' yer grey hairs A'll just say this tae ye, John M'Glusky, son of ma feyther's mither, ye're a leear, an' the truth isna in ye. A cud say somethin' harsh tae ye an' A was a mon o' strife, but A'm a mon o' peace, wi' a peacefu' mission in the warl', sae A'll no hurt ye in yer auld age, ye grey, auld, money-grabbin', leein' sinner. Gang yer weys, an' A'll gang ma ain weys. A'll be beholden tae no mon for ceveelity as long as ma twa han's can earn ma bread. A'll leave Lough Slough within the 'oor, but A'm sorry on accoont o' the puir bodies wha live here. A meant to preach the Word tae them on the Sawbath, an' A think they wad hae listened, for they ken weel A'm an earnest mon. Yes," he murmured dejectedly, "A think they'll miss me when I'm awa'. A hae won a place in their he'rts, A think, for though they are rough an' ready, an' awful swearers an' drinkers, yet A'm thinkin' they love a monly mon, an' they'll no sune forget me."

Without another word he wheeled and went off. And his bitter old kinsman went home and told Elise that he had driven his brother's son away.

"It pained me tae the marrow in ma banes tae dae it," said he, "but he was a cantin' young hypocrite, an' a cooard. A had tae send him awa frae the pit, lassie. It wad hae made me ill tae see him."

And Elise, too, was sad at heart that day, though she could not have told why, for the lasses are quaint creatures. A man comes into their lives and takes possession of their wayward fancy at times, in spite of themselves. They believe that if the man is magnetised in the same manner by the same lass, they are sure to come together sooner or later, as sure as a cock pheasant is to fly down the wind.

After the young man had left Lough Slough Elise thought of him often, and wondered continually concerning his welfare.

Then there came a day when she heard from a gossip the story of how M‘Glusky had tried to work the reformation of the miners in the small hours of the morning, and her heart was glad, because no lass likes to think that a man who has somehow taken her fancy is a craven.

When she told the story after dinner to old John M‘Glusky, that pious old Scot slapped his thigh and laughed until the tears ran down his wrinkled face.

“A’m a fule, lassie, a great chuckle-pated fule, in spite o’ ma white pow. I knew his feyther an’ his mither, an’ yet I was daft enoo’ tae think him a coo-ard. A might hae kent weel it was naething but his stubborn releegion. It was jist what ma brither Jamie wad hae dune in his youth.”

Then he chuckled again.

“A wad hae gied a lot tae hae seen Ian M‘Glusky preachin’ his reform creed i’ the dawnin’, wi’ the help o’ the leg o’ an oaken claes-press. It maun hae been fine. A wad wager ten poun’s he drove his sermon hame tae the he’rts o’ his audience wi’ mair poower than ony elder in any kirk in Scotlan’ cud hae dune. Losh, lassie, but that laddie is gaun tae taste a lot o’ trouble o’ his ain brewin’ afore he dees.”

“He was very brave to take all those insults and blows and kicks and not return them just because it was Sunday. We thought he was a coward, and he was brave for conscience sake.”

The ancient Scot chuckled again.

"Ye dinna ken the breed, lassie. It's in his bane and bluid. Why, it's the persecution that mak's him like it. Those blows and kicks were jist saut tae his meat. If they had let him alane they wad hae broke his he'rt. It was the persecution that made him think he was daein' a gran' wark. There's lots like Ian M'Glusky in the warl', lassie—lots. They want to set the whole warl' richt, an' if they got their ain wey they wad jist turn roon an' fecht amang their ain sel's, and turn the guid auld warl' topsy-turvy again. Dinna ye greet aboot young Ian M'Glusky. He has mair unleavened sin in his banes than maist men, an' some day he'll gang astray, an' then A wadna care tae be sharin' bed an' board wi' him; but in the end he'll come intae his kingdom o' guid common Scot's sense, an' he'll be a mon worth ca'in a kinsmon. But, lassie, A'm rather gled he went awa' frae Lough Slough, for he wad hae converted ma miners or killed them, an' wi' a' their fau'ts they are gran' workmen, an' A canna replace them."

He put his old white head in his hands and laughed until the table fairly shook.

"Oh, ma lass, wad ye no' hae likit tae hae seen Sandy Pearson on the tap o' his bit cottage in his shirt, sharpenin' his scythe? It wad hae made a picture fit for the gods tae hae seen Ian threatenin' Sandy wi' stanes an' the win' flirtin' an' playin' hide-an'-seek wi' the shiverin' body o' him."

Miss Elise gave her head a toss and left the room, declaring most emphatically that she would *not* have liked to have been a spectator at that scene.

That night the old man sat for a couple of hours longer than usual over his whisky, and every now and again he gave the table a hearty thump and chuckled.

"He ca'd me a leear, an' A ca'd him a cooard, sae A'm nae sure he hadna richt on his side," he muttered as he took the bedroom candle. "Losh, but it's a gran' thing tae be young an' fu' o' the desire tae set the whole warl' richt. A'm no sae sure A wadna gie a' ma siller if he wad tak' hauf ma years aff ma shoulders. But," he continued more soberly, "wae, bitter wae tae ye, Ian M'Glusky, if ye fa' in love wi' a wumman wha isna what a wumman ocht to be. She'll play wi' yer he'rt-strings as a fiddler plays wi' the strings o' his fiddle, an' God hae mercy on ye then, for ye're jist the sort tae suffer. Ye'll hae need o' yer releegion, A'm thinkin', an' maist o' all ye'll want the verra pairt o' releegion ye ken naething aboot. Ye'll want the love an' charity, an' no' the fechtin' reformer's pairt, an' ye ken nae mair aboot the love an' peace o' the guid buik than a breekless savage."

As he had gone to Lough Slough, so M'Glusky made his way out of it. He tramped and did odd jobs *en route*, and when he came to a place where men assembled he preached the Gospel, and laid the flattering unction to his soul that he was setting the world right.

He did not know where he was going, and he did not care. For a little while he lived with a roving class of gipsies, whom he accidentally met, but their thieving habits disgusted him and he left them. Possibly the inherent laziness of the gipsy men offended him more than their dishonesty, because there was that in his nature which made him tolerant to the gipsy poaching. A rabbit, they said, was not a landowner's because it happened to burrow and breed on his soil; a pheasant was not a landed proprietor's because it happened to roost in the trees that grow on his soil. They were both products of Nature, and belonged as much by right to the

poor man as to the rich—more so, in fact, because the poor man wanted them for food, the rich man for sport alone.

The same applied to the fish that swam in the rivers. The rich had made the laws and put their seal upon everything—furs, fins and feathers—and the gipsies, resenting this, took all their toll near and far of everything that they could lay hands upon.

M‘Glusky held that they were right on most things, but his love of labour, his thoroughgoing industry and thriftiness of disposition revolted against the laziness of his nomadic friends.

“Why should we work? The rich do not toil,” said the nomads, as they sat around the camp fires of an evening.

Then M‘Glusky would bring forth his ancient Bible and read to them the story of the Fall and the curse.

“God said that every mon should work an’ eat the fruit o’ the sweat o’ his ain broo’, an’ ye toil not, neither dae ye spin, except spin lees tae charm the ears o’ silly village wenches, an’ that is no monly, or wummanly either.”

“Make the rich work and we will work,” answered the nomads. “They have the same Bible as you have, they had the same law given them as is given to us, yet they live on the fat of the land and do nothing except eat and drink and make merry. Make them work, and then we will also sweat and toil, but not until then.”

It sounded like good logic to M‘Glusky, and when he left the gipsy camp he preached the doctrine of hard work for the rich man as well as for the poor man, and he was hauled before a magistrate who owned many fat acres—a man who had his own possessions to shoot over, his own rivers to fish in, a man who rode to hounds and galloped with an easy

conscience over any farmer's land if the hounds took him there. And when he heard of M'Glusky's preaching, and the text, "Labour for all men, rich and poor alike," expounded to him by the village policeman, then that magistrate threw up his hands in holy horror and wanted to know if the world was coming to an end.

"Ay," answered M'Glusky, "it is that, an' when the last trump sounds ye'll be in a place where there'll no' be watter enough tae moisten yer pairched lips, let alane keep troot an' salmon an' sic like beasties a' tae yersel'."

"Three months," said the magistrate.

Then M'Glusky unburdened himself of a lot of fine old Gaelic language, telling the magistrate that he was unfit to sit in judgment on pigs, let alone men, which was pretty near the truth, but very unwise.

"Ye canna send me tae preeson for jist speakin' ma mind oot straucht like a mon!" he cried hotly. "It's no lawfu'. Ye canna dae sic a thing."

But M'Glusky was wrong. The magistrate not only could send him to gaol, but did.

"It's no the law o' the lan'!" said M'Glusky to the police-officer who had charge of him.

"Perhaps not," was the reply, "but it's the law of this parish, and the man on the Bench owns half the farms about here. You'll be lucky if you don't get another lot when this term is up. He won't forgive you for what you said to him in court in a hurry."

"It's no justice," was all the reformer could say. "Mon, it's monstrous; it's no justice."

"Very likely it's not," was the laconic answer, "but it's the law."

He served his term, and when he came out of gaol he was hooted in the village streets by the very men whose cause he had espoused. No one had a good word for him. The rich called him a firebrand and an agitator; the poor called him a quack reformer and a sham, and would not have him as a champion at all, and it grieved M'Glusky to the soul to find that he could not be a martyr. As he trudged on he came across a travelling show, a sort of circus and boxing booth combined, and being hungry to the verge of starvation he took work as a handy man, giving his labour in return for his food, and in this fashion he travelled far and learned a good deal.

The heavy-weight boxing man used to put the gloves on with him for the sake of exercise, and as he was a good-tempered fellow when sober, M'Glusky picked up a lot of scientific information in regard to the art of self-defence.

One day the manager gave the Scot a lot of bills and a bucket of paste and a brush, and told him to go ahead of the caravan and decorate a town which lay in front of them. They were an awe-inspiring lot of posters. One represented a mighty lion tearing an African giant limb from limb.

Folks looked at the poster and shuddered. They did not know that the lion was fed on biscuits until it was so weak that it could barely jump through a hoop, and that the African attendant used to get drunk and go into the monarch of the desert's cage and beat it most unmercifully with a club about twice a week.

There were other picture posters representing a boxer of most beautiful proportions knocking men twice as big as

himself over the ropes of a ring, and these latter bills had a legend attached to them to the effect that the boxing man attached to the circus would meet the champion of America in a ten-round contest with small gloves for £500 a-side. This was news to M'Glusky, and he said so when he returned to the caravan.

On the night appointed for the great contest the big tent was packed to overflowing. The ring man told a wonderful and picturesque story concerning "Leo," the man-slaying lion, and when the African chief, arrayed mostly in a leopard skin drawn across his shoulders, and three eagles' plumes, which he had stolen from a barnyard goose that afternoon, in his curly wool, stalked majestically into the man-slayer's den, the folk fairly quaked, and so did "Leo," because he could smell rum, and he knew by past experience that when the African had been drinking rum he would not spare the club.

"Leo" at once emitted a roar of terror, which the people fancied was a roar of ferocity. Twirling his club, the African threw himself into a picturesque posture, which was very effective, as he was a magnificently-built man. Every now and again he drove the club into the poor brute's ribs and pretended that he did it in self-defence, and the people applauded his daring courage and cheered him to the echo.

"Leo" heard the cheering and snapped and snarled at the bars of his den, and the people cheered again, thanking God at the same time that they were protected from the "king of the forest" by stout iron bars.

The curtain was rung down over the cage at a time when the exasperated lion had turned, half mad with terror, and crouched as if to spring upon the gigantic black, who, with club poised aloft in both hands, awaited the onset.

A minute later the immense black was standing by the ring-master's side in the centre of the tent, receiving the tumultuous plaudits of the throng, whilst "Leo," behind his screen of canvas, was complacently munching dog biscuits, represented on the gaudy play-bills as the raw marrow-bones of a bull. He was supposed (in the handbills, drawn up and edited by a most distinguished journalist) to kill one wild bull every forty-eight hours and eat everything except the horns.

Whilst the next few acts held the attention of the audience the manager called M'Glusky to him and said that a certain professional boxer who had agreed to be on hand to box ten rounds with the champion of the circus had failed to keep his appointment.

"A'm verra sorry," remarked M'Glusky; "A wad hae liked tae see the fecht."

As a matter of fact there had been no appointment and no match; it was merely a catch-penny dodge on the part of the management.

"There'll be an awful row, and our reputation will be ruined unless I can get someone to fight our man," was the circus-manager's next comment. "It will just about break the show up, and we will all be left on our beam-ends," he added. Then, as if voicing an after-thought, he said, "Will you box our man? You can have a golden sovereign for every round you stay in the ring."

"Na, na, A canna box, ye ken that weel eno'. A'll fecht him wi' single-sticks, if that'll dae."

"Single-sticks won't do. We must have the gloves. That's what the folks have come to see; and look here, Scotty, I'll make it two sovereigns for every round you remain in the ring."

“And I,” said the bruiser, “will let you stay in the ring for nine rounds. I’ll only tap you lightly and dance about a lot. The people won’t know any better. You’ll have eighteen pounds to put you on your feet, man.”

“A dinna think it’ll be quite honest,” remarked M‘Glusky, “but—” he hesitated, “ye said auchteen pounds. It’s an awfu’ lot o’ money. A never saw sae muckle as that in a’ ma life. A fear A’ll be murthered for ma wealth if it becomes known A hae sae muckle. A’ll no dare tae gang oot o’ nichts.”

His conscience told him that it was not the right thing for a reformer to do; but his greed of gold, which was his besetting sin, egged him on, and he went into the roped arena arrayed in green tights, with the star-spangled banner of America bound round his middle.

The referee announced the terms of the great contest for the world’s championship, and then began to give M‘Glusky’s pedigree and performances. He told in thrilling language how the American hero had maimed, bruised and beaten about a score of champions, and won cartloads of dollars, and cups and mugs and silver belts enough to stock a jeweller’s shop. He was just launching out into a particularly vivid account of the way the great American had beaten the champion of Australia, when M‘Glusky arose.

“Mon,” he whispered, “are ye no’ feared o’ a judgment fa’in on ye? A wunner yer leein’ tongue disna cleave tae the roof o’ yer moo’. Ananias wasna mair than a puir hauf-he’rted leear compared wi’ ye, an’ A’ll no’ be a pairty tae sic awfu’ wickedness. A wad rayther beg ma bread frae hoose tae hoose.”

At this juncture the professional boxer, seeing that there was likely to be a fiasco, nodded to the referee to give the

signal for commencing hostilities. This was promptly done, and before M‘Glusky knew just where he was he received a blow on the ear that made him think that someone must have struck him with a cricket bat.

# CHAPTER VII

## IN THE LION'S CAGE

"Losh!" gasped M'Glusky, "dae ye ca' that tappin' an' dancin' roon', ma buckie?"

Whizz came a blow on the other ear.

He stood and rubbed the spot, with a look of stupid amazement spreading over his countenance.

Ping! ping! Two wicked left-handers fell on his face, and he forgot all about Ananias. He began to fight, but he might as well have tried to hit a shadow. The boxer was in his element and walked around the Scot like a nigger round a melon patch.

"Haud on a wee bit! haud on! A'm no likin' this at a'!" shouted M'Glusky. "Gie me twa sov'rins an' A'll gang oot o' the business aince an' for aye. A'm no' a glove-fechtin' mon, an' richt weel ye ken it."

The pugilist only grinned, and pounded M'Glusky all over the ring, and the people, who always dearly love to see a man get a lot of punishment, or else they think they are being defrauded out of their money's worth, cheered with frantic glee.

"Hoo muckle hae A earned?" asked M'Glusky at the end of the second round.

They told him.

"Losh!" he exclaimed, "A wudna follow a fechtin' trade for a' the siller in Scotlan'. Gie me what's ma due an' A'll tak' masel' oot o' this!" and he tore off the gloves amid a perfect Babel of hooting.

“Gie me the siller!” he said, holding out his hand; but the boxer and the manager, who were both knaves at heart, laughed him to scorn.

When M‘Glusky realised that he was to lose his hard-earned money he rose on the tips of his toes like a gigantic cat, and thrusting his head out he advanced on the pair of rascals.

“A’m ane o’ the men wha like a quiet life, an’ I dinna want tae mak’ trouble. A canna fecht wi’ the gloves, but wi’ a chair A’m no’ so bad. Aince mair, wull ye pey?”

The men said they would not, and talked of putting him in the nearest pond to cool his temper. Tears of rage at the idea of losing his pay sprang into the Scot’s eyes. He reached over the ropes of the ring, and grasping a cane-bottomed chair by the back, swung it round his head with frightful rapidity. Then he charged the pair, and, moaning woefully over the loss of his cash, struck right and left with his novel weapon.

In vain the pugilist ducked and dodged. The air seemed full of chairs, as the uncouth creature, raging over his lost wealth, bounded about the ring.

The manager, who was a stout person, ducked under the ropes and fled, but M‘Glusky pursued him, and every time he brought the chair down on the fleshy body he roared:

“Gie me ma wealth, ye thievin’ Philistine! Gie me fower poun’ or A’ll nae leave a soond bone inside yer claes!”

The canvas screen drawn up in front of the lion’s cage was knocked over in the turmoil, and “Leo,” hearing the tumult, began to roar furiously. The prize-fighter had meanwhile clambered up on the swinging trapeze which the acrobats had been using, and dangling there, well out of peril, looked

down with scared face at the stout manager trying to avoid the long, lean Scot with the now badly damaged chair.

"Pay him, you fool! Pay him!" he shouted. "A Scotsman will kill a man for four shillings. He'll kill and eat him for four pounds!"

But the terrified circus manager was too scared to stop and pay. He thought his last hour had dawned. As M'Glusky sprang past the bandstand he dropped the chair and snatched up the big brass trombone, and continued the pursuit.

"Gie me ma bit siller!" he chanted, "or A'll squeeze ye intae ane end o' this an' draw ye oot o' the ither end like a note o' music. A wull that, upon ma soul!"

Dodging round the lion's cage, the manager caught sight of the door. He was mortally afraid of "Leo," but what was a half-starved lion in comparison to a Scotsman robbed of four pounds? He swung open the door of the cage and dived inside.

M'Glusky uttered a slogan of triumph.

"A hae ye noo in a nice quiet place. The Lord has delivered ye intae ma han'!"

"Don't go in there! The lion will claw you to death. He won't let a strange keeper go near him," cried the negro.

All the people were standing up, straining their necks, white-faced and overawed.

"Dom the lion!" snarled M'Glusky, brandishing the trombone defiantly. "Dom the lion! A'll hae ma fower poun', an' hae it the noo!" and in he went.

"Leo" was roaring and growling frightfully. M'Glusky gave the gaunt brute one terrific kick in the ribs, and the people closed their eyes and shuddered, for they knew this

was the terrible man-slaying king of the desert seen on the play-bills on every hoarding.

When they opened their eyes again “Leo” was crouching right up in one corner of the cage and trying his best to squeeze himself through the bars. The manager was doing the same in another corner. The Scot held the floor.

“Gie me ma bit siller.” His voice was very low but full of menace.

The manager emptied his pockets into the big outstretched hand and added his gold watch as well.

“A only want ma ain. A dinna want yer watch;” and as he spoke M‘Glusky tossed the timepiece on the floor and turned to go. As he did so “Leo,” observing that the man’s back was turned towards him, struck out with a heavy paw and ripped M‘Glusky’s trousers, which he had pulled on in the ring, almost off him, and scored his flesh as well.

The Scot sprang away; then, observing the utter ruin of his garments, he gnashed his teeth.

“Ye son o’ Beelzebub! Ye hae ruined ma claes, ruined a pair of guid breeks that cost me twal siller shillin’s. A’ll tear the tail oot o’ ye, ye slobberin’, bellowin’ beastie!” And the next moment the audience were convulsed with mirth as they watched M‘Glusky booting the monarch of the wilds from one angle of the cage to the other.

“A’m thinkin’,” said M‘Glusky to himself, as he knelt down to say his prayers that night, “A’m thinkin’ the next time they try tae rob a puir, peacefu’ body they’ll no’ pick a Scotsman.”

After the glove-fighting episode the circus did not want M‘Glusky, nor did M‘Glusky particularly want the circus.

“It’s maistly tinsel an’ glitter,” he said to the doctor who attended his wounded leg, “an’ as A hae a serious mission in life A wudna hae mixed wi’ sic folks, only A was hungry an’ weary, an’ A hadna a penny piece in a’ the wide warl, an’ A cudna get honest toil. A’m verra sorry for the lion,” he added; “A’m afeared A hurtit the puir beastie, an’ A hae aye been verra gentle wi’ puir dumb craturs.”

So once more he started upon his travels. He would not purchase a ride even to save the pain in his mauled leg. “The Lord gied me twa legs, an’ He meant me tae mak’ guid use o’ them. A’ll no waste siller on sic fulishness as ridin’.”

When they told him it was forty miles to the next town of any size, and that he could ride all the way for a few shillings, he glanced at them.

“A’ll tak’ black shame tae masel’ tae think o’ payin’ money oot o’ ma pooch for sic idleness. What is the wee maitter o’ forty miles tae a mon wha’s worth ca’in a mon. If there’s a carrier’s cart that’ll tak’ me an’ ma pack the forty miles for tuppence, A micht consider it. A cud haud the reins and whistle tae the horses, an’ no chairge for it, ye ken.”

But as no one was looking for wealth on those terms the Scot limped away with his pack on his broad back. And as he marched he thought over the Bible story of Samson slaying the lion.

“A used tae be sair distressed in ma mind tae believin’ that story when A wis a laddie,” he mused, “but A didna ken muckle aboot lions in thae days. A ken better noo, an’ A expeck A’ll fin’ mony things in the warl are no sae verra terrible if a mon’ll only gang richt up tae them and tak’ haud o’ them by the tail. Some of the sae-ca’ed great men o’ the warl’ are only like that circus lion, maistly noise an’ big

advertisin'. They flourish like the green bay tree, because the warl' is fu' o' fules ready to fa' doon an' worship at the feet o' ony windy thing in breeks, if only it's weel puffed in the papers an' self-advertised in speeches. A'm arrivin' at the opeenion that maist o' them wha are sae fond o' sayin' they sacrifice themsel's on the altar o' duty mak' a bonny penny oot o' the sacrifice. A'm no politician, but A wud bet ma breeks that ninety-nine oot o' every hunner o' the lot o' them grind an axe o' their ain, an' the ither ane dees young. As for the lawyers, is it no' written in the guid buik that none o' them can enter the kingdom o' heaven? Losh, when A think o' a' the deil has tae pit up wi' frae them, A can maist fin' it in ma he'rt tae peety him. He must hae an awfu' time o' it."

Wandering along he came to a biggish-sized town which seemed to be seething with excitement, and he soon learned that an election was on foot.

"A'm nae politician," he remarked to himself, "but A dinna see why A shouldna mak' an' honest penny oot o' ane o' thae wind-bags."

There was a white-whiskered, white-waistcoated Tory candidate, who spouted much concerning the glory and the greatness of mighty Briton, the ruler of the seas. He dearly loved that term, "ruler of the seas," and rolled the "r's" about in his mouth like bullets coming from the nozzle of a Gatling gun.

M'Glusky rose in the midst of this person's oration and wanted to know if he—the candidate—would stop talking dom rot and tell the people how and why a few thousand Britons were born to live in extravagant idleness all their days whilst millions were born to work, half-starved and half-

naked, and eternally so ill-paid that they could never hope to save enough to enjoy a peaceful and prosperous old age.

"I—ah—suppose it's the will of God, my good man," answered the white-waistcoated one glibly.

"Yer an awfu' old leear, an' ye ken that richt weel," stormed the reformer. "Didna the Almichty mak' sheep as weel as men an' wimmin, an' did He no' pit the same amount o' warm wool on the back o' each tae keep oot the cauld? Did He no' grow grass for a'? Ye ken weel He did, but it was mon wha built hedges an' pit up fences tae keep some sheep fat an' some lean."

Then in a voice of thunder he demanded:

"Isna a mon born o' wumman mair precious in the een o' the Almichty than mony sheep? A tell ye, a' men werena born equal, but the Lord intended every mon tae hae a chance in life. He didna mean ony mon tae sit on his hunkers in the gutter a' his days, an' anither yin tae be dressed in purple an' fine linen, wi' a pooch fu' o' gold an' siller, wi' lapdogs an' lackeys an' flunkies rinnin' ahint him, ready tae blaw his nose on a cauld day."

At this stage the stewards fell upon M'Glusky, and after a very fleshy argument succeeded in casting him forth from the meeting into the outer world.

Then he drifted off to the meeting of the Unionist candidate, and heard a middle-aged man of thin, ascetic appearance preaching tariff reform.

"Stand by your gracious Colonies and they will stand by you in your hour of trouble," shouted the perfervid orator. "In the Colonies there are millions of acres of land waiting for you. The land cries dumbly to you and your wives and children. It is the voice of the manless land calling to the

landless man. You can cross the seas and make happy homes for all if you only stand steadfastly by that Greater Britain over the rolling waves."

M'Glusky upreared his shaggy frame, and shaking a big, bony forefinger at the orator he cried:

"Ma certie, mon, ye're nae mair use at a gatherin' o' sensible, thochtfu' men than an addled egg under a sittin' hen. Ye canna be eaten an' ye canna be hatched."

The crowd, scenting fun, cheered the reformer furiously.

"Haud yer senseless yammerin!" cried he, turning upon the people furiously. "Ye'll cheer me the noo, an' if the deil prompts ye tae dae it ye'll pelt me wi' road metal the morn; ye're nae mair to be trustit wi' a vote than a mon fu' o' whusky is tae be trustit wi' a motor-car, but A wud like tae say a word tae yon mon on the platform; nae that A wud wish tae hurt his feelin's, for A'm no' a mon o' strife, A'm no' a firebrand. A cam' amang ye tae bring peace an' guidwill, an' no' tae stir up the angry passions o' ony pious, feckless wind-bag that the Almichty in His wisdom has seen fit tae let loose on this toon, wi' yearnin's in his soul for a seat amang the michty in the hoose o' Parleyment."

The crowd spread itself in one vast grin of sheer delight at this exhibition of M'Glusky's gentleness of soul, and the candidate began to bleat feebly.

"Ah, gentlemen, I—ah—protest; I—ah—gentlemen—"

"Haud yer peace, mon, an' let ane o' the people speak a word in season. A'm thinkin' if the prophet Jeremiah should hae come here the nicht an' heard ye bletherin' aboot the happy hames tae be made across the sea he wudna hae patience wi' ye; he wud hae emptied the vials o' his wrath on tae ye; he wud hae ca'ed ye no' the voice o' a leader o' men,

but the voice o' the win' blowin' doon a hollow log, ye misbegotten gommerel! Is there no' room in Englan' an' Scotlan' an' Irelan' an' Wales for the people, that ye wud bid them gang forth intae the wilderness like the children o' Israel o' auld? Ye ken fine, ma buckie, there's room here for us a' if ye parcelled oot the lan' yer thievin' gran'sires stole frae the people in bygone times."

"My great-great-grandfather received his estate from the King in his time for service rendered to that King," said the candidate, pompously.

"Ou, ay, we ken a' that, ken it fine, ma braw bit buckie. The King had no richt tae gie awa' the people's lan's tae yer great-great-gran'feyther. Burn yer great-great-gran'feyther, an' great-gran'mither tae!"

The candidate protested that no man had a right to want to burn his ancestors.

"Weel, weel, dinna argue aboot it," said M'Glusky, softly. "If yer ancestors were like maist o' them wha o' auld time served kings they're gey weel burned by noo. A time-servin', lan'-grabbin' lot o' thievin' wastrals they were for the maist part, tyin' themsel's up in iron pots an' makin' war on naked mon, an' ca'ing themsel's nobility, jist because they plundered the puir wi' fire an' sword tae fill the coffers o' kings; an' at ither times soilin' their monhood by panderin' tae the leecherous tastes o' worthless monarchs by feedin' their gross appetites for loose wimmen."

"My great-grandfather," began the candidate, but M'Glusky cut him short again, crying fiercely:

"Burn yer great-gran'feyther! Wull ye han' back tae the people the lan' yer great-gran'feyther got haud o' by unlawfu' an' unmonly devices? If ye'll no' ye're as big an

auld thief as yer great-gran'-feyther, for the receiver o' stolen goods isna blameless in the eyes o' the Lord."

Once again the stewards fell upon M'Glusky and deposited him, with no undue softness or kindliness, in the gutter. When he had shaken himself together he reviewed the situation without heat.

"A'm like a lily o' the valley in a bed o' thustles. A canna fin' honest men tae listen tae a few soft words o' kin'ly argument. A canna unnerstan' it at a'. It wud be a different maitter if A wis o' a brawlin' or a contentious speerit, but A'm as gentle as a lamb wi' them a'. But A'll no' repine. A think A'm daein guid wark in the vineyard. Some o' the seed A'm sowin'll surely fa' on guid ground, though maist o' it fa' on stony soil."

He shook himself together and wended his way to another hall, where a mob of suffragettes were making night hideous with their clamour.

A tall, bony woman had full possession of the platform when he entered. She was orating in a high falsetto voice, and at the conclusion of each sentence some female in the throng would shout "Votes for women!"

Then a dozen of others would wave little flags and bannerettes bearing the same inscription, "Votes for women!"

"Man has been a tyrant from the beginning of the world," cried the excited person on the platform.

Wild cheers and waving of flags greeted this time-honoured truism.

"Man has trampled upon us and held us in bondage in all ages."

Fierce shrieks and clapping of hands from most of the females present.

"We want votes, we want liberty, we want equality!"

"Bravo! bravo! bravo!"

"Yes, my sisters, we are no longer the slaves of man's passions and desires. No longer are we content to be looked upon as chattels. We were made equal with man in the beginning. We, like him, were made out of the dust of the earth, and, like him, in the end we go back to our brown mother earth."

Slowly, and with a dignity akin to austerity, M'Glusky upreared himself.

"Wumman!" he cried in his deep, rich voice, "wumman, dinna misquote the guid buik. A dinna min' what ye ca' yer mon folk, but A'll not sit still an' hear ye add tae or tak' frae the Scripture. Mon an' wumman werena made alike in the beginnin'. There was a difference between them frae the verra first. Ye canna hae made a study o' the buik beautiful or ye wudna stan' screechin' nonsense there like a pea-hen that wants a mate and canna get ane."

Fierce shrieks of "Votes for women!" drowned the Scot's voice for a long time, but at last he resumed.

"Ye dinna ken maybe that after the Almichty made Adam He took a rib frae his body an' made Eve oot o' that bit o' bone. Wumman, A wull impress a great truth on yer soul. Mon is mud, an' maist o' him is dom poor mud at best, but wumman is bone, an' A'm thinkin' that's hoo some o' ye hen politicians are sae devilish fon' o' talkin' day an' nicht, instead o' studyin' the principles o' baby-raisin'. An' A'll tell ye anither great truth: wan bairn per annum, an' perhaps twa noo an' agen for a change, is a greater glory tae a wumman

than sax hunner speeches frae the platform; sae kilt yer coats an' gang yer ways hame tae yer gude mon, an' leave votes tae fules wha'll gie them tae ony windy loon wha'll gie them a belly fu' o' promises an' nae fulfilments."

The oratress was frantic.

"Hearken!" she cried, pointing a shaking finger at M'Glusky's grisly figure. "He calls me 'woman.' That is like all his sex. They have no chivalry, they never lose an opportunity to toss insults in our teeth. Woman indeed! I would have you know that the Montmorenci Cavendishes are of gentle blood. I—"

"A did ca' ye wumman. Was A no richt? A thocht A cud tell a hen by the cackle o't."

"Are you a man?" shrieked the oratress.

"Tae the best o' ma knowledge and belief A'm a mon. It is a maitter that has never before been disputed tae ma face."

"Do you believe in votes for women? Would you give every woman a vote?"

"A wud," answered M'Glusky, solemnly, "A wud as sune think o' lookin' doon the barrel o' a gun tae see if it wis loaded."

There were about fifty medical students present. They had attended the suffragette meeting in the hope of getting a night's free fun, but they saw in this grim, non-humorous creature, who took all things under heaven seriously, a sure mine of amusement.

One of their number arose, and pointing a scornful finger at M'Glusky, said, in magisterial tones:

"Take no heed of that base fellow, ladies, I know him; I have known him for years. Let me ask him a few questions in

public and cover him with shame, if there is any shame left in him. Man, what have you done with your poor wife? What have you done with your five innocent starving children? Answer! Where are they?"

A solemn hush fell upon the audience.

"Ye're clenchin' yer fist on the wrong thustle this time, ma buckie," was the Scot's reply. Then he laughed jeeringly, adding, "Ye're a fine judge o' a family mon. Dae A look like a feyther o' five bairns? Why, as the Lord liveth, A dinna ken a wumman frae a bag o' biscuits. A wudna be bothered wi' the hen creatures at a'."

"Liar!" rang out from fifty voices, and all the students arose and pointed accusing fingers at the bewildered Scot. "Liar! We know you!"

There was an awful pause, then the relentless voice of the leader of the medical students broke in again.

"Man, what have you done with Aurora Floyd, the poor lass you decoyed from her humble home after you deserted your wife? Where is she?" And all the other voices chimed in, "Where is she?"

M'Glusky, who knew not medical students and their ways, gazed around him in amazement.

"A thocht A wis attendin' a hen convention met tae talk aboot the political richts o' wimmen. A didna ken A'd missed ma wey an' strayed intae a lunatic asylum. A'll gang aboot ma business."

"Stop!" thundered the voice, "outcast, pariah, wrecker of happy homes, what have you done with Janet M'Kim?"

This was too much for M'Glusky's placid temper. He pushed his way through the crowd and faced the woman on

the platform.

“Wumman,” he growled hoarsely, “ye’re no pleasin’ tae the ee’s o’ a mon, an’ A’ll no’ perjure ma soul wi’ flattery. A’ll no’ call ye a gazelle, for as ma soul liveth ye’re mair like a she-emu than ony livin’ thing A hae ever cast ma een ower in this warl. But ye look honest, if ye’re ugly enough tae shift the writin’ on a coffin-plate, but I wud ask yer tae loan me the use o’ yer platform while A gie yon mon the lie in his teeth.”

The oratress, however, would have none of him. She saw before her a sample of the tyrant man, and sweeping up her skirts, as if she feared defilement from his presence, she struck an attitude, in which, owing to the lifting of her skirts, a lean, unlovely leg was brought under the gaze of the medical students, who swiftly took possession of this chance to air their demoniacal wit.

“Shame! shame! shame!” they shouted in a mighty chorus. “Why tempt the man? Has he not sins enough upon his soul?”

Then all the suffragettes present raised a terrible hubbub.

“Votes for women!” was the cry, mingled with jeers from the students concerning that lean, unpicturesque feminine under-pin. This soon blazed into open war, and M‘Glusky took the part of the women.

“A wud suner be mated with twa yairds o’ fencin’ wire dressed in a pocket-handkerchief an’ red parasol than mate wi’ yon hen politician,” he grumbled, “but A’ll no’ see them hustled;” so he joined issue with the leader of the medical students, and the whole lot fell upon him and dealt with him after the manner of their kind.

The suffragettes refused to accept him as a champion, and when he was not being buffeted by the male imps he was being prodded from stem to stern with parasols.

Next day, as he overhauled his damages, he remarked to himself, in an awed whisper, “Weel, weel, A didna dream a politician’s life cud be sae fu’ o’ incident. A wudna hae minded the buckies sae muckle, but thae hens foond every tender spot in ma carcase wi’ their parasol points. Losh, but it’s wonnerfu’ hoo a wumman kens whaur a parasol point hurts maist. It’s a blessed thing for me they didna think tae use hatpins.”

He was far too sore to try any more work of reformation in that town, and as he went upon his quest for someone or something to save he took good care to give the suffragettes a wide berth. A woman only had to open an umbrella on the footpath within a dozen yards of him to send him scurrying across the road like a shying horse. But he had a good grip upon his nerves again by the time he reached Glasgow.

The sight that met his eyes when he first arrived filled his zealous soul with enthusiasm. It was a holiday night, and every street was thronged. All the drinking places were open and doing a roaring trade, more especially in the slums, where poverty tried to drown care with many drams. Perhaps there is no other place in the world where it is so hard to get good Scotch whisky as in Scotland. They were certainly not getting good liquor in those Glasgow slums. Girls, who had no business to be abroad at their tender age, were hobnobbing with men, and drinking openly and unashamed amid talk that would shift a door-knob.

As the reformer strode from one scene to another his soul grew big within him. Here was the work fit for a giant. No

puny weakling could tackle the sins of Glasgow.

That night, as he knelt by his truckle bed in the garret he had hired, he prayed with all his might, for the sin and shame of the great city roused all the reforming instincts in his soul. He did not know that there were few men in the city who needed the real grace of God more than he himself.

He was like thousands of other men who go about taking motes out of other people's eyes. He had lumps of gravel in his own, and the pitiful thing about it all was his utter unconsciousness of the fact. He was self-satisfied, self-righteous and self-assertive, as so many preachers are. Had he died that night he would surely have found the pearly gates closed, and his soul would have been sent in by the back way.

"Lord," he cried, "gie this sinfu' city ower tae me. Gie me a giant's strength. Gie me a granite will. Let me reform the drunkards an' drive the hosts o' the dochters o' the scarlet wumman frae the streets. Thy Church is deid, or it surely sleepeth in Glesca, Lord, for A hae seen fat kirkmen dressed in the best broadcloth, lollin' back in carriages, whilst starvin', ragged sinners slunk along the causeway. Ye wouldna hae permitted that, Lord, in the days when ye swept the hypocrites from the streets o' auld Jerusalem, an' these fat, smug, weel-groomed kirkmen are bringin' Thy great name intae contempt. It is no' the Jews wha are crucifyin' Thee the day, Lord, 'tis the kirkmen, wha get a lazy living by professin' Thy name an' faith whilst they dae nane o' Thy guid work amang the puir, the sinfu' an' the wretched. Gie me grace tae smite them, Lord; smite them hip an' thigh, for as ma soul liveth they are Thy greatest enemies in this city the nicht. A'll pu' them doon frae their high places, A'll abash

their pride; A'll mak' their fat lugs tingle with shame. An' noo for ma carnal works, O Lord. Ye ken I dinna care for the pomps an' vanities o' the warl, but I'm no dacent in my attire. A reformer canna stan' wi' his back to the wa' an' pit poower, an' fire, an' pathos, an' supplication intae a discoorse, an' stir the he'rts o' a' people, an' I canna stan' awa' frae the wa' because A'm maist fa'in' through ma breeks. Gie me wark in the mornin', guid, hard, honest wark, that I may earn siller to buy claes. A dinna ask for manna frae heaven, only wark, hard wark, wi' guid siller attached to it when Setturday nicht comes roon'. Gie me a fair master wha'll no' expeck mair than a fair day's wark for a fair day's pey; no' a nigger-drivin', blood-suckin' son o' Satan, wha wants mair for saxpence than anither yin wants for hauf a dollar. An' noo A'll sleep, for weel A ken ye hae ca'ed me tae my ain place. The grain is ripe, an' Thy servant's han's itch tae grip the sickle."

Even in his sleep he whispered, "It'll be a gran' harvest; a gran' harvest. The Lord kenned weel what He wis aboot when He guided ma feet here. It's a mon's job, an' A'm a mon."

Early in the morning he was up and about seeking work, for he never shirked his daily toil. Some inner instinct told him that the man who was willing to work, and work hard, was the only really independent man in the universe.

He very nearly obtained work from a large grain merchant, a man reputed to be a pillar of the Church, a most pious person, who had risen from a very humble position partly because he never missed a service on Sunday, wet or dry, and when there never missed crying loudly, "Amen" and "Lord, pardon me a sinner," just a few seconds after everyone else, a

habit which drew the eyes of the whole congregation upon him and acted as a splendid business advertisement.

To this person went the reformer, seeking honest toil. The pillar of the Church offered him a shilling a day less than the current wage because M‘Glusky had told him that he had not the price of a breakfast. Then he pointed to some framed Scripture texts hanging on the wall. “Read those slowly and solemnly, man,” said the Church “pillar.”

M‘Glusky read:

“Thou shalt not swear.” “Thou shalt not steal.” “Whatever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might.”

“What do you think of those beautiful words, my man?” queried the “pillar.”

“They’re simply gran’,” answered the reformer, “gran’ auld words.”

“They are the mottoes of my lifetime,” murmured the “pillar,” clasping his hands on his stomach. “They are my guiding stars.”

Something in the manner of the man roused M‘Glusky’s gorge. He looked at this person who talked Scripture and offered him less than the current wage.

“There’s twa mair texts ye micht weel pit up there on yon wa’, ma buckie.”

The merchant bounded out of his seat at being addressed as “ma buckie.”

“Twa mair texts ye flint-skinnin’ robber o’ the puir. Ane is, ‘Muzzle no’ the ox that treadeth oot the corn,’ an’ anither is, ‘Gie guid measure heaped up an’ rinnin’ ower.’ Ye hae never dune sic a thing in yer business life. Ye’re no’ a Christian mon, though ye’re as fu’ o’ Bible texts as hell is o’ lawyers

an' publishers. Ye're a sign-post on the high road tae the deil, covered ower wi' a thin coat o' gospel paint. When A dee A'll rise up in judgment against ye for offerin' me a shillin' a day less than ma due, ye robber o' the helpless. A wud cloot ye in the pit o' the wammale if A didna hae ower muckle respect for ma han' tae soil it wi' sich trash."

He went upon his way in great wrath.

"It is fu' time a new prophet cam' intae the warl'," he mused, "for the hypocrites wha profess releegion an' oppress the puir are wolves in sheep's clothin'. They soil the gran' auld faith. Losh, but A'm thinkin' there'll be mair sae-ca'd saints roastin' in the next warl' than open sinners."

He got work that afternoon in a boiler factory as a rivetter's striker, and went his way rejoicing. The work was hard, the pay poor, but he did not mind that, because he was such a thrifty soul. He could save money out of the wages that would starve most young men.

One evening he went in search of new lodgings. By this time he had purchased himself some decent clothing and looked quite respectable. He was hard to please. He wanted to live with a respectable family, and he wanted his living at the lowest possible cost.

"A want godliness, cleanliness and cheapness," he averred, an' he wanted a lot of these things for his money.

At last he found what he desired. An old pastor, living in a very humble tenement, was willing to take him in.

"We cannot feed you very well for the money you offer, young man," said the pastor.

"A ken that fine," was the reply, "but A'm no' a glutton, no' a wine-bibber, an' A think aucht shillin's a week for

board an' lodgin' is as much as a plain mon oucht tae waste on his carnal wants. It's a powerfu' lot o' siller, ye ken. A dinna want tae mak' a god o' ma belly. Just a platter fu' o' guid parritch wi' saut in it three times a day, an' a hauf o' a nice saut red herrin' on Sundays an' on Christmas day, for a feast, wi' fresh watter tae wash it doon, 'll dae for Margaret M'Glusky's son."

So the preliminaries being fixed up to the satisfaction of all parties, the reformer at once commenced to make himself at home.

The pastor was a sweet, gentle old soul, brimming over with love and goodwill for everything that lived. He had learned the lesson the great Nazarene had died to teach, and had graven it upon his heart. Love for everything made by the Creator was his creed, and this was a new doctrine, concerning which M'Glusky knew next to nothing.

At first he felt inclined to despise the old man, judging him to be a weakling, but by degrees the goodness and simplicity of the old man grew upon him and took hold of his heart-strings, and he found the greatest pleasure of his life in sitting with him of an evening after a hard day's work to "hae a crack," as he himself expressed it.

The pastor's daughter, Jean, was like her father in many things; like him in his simple piety and sweetness of disposition. She was not what folks call pretty, neither was she bonnie, but she was winsome, a dainty little flower of womanhood, almost too good for any man alive. She and her father had one great joy in common; they were both musicians. The pastor played the violin, and his daughter played the harp, a treasure that had come down to her from

her mother's mother, the one remaining relic of former splendour.

Sitting together of an evening they would play old-world melodies, and the girl would sing, and, at last, much to his own astonishment, M'Glusky found himself joining in this innocent amusement. If he had only the sense to know it he was being favoured by the gods beyond the lot of most men.

At times he would send the colour rushing into Jean's face by his fiercely outspoken denunciation of "the scarlet wimmen o' Glesca." And at such periods the lass would slip quietly away and leave the two men to talk; and yet it so happened that she knew a million times more than the cantankerous young enthusiast concerning the scarlet woman, for she had knelt by the bedside of many a dying sinner and helped to make the last pathway smooth.

Young as she was, Jean M'Intosh was a real power for good, and had far more real influence with the waifs and strays of the slums than M'Glusky was likely to have for a long time to come. She helped the fallen out of the sweet humility of her nature. He, too, wanted to help, but his helpfulness was prompted more by spiritual pride than anything else.

In those early days he did not take very much notice of Jean; she was "only a wumman" in his eyes, and he considered them mere thorns in the flesh, to be borne with patience and resignation, but still thorns.

Whilst he was learning his way about Glasgow he met with a surprise that rather annoyed him. He was preaching one Sunday afternoon at a street corner, and, as usual with him, there was far more brimstone than honey in his crude sermon.

Looking beyond his little circle of listeners he beheld an elderly man and a young woman. The face of the man attracted him, it was so sanctimonious. That face seemed to be saying eternally to all the world, “Behold, what a good man I am. If there were a few more like me alive, this earth would be a Paradise.”

M‘Glusky knitted his heavy brow and frowned on the owner of that sanctified signboard.

“There be some amang ye wha are puffed up wi’ pride, an’ think they’re the saut o’ the earth, but efter judgment the deil wull iron oot a lot o’ the self-satisfied creases wi’ hot irons, for pride o’ soul is mortal sin.”

He was proceeding in this strain, and looking straight into the old listener’s face, when the girl by the man’s side laughed outright. He dropped his gaze and saw Elise Hillberg shaking with merriment.

# CHAPTER VIII

## A WINSOME WOMAN

ELISE beckoned to M'Glusky, and he went towards her slowly, and as he did so the memory of the scornful look she had given him the last time he had gazed upon her flashed into his memory and made his blood tingle. The whole scene came back to him; the ring of colliers around the two dogs who were bent upon mangling each other; the old man in the carriage, with the look of fierce scorn upon his grey face, and the lass who then looked so contemptuous and disdainful. He knew well that she had considered him a coward because he had not struck back when the collier had struck and kicked him. He had read it in her face as plainly as if she had told him so in words, and now she was beckoning to him to approach her, her face all wreathed in smiles.

"A dinna wunner it was the wumman the serpent went tae in the garden o' Eden," he muttered to himself.

Elise held out her hand with a frank graciousness that would have won any other young man upon the spot, but the "reformer" was not then as other men are.

"Aren't you pleased to see me?" the bonnie creature asked, as her dancing eyes took in every detail of his face and figure.

"A'm no' sure," he answered gravely, for it was part and parcel of his Spartan creed that conventional lying was as bad as any other class of lying, and therefore he would not tell the maid he was pleased unless he was quite sure of the fact.

At this most embarrassing answer a merry laugh rippled from the maiden's red lips.

“Well, then, let me speak for myself,” said she. “I am more than pleased to see you. I did not know you were in Glasgow.”

“A didna ken ye were here either. A thocht ye were still wi’ John M‘Glusky at Lough Slough.”

“Oh,” she said, “I left your uncle a month ago to come here to see my other guardian.”

The “reformer” straightened his sinewy figure. “A hae nae uncle noo. Ma feyther’s brither cast me oot o’ his warks an’ bade me begone, an’ that day he dee’d. As far as A’m concerned masel’, A bear him nae ill-will. He’s jist deid tae me, that’s a’.”

The maid stamped her little well-shod foot on the side-walk.

“What a Pagan you are, Ian M‘Glusky; and you call yourself a Christian, and go about preaching to other people! You ought to be ashamed of yourself. Why, you don’t know what Christianity means.”

“A’ll no dispute wi’ ye on a maitter o’ releegion because ye’re a wumman, an’ it is written in the buik, ‘Let your wimmin keep silence in the kirks.’ ”

“This is not a church,” retorted Elise.

“No, A ken that as weel as yersel’, but the meanin’ o’ the command is the same.”

“Why don’t you write your uncle a line to let him know how you are?”

“If ma breast-bane was hammerin’ ma backbane, an’ A was deein’ o’ hunger, A wudna dae that. A bear him nae ill-will, but A owe him nae duty. He gied me the scornfu’ word in ma teeth, in front o’ his men, an’ bade me tak’ masel’ off.

If John M‘Glusky’ll come tae me an’ unsay his words A’ll shak’ han’s an’ forgie him; A’ll say nae mair.”

“A grey-haired man to come to a young man like you to crave pardon for a few hasty words! Is that all your religion is worth, Ian M‘Glusky?” scoffed the maid.

“Grey hairs are honourable only when the heid that carries them is held high in honour’s path. John M‘Glusky dishonoured his grey hairs when he ca’ed me a cooard because A wudna fecht like a wild beastie on the Sawbath day.”

An irresistible laugh broke from the lips of Elise.

“May A ask hoo it is ye are screechin’ an’ gigglin’ like a steam-pipe crackit at the joints?” he asked severely. “It’s no seemly. A wud set a better example tae the fowk o’ Glesca than ye are daein’ the noo.”

“I was thinking,” replied the girl, between little bursts of merriment, “of the man who sat on the roof sharpening his scythe in the cold dawn.”

“It wisna ma fau’t that. The buckie climbed on tae his ain roof wi’ naething on but—”

This was materialism with a vengeance, and Elise hastened to stop further revelations by saying:

“That gentleman there is my other guardian; he lives in Glasgow, and according to the terms of my father’s will I have to spend a certain time every year with him. He is said to be the most pious man in Scotland.”

“A dinna like the look o’ his lug. His face seems tae be tellin’ a’ monkind that he is ower guid for this sinful warl’. A wudna trust him in a maitter o’ business as far as A cud throw a feather against a gale o’ win’.”

Elise looked shocked.

"Oh, dear, what a person you are to sit in judgment on your fellow-man. Why, he is one of the very richest manufacturers in Scotland."

"That disna say he isna ane o' the biggest rascals as weel. A'm beginnin' to hae ma doots concernin' verra rich Christians. A canna see hoo a verra rich Christian can reconcile his wealth wi' the teaching o' the buik. Is it no' written, 'Let him that hath twa coats gie ane tae the puir'? An' yon mon has gotten mony coats, an' siller tae buy mony mair, an' there are thousands o' little anes in Glesca wi' michty little atween the win' o' winter an' their nakedness. It's a' verra weel for men wha dinna profess tae be Christians tae become wealthy, but, lassie, for ma soul's sake A canna mak' the teachin's o' the Maister fit in wi' the possession o' millions. A'll tell ye what it is, lass," he continued in his fierce, dogmatic way, "either the voice o' the Bible isna the voice o' God Almichty, an' oor religion is a mockery an' a lee, or else maist o' the verra wealthy Christians are gaun tae get mair warmth than chills in the next warl'."

The girl shifted uneasily. She did not want to start a controversy of that kind just then.

"Let me introduce you to my guardian," said she.

"Him wi' the face?" demanded M'Glusky.

"Well," laughed the lass, "I shouldn't care to have a guardian who hadn't got a face."

"A dinna like the wey he draws doon the corners o' his mooth, an' A dinna like the wey he turns up his een, an' the wey he strokes his auld pow, as if he wis the only mon worth savin' in a' Glesca. It mak's me feel sick at ma wammale. Judas sold his Maister for thirty pieces o' siller. Yon buckie

wud sell his ain soul an' the souls o' a' the sinners in Scotland for hauf that amount, or A'm a leear an' no mon. A wudna trust him wi' the brine oot o' a barrel o' saut herrin'."

"Thousands of other people have the utmost faith in him, Ian."

"There are thoosan's o' fules born every day, lassie," was the grim retort. "Na, na, A'll no let you introduce me tae that mon. If ye did A wud hae to shake han's wi' him, an' A'm thinkin' A wudna like tae eat victuals oot o' the same han' for a lang, lang time tae come. The mon's no clean, lassie; he has the hall-mark o' the deil on him, an' A'm thinkin' it'll no' come oot until his Maister burns it oot. So A'll leave ye. Ye ken A hae ma Maister's wark tae dae on the seventh day, an' the rest o' the week A hae to punch iron wi' an aucht-pun' hammer for ten hoors each day to earn ma livin'."

"Won't you give me your address, Ian? I should like to know where you are staying."

"A'll just think ower it an' pray for guidance. Ye ken weel A'm afeerd o' wimmin. They're a sair thorn in the flesh for men fowk. A'll ask for licht on the maitter, an' A'll let ye ken."

At first the maid was very angry, then the humorous side of the affair struck her, and she smiled.

"How will you communicate with me? You do not know my address, and you have not asked me for it."

"A dinna need tae," he answered. "If it seems guid that we should meet, ye may be sure we wull."

Of a truth the man had in him the faith that moveth mountains. So they parted, and if M'Glusky could have heard the opinion concerning himself expressed by Elise's guardian

he would not have needed to shave for a week; it would have stopped the growth of his whiskers.

The pair did not meet again for some time, but a good and gentle woman's refining influence was at work on M'Glusky's half-barbaric nature.

The old pastor was feeling the severity of the weather just then, and could not go abroad at night, and his daughter Jean was too good a woman, and too sound a Christian, to neglect her home duties for the welfare of others. Well she knew that during her father's indisposition home was her place. She had to cheer him with music and song, and make his declining years as peaceful, as happy, and as comfortable as circumstances would permit. She was not one of those sham Christian women who leave a cold hearth or a cheerless home for husband or father in order to air themselves in the lime-light of mission work. She made her humble home a veritable Paradise for the two men whom God had given into her hands. Poverty was always at her elbow, but it was cheerful poverty, bravely borne without any martyr's sighs and moans. Of an evening when Ian had washed himself and changed his work garments for clean things, and had had his tea, she would take her harp and sit watching the two strangely-contrasting men. If they were inclined to talk she just sat mute and listened, but if her father reached out his withered hand for his well-coloured clay pipe and tobacco jar, then she would draw the harp to her and let her fingers sweep caressingly over the chords; and when she saw M'Glusky take the patriarch's pipe and fill it, and then lift a glowing ember from the fireplace and crown the bowl, she would give him a quick, grateful little smile, which he had not the wit to treasure, though a time was coming when the memory of that

winsome face and happy smile was to haunt him; but his oak was still in the acorn, and he had no more knowledge of a good woman's worth than a sheep-dog has concerning the price of wool.

When Jean saw the blue wreaths circling around her father's pale face she would sing, and the pastor would beat time in a mechanical sort of way with one slippered foot crossed over the knee of the other leg. Every hour he spent in that quiet haven of refuge made M'Glusky a better man, though he did not know it at the time. And when the embers burnt low in the little old-fashioned grate, and the night was wearing away, the patriarch would lay aside his pipe, Jean would put the harp away and put the old man's Bible and spectacles in his feeble hands, and the evening would close with worship.

There was no cant, no thanking God for being better than other men. Just a few simple words of grateful thanks for the mercies of the day, and a petition humbly sped for divine help for the morrow, and then peace, perfect peace, through the still watches of the night.

In turn Jean learnt to listen for the swift, strong step of the young man on the stairs at the close of the day, and he seldom lifted the latch without finding her waiting to welcome him from his hard day's toil with a smile that most men would have considered a benediction. Her woman's instincts had taught her by this time that the man was genuine; that under all the base metal of religious egoism which covered him, layer upon layer, lay a mine of real gold. She saw his faults almost as a mother, not over doting but truly loving, sees the faults in a growing boy, and at times her heart ached for him, for some instinct within her warned her that sooner or later he

would have to pass through much suffering and drink the cup of humiliation to the very dregs.

She did not talk much on religious topics. Her Christianity was of the kind which shows itself in doing all things well, little or great; and her little world was the brighter and better for every hour she lived.

Sometimes M'Glusky would arrive home full of ill-suppressed religious fury over some scandalous outburst of evil in the city. At such times he would cry to the patriarch:

"A canna think what the Almichty is daein tae permit sic foulness tae gang unpunished. A wudna be content wi' exhortin' sic sinners. A wud scourge them wi' whips made o' brambles. Kindness an' mercy is wasted on sic fowk. It is the strong airm bared tae the muscle that is wanted. It is verra weel tae talk tae sic fowk o' the mercy o' the Lord, but they maun be made to tremble at the wrath tae come."

Then he would go forth into the night and lift up his voice in the slums and give the sinners strong meat. He found many names for the sinners which no person moving in polite society would use even towards a horse, and they in their turn found many names for him which a costermonger would not put on a dog collar.

There was one hotel in a slum street which most particularly roused his ire, because certain inducements were used to draw young people of both sexes there. It was a shameful hostel, a disgrace to any city and any government in the world. The licence of this place should have been cancelled years before the reformer went to Glasgow, but it was the property of a very important personage, a man who ranked high in the world, and he drew a big rental from it year by year. So the police winked at it and let it alone.

No respectable person ever mentioned the name of this hotel; it was too infamous. Lads and girls were decoyed there, and few who ever entered its doors came away without being defiled. It was the worst cesspool of viciousness in Scotland.

One evening M‘Glusky came home from work—his brows were knitted, his jaws clenched, and the sparkle in his eyes was as the light of battle. Jean knew the signs by this time and said nothing. He ate his meal in grim silence; then taking his hat down he said:

“Dinna wait up for me the nicht. A’m no certain A’ll be hame until the morn.”

He strode out, and the sound of his footsteps rang on the stairs like the foot strokes of a warrior going into battle.

“Some poor sinner is going to hear a lot about hell-fire and everlasting punishment, I fear,” said the patriarch, with a sad smile. “He is more in earnest than ever to-night, my child, and our young friend is usually very, very earnest. I wish he would learn the gracious and kindly side of religion. He is too fierce, too vengeful not to do much harm even whilst he is trying to do good with all his might.”

M‘Glusky did not seem to walk through the crowds—he plunged through them—and many a man whom he brushed brusquely aside threw a curse after his retreating figure.

Out of the poor quarters of the city he went, on into the best part of Glasgow. He knew where he was going and asked no man to direct him.

Pausing a moment in front of a fine mansion he cast his eyes upward.

“Gie me a tongue o’ fire. Let me speak the nicht as men spoke on the day o’ Pentecost,” he muttered.

Anyone who knew him and his undisciplined temper would have told him that he should have prayed for a little patience, for a softer edge to his tongue. He had no need to pray for fiery speech; he had too much of that at his command as it was.

He rang the bell and a servant in plain livery answered the ring.

“Tell your maister a mon maun see him on verra important business.”

The flunkey looked over the head of the intruder with that peculiarly exasperating, vacant kind of stare which “Jeames” knows how to use all the world over. He recognised a workman, a common person who toiled for a living, and “Jeames” did not like such people. “Jeames” never does.

“The tradesman’s entrance,” he remarked loftily, speaking as though to some person on the roof. “The tradesman’s entrance is a few steps further along on the left.”

He was going to close the door. M‘Glusky just touched it with his shoulder; or at anyrate he said afterwards that he “just gave the door a wee bit shove.” Anyway it flew back on its hinges with such violence that “Jeames” sat down in the hall. He sat down on the floor so hard that the shock of his down-sitting almost caused another person in livery to drop a very well-appointed tray at the door of the library.

M‘Glusky stood over the person on the floor and glowered down upon him.

“Burn yer gran’mither, ye pampered, ower-fed lady’s lap-dog. Wud ye bang a door in the face o’ a Hielanmon? A ken

mony a mon raised whaur A was raised wha wud pu' yer lugs ower the hair on the tap o' yer heid if ye dared offer sic an insult to them. Ye may thank yer Maker that A'm no' ane o' the hot-bluids frae oor Hielans, but a saft-spoken, saft-dealin' mon."

"Jeames" did not rise. He crawfished away on his hunkers until a goodly distance lay between him and the soft-dealing visitor. He had heard something of Highland pride, and knew that it was safer to poke gunpowder with a lighted fire-stick than to argue with an insulted member of the hill clans.

"A cam' tae see yer maister. Is he in there?" said M'Glusky, pointing to the doorway into which the servant with the tray had disappeared.

"Jeames" nodded an affirmative.

"Verra weel, A'll gang tae him."

The man made a movement as if he would prevent the visitor from intruding, but rising upon his toes, and forcing his lean face far forward, M'Glusky advanced upon him.

"Mon," he whispered, "mon, dinna tempt Providence mair this nicht, for ma bluid is growin' hot within me. A wudna wish tae dae violence tae ony wumman's son, but as ma soul liveth, if ye try tae stop me A'll pit ma richt han' unner ye an' ma left han' on tap o' ye an' squeeze ye thegither like a German concertina."

"Jeames" gasped and backed away until he stood against the wall with his hands flattened down by his sides, palm inwards, as if he wanted to stick to the wall-paper and add to the pattern.

Any other man in the universe but M'Glusky would have laughed, but he had no more humour in his composition than

a dumpling.

Knocking at the library door he entered without further ceremony and stood unabashed in the presence of a prince of the Church, a man whose power was practically unlimited in matters clerical.

It was an austere, haughty face that met his gaze. Handsome, clean-shaven, cultured, but lacking in human sympathy.

"Who are you, sir, to force your way in here unbidden?" The voice was rich and musical, but it lacked that indefinable quality which reaches the heart. The prince of the Church could touch men's intellects with unfailing skill, but could never reach a human soul.

M'Glusky, standing in front of him, his tweed cap in his hands, looked back into the hard eyes and did not flinch.

"A'm a servant o' the Maister ye dishonour," he replied harshly. "An' a hae cam' tae tell ye tae yer face that ye disgrace Him wha's wages ye tak', wha's livery ye wear."

The great Churchman rose from his chair, and resting one hand upon the table pointed with silent scorn to the door. The red glow from the fire fell upon the pair, and as they stood thus, with the flickering shadows coming and going swiftly, they made a marvellous picture, an aristocrat and a plebeian of the Church of God; one so rugged and strong, the other so æsthetic and refined.

"Ye'll no wither me wi' yer silent scorn," growled M'Glusky, and his voice became low and deep. It seemed to boom out from his chest in the stillness of that almost regal room. The Churchman did not speak or move; not so much as an eyelid quivered.

His finger still pointed to the door. Throwing one foot forward, like a boxer balancing himself to strike, the reformer spoke again.

"Fause tae yer cloth! Fause tae humanity! Fause tae yer God! A wunner He disna blight ye whaur ye stan' an' leave ye petrified, wi' yer scornful een fixed for ever an' aye, wi' yer finger pointin', a guide-post tae the pit, whaur ye an' a' lik' ye are boun' for."

No word came from that silent figure standing near the fire, but the beautifully-chiselled lips curled scornfully.

M'Glusky let his eyes roam around the splendid equipments of the room. He glanced at the rare books, some of which were worth their weight in gold, and he laughed the jeering laugh, low and mocking, which hurts like a blow. He swept his hand around the room with a splendid gesture.

"For this, for gee-gaws like this, ye hae bartered yer soul."

He dropped his voice to a whisper. "Mon, if A had the poower A wad spike ye tae the floor, jist as ye stan' the noo, an' lock yer door an' lose the key, an' so leave ye till the last trump soonded. A wud like the Maister tae sit in judgment on ye here, surrounded as ye are wi' the price o' yer apostasy. Wi' these gee-gaws yer e'en hae been closed tae the sins o' them what sit in high places. These are the wages ye hae gotten for sittin' still while lads an' lassies are being lured tae their ruin. Ye ken weel what A mean. Ten times A hae written tae ye concernin' the drinkin' den belongin' tae yer own great kinsman. Ye ken as weel as A dae masel' what gangs on there nicht after nicht, an' ye winna lift han' or voice tae stop it. If ye wud pit yer hat on the noo, an' walk intae that den o' evil, an' in yer Maister's name bid the deil wha keeps it cease his trade, richt weel ye ken that the polis wud close it within an

oor, close it never tae open again. Ye hae the poower, ye hae the charter frae the Almichty tae dae it. Ye wud lose some rich freen's but ye wud mak' a Freen michty to save. Wull ye dae it?"

He paused, waiting a reply. Not a word came, only the sneer deepened round the handsome mouth, and the long, white, tapering finger pointed more imperiously than ever to the door.

A wild gust of rage swept over M'Glusky and took possession of him. For a moment he was like one of the desert dervishes, a wild, irresponsible thing.

Leaping to the very feet of the great Churchman he drew back his brawny right arm to strike him to the floor.

"Ye mockin' deil, ye stan' there wi' yer stony face set like flint. A'll strike ye deid an' sen' yer sinful soul tae judgment."

The Churchman never flinched; the mockery on his face grew more vivid, more intense. In physical strength he was no more a match for the figure in front of him than a lass would have been. He was within the very shadow of death at that moment, for in his frenzy M'Glusky could and would have killed him for his silent scorn.

In the street outside a blind girl was singing, for the sake of alms:

"Abide with me, fast falls the eventide."

The sweet voice carried the words high and clear above the humming of the street traffic. They came to M'Glusky's ear at a moment when red lights were flashing before his eyes and the muscles of his right arm were vibrating like a taut

steel cable. Only the night before Jean had sung those words, accompanying them on the harp. Like a vision that scene rose before him: the old pastor with his white hair drifting on to his neck, his eyes closed, his pipe in his mouth, his thin, worn hands clasped in front of him; the lassie sitting at her father's feet on a low stool, her shapely hands running over the chords of the harp, her winsome face turned up so that the firelight fell upon it. He had noted how her round white throat filled as she sang, and how her full bosom rose and fell. He had not known at the time that he had noticed these things, because he had not an atom of woman consciousness in his nature. All that had to come later.

Now, as the words of the dear old hymn floated up to him, the memory of that other singer and all the singer's surroundings floated in upon him, and all his madness fell away from him on the instant. He drew back, and the sweat broke out on his face like early morning dew.

"God forgi'e me," he muttered hoarsely. "God forgi'e me. A wis near stainin' the name o' M'Glusky beyond a' redemption. If A had smitten ye A wud hae been guilty o' a shamefu' deed. Ye're no' fit for a mon to smite. A'll leave ye tae the Almichty. He is the only ane that can smite ye an' no' be defiled. A'll no' say anither harsh word in yer presence, no' ane, though A hae seen better material than ye are made o' poured doon a drain."

He turned on his heel and left the house, but as he passed the vile haunt on his way home he saw the publican standing at a side-door, a big, portly, well-dressed man in the prime of life.

M'Glusky paused.

“A wunner,” he mused, “A wunner if a word drapped gently in yon mon’s ear wud stir his conscience. Ma certie, A’ve a min’ tae try. Yon mon must hae had a mither aince, an’ his soul may no’ be deid; maybe it’s only sleepin’.”

He stood in the garish gaslight musing, trying to think of something nice and gentle to say to the sinner, and as he stood there he saw girls, slender slips of girls, push past the fine, portly man into the sink beyond. He saw the folding doors swing back noiselessly, and now and again caught a glimpse of the hell beyond, and it made his big heart bleed to think that vice and money could so easily obtain the patronage and protection of law and so-called pious respectability.

“A hae had enough o’ wrath for wan nicht,” he mused; “A cam’ near slayin’ a mon in hot anger. A’m feered there’s jist a wee drap o’ the auld Adam in the bluid o’ the M‘Gluskys.”

The big, fine man at the door thrust both his hands into his breeches pocket up to the wrists and yawned.

“A’ll gang tae him the noo an’ speak him fair an’ saft. Maybe the guid seed may tak’ root an’ grow. Mon planteth an’ the Almichty watereth. Maybe a bit o’ gentleness’ll touch his he’rt.”

He crept silently up to the publican, unobserved by him, and putting his lips to the thick, fleshy ear that was nearest to him he whispered:

“Mon, ye’re a dom’d soul; dae ye ken that?”

If a motor-car had burst out of the bar and struck the publican he could not have leapt aside more quickly.

When he turned round M‘Glusky was standing in the doorway wagging an admonishing finger at him. The

publican did not appreciate M‘Glusky’s gentleness. He was upset; he was angry; and in consequence he made the mistake of his lifetime. In ordinary circumstances he would have called a policeman. This time he took the law into his own hands.

Rushing at M‘Glusky he struck him a blow that sent the reformer reeling back against the swing doors. They opened and deposited him headlong amongst the folks who were drinking.

As M‘Glusky fell on the floor the publican kicked him savagely in the ribs, and one or two others standing near did the same. Then up from the floor leapt a wild creature, not only a reformer now, but a Highlander outraged and hurt.

That den had known many wild scenes, but never one like that which followed.

M‘Glusky took no heed of anyone but the landlord. On him he rained blows thick and fast as winter’s sleet, wind-driven, falls on forest pines. The man was gritty and game enough, but his mode of life made him short of wind, and so did the awful blows that fell upon his ribs. Just as he smote the iron with the eight-pound hammer day by day at his work, so M‘Glusky smote his man. The others showered blows upon him, but he turned neither to the right hand nor to the left. He hit his man under the heart and flung a Scripture text in his face: “Wae tae them that set a snare for the feet o’ the innocent.”

Then his left hand went with mighty power into the publican’s stomach.

“The evil mon’ll be cut doon like grass in the fields.” His right fist nearly carried away the left ear of the Boniface.

“He that diggeth a pit for his nee’bor’ll fa’ intae it.”

He swung both his arms and landed one on top of the head, one under the chin.

“The wicked’ll ken nae rest. He’ll no’ sit doon nor stan’ up.”

He crowded the fellow against the wall and pounded him with sledge-hammer blows.

“The Lord’ll flay the wicked mon like flax.”

By this time the fellow was an awful sight. All the fight was out of him; he fell to the floor and lay there.

The crowd fell upon M‘Glusky with pewter-pots and any other little item of furniture that was handy, and then he gave them also of his best. The police rushed in at last and cleared the den.

M‘Glusky was a woful sight, but his soul was full of joy.

“The Lord wis ma shield an’ buckle,” he whispered. “But what’s this I hae in ma hand? A dinna ken hoo it cam’ there; it maun hae come in the heat o’ battle.”

He walked to a street lamp and examined his trophy.

“Losh!” he said, “if it’s no a man’s ear. A thocht A heerd someane screech. Weel, it’s no mine. Maybe he’ll miss it by-an’-by an’ seek it. A dinna want anither mon’s property; A’ll jist drap it here.”

# CHAPTER IX

## AFTER THE BATTLE

It was very late when M‘Glusky, with the tread of a warrior returning from victory, sprang up the stairs that led to his lodgings, but late as it was Jean and her father were waiting up for him.

When the patriarch saw the grisly figure covered with the stains of battle he cried out in alarm, asking if M‘Glusky had been in a railway accident.

“A’m a’ richt,” was the cheery answer. “Ye maunna fash yersel’ aboot me. A hae been pluckin’ a few thustles oot o’ ma Feyther’s vin’yard, that’s a’.”

He did not tell them that he had plucked a sinner’s ear off also, but M‘Glusky was always modest in regard to his own exploits.

Jean looked at him with wonder-laden eyes. Someone had cut a dent in his forehead, just above the right eyebrow, with the edge of a pewter-pot, and thick blood welled slowly out of the ugly wound, and running into the eyebrow clung there a little while, and then in big beads dropped slowly on to his half-naked chest. All the front had been torn out of his shirt. His collar was gone, his waistcoat was a ruin.

The lass could see the big blue veins that hard toil had caused to rise to the surface like bits of twisted cord. She could see the mighty chest, so lean and muscular, and she noted the wild light in his eyes, and the brute power of the man appealed to her. Indeed the light in her eyes was more the light of admiration than fear as she measured his untamed strength with her gaze.

Her father was more terrified than the maid. The tremendous physical force of the creature in front of him made him tremble. He had not the opposite sex feeling, which gives a woman courage in the presence of brute force.

"Sit down, man, and tell us of the happenings of this night. I fear me you have done someone an injury," cried the pastor, in agitated tones.

"A dinna think sae," whispered M'Glusky, meditatively. "A may hae bent some o' the sinners, but A dinna think A hae broken them—no permanently," he added as an afterthought.

The pastor looked at the gaping, dripping wound above the speaker's eyebrow and shuddered. A man who could make light of a wound like that on his own person was not likely to be over-indulgent to his foes in the heat of battle, and violence was a thing that sickened the good man's very soul.

Jean followed her father's gaze and began talking at once of bandages and hot water for the unsightly gash.

"Dinna fash yersel' ower sic a scratch," muttered the Scot, as he strode across the room to where a small mirror hung from the white-washed wall.

For a moment or two he gazed in the glass, then, taking the lips of the wound between his finger and thumb, he said to Jean:

"Maybe it'll be as weel tae tak' some care o't efter a'."

"Yes, yes," she cried breathlessly, "let me slip out and bring Dr Gamble. He lives near by and would attend to the wound properly."

M'Glusky stared very hard at her.

“A didna think ye were daft, lassie,” he said slowly. “What wud A want wi’ a doctor? Dae ye ken he wudna come to me at this time o’ nicht unner a poower o’ siller? He wud be asking the maitter o’ ninepence, or maybe a whole shillin’, tae dae up this thing for me, an’ A hae tae wark ower hard for ma gear tae pairt wi’ it sae recklessly. If ye hae ane or twa pins handy ye can pin up ma woun’ an’ it’ll sune heal. A’m nice an’ healthy; there’s nae whusky microbes in ma bluid tae keep ma flesh frae knittin’ thegither again.”

Jean gave a little gasp of horror. He saw the shudder that ran through her slender form at the thought of pinning up his wound.

“Weel, weel,” cried he, “wimmen are fu’ o’ whimsies. If ye dinna like tae pin me thegither, maybe ye wud thread a darnin’ needle an’ pit a few stitches in for me. A saw ma mither dae as much for ma feyther wan day when the colt bolted wi’ the ploo an’ ma feyther got tangled up wi’ it somehoo, an’ the edge o’ the ploo made a furrow in the auld mon’s thigh sae big ye cud hae hid yer han’ in it a’most. Ma mither didna want tae waste siller, A can tell ye. ‘Rin, Ian,’ said she tae me, ‘rin an’ git the packin’ needle frae ma wark-box, an’ a yank o’ strong thread, an’ dinna look sae white aboot the gills or A’ll skelp ye wi’ ma shoon the noo.’ Then she sat on ma feyther’s leg tae keep him frae kickin’, an’ he filled his mooth wi’ a clod o’ dirt tae keep himsel’ frae usin’ ungodly language; an’ ma mither sewed up the hole in ma feyther’s leg as neatly as if she were puttin’ a new patch in his auld breeks, an’ A on’y heard ma feyther say ‘Dom it a’’ aince, an’ that was when ma mither drapped the thimble intae the woun’ an’ hookit it oot wi’ her thumb. She’s nae

weaklin', ma mither," he added, with just a faint touch of pride in his voice, "an' A'm no gaun tae shame ma mither."

Winsome Jean could not bring herself to emulate the deeds of the Spartan-like Scotswoman in the Highlands. She found some sticking-plaster in a box, and with this and some warm water and a nice piece of soft linen she dressed his wound, and then M'Glusky told of the doings of that night. He waxed wonderfully eloquent over his abortive interview with the prince of the Church.

"A think," he said solemnly, "A think yon mon has a deid soul inside his body. He may hae a' the learnin' o' the universities in his heid, but a wee bairn cud teach him mair about the truths of releegion than he has learnt up tae this day. A cudna move him. A cudna quicken his spirit. He jist stood there, pointin' me tae the door, like a graven image. Scorn, contempt an' a' uncharitableness was printed a' ower his white, han'some face. He belongs tae that section o' the kirk that stan's weel wi' the rich an' poowerfu' an' disna care for the sufferin's o' the puir."

He bent his head and remained silent for a time. Then, lifting his bruised face, he said solemnly:

"A fear the kirk has chosen tae gang wi' the fleshpots, an' cares no' whether the puir fowk gang tae the deil or no'. Some day the puir fowk'll turn awa' frae kirks a'thegither unless the pride o' the kirkmon is lowered. Hae ye noticed," he asked, leaning forward his hands upon his knees, "hae ye noticed hoo the big kirkmen an' the big beer brewers an' whusky distillers hobnob lug tae lug, though every mon o' ony unnerstan'in kens weel that it's the drink traffic in a' lan's that fills the hospitals and the gaols, the lunatic asylums an' the cemeteries? The puir bairns that are born intae the

warl' hivna a chance. Their mithers, livin' in the slums, drink tae droon their misery in the dark winter's days, an' A peety mair than A blame them, puir creetures; an' when their bairns are born they hae the taint o' the dram-shop in their bluid, an' they draw in mair o' it in the milk they suck frae their mither's breasts. The rent drawn frae the dram-shops gang intae the pockets o' men wha sit doon to dinner wi' princes o' the kirk nicht efter nicht, an' as ma soul liveth the kirkmen darena cut themsel's aff frae the rich mon. If they did they wad lose the loaves an' the fishes, an' it is the loaves an' the fishes they hanker efter, no' the souls o' men an' wimmen."

He rose, rugged and terrible, and stretched out his right hand, clenched in hot wrath.

"The kirkmon wha sits lug tae lug wi' the contaminators o' the puir an' wretched are stanein' the Maister this day. Ay, they are; burn their gran'mithers!"

He strode out of the room without another word, and Jean, a little later, passing his door, heard him praying for more power, more vigour, more fiery zeal, and she smiled as she tip-toed to her own cot, where she knelt to pray that the Lord would not deal too harshly with the fierce man when his hour of temptation and tribulation came.

And, though he knew it not, M'Glusky slept that night guarded by angels conjured to his side by a woman's love. Even in his sleep he was at war with the world, and fierce mutterings broke from him at intervals. But Jean, sleeping in the next room, had her winsome face pillowed upon her round white arm; a smile was on her lips though tears clung to the long lashes of her eyes. She was smiling in her dreams over his strength, his lion-like courage, his terrible

earnestness, and weeping over his self-righteousness. For she was a woman, not a saint.

The fame of M‘Glusky’s exploits on that night of the raid ran through the city like fire through a field of ripening grain. The publican did not prosecute the reformer, because he was afraid that should he do so some of his misdeeds might get into the newspapers and cause a hue-and-cry to be raised which would end in the closing of his establishment. For a while, whilst public attention was directed towards the den, he caused the place to be conducted on more decorous lines. He did not go to supervise the working of the establishment himself because he was laid aside in a private hospital for repairs.

M‘Glusky found out where he was, and straightway bombarded him with tracts, most of which had fearsome headlines relating to the future of sinners who died unrepentant, but the man refused to be saved. He told his nurse that if heaven were full of people like M‘Glusky he did not want to go there. He seemed, from his conversation, to imagine that it would not be a peaceful spot.

Then for a season quietness fell upon the reformer. He worked at the factory, and did his work so well that the foreman quoted him as a model man, because he was no shirker. It did not matter to him whether the “boss” was by or not, he toiled hard; and the swinging of the great hammer developed his thews until he was a wonderful physical specimen, lean, hard and muscular, full of spring as finely-tempered steel, yet of tremendous weight. His clean, temperate life kept the life-blood pure; the work made him a mass of muscle. When he walked he was a sight worth

looking at, for his feet left the ground with a snappy spring in spite of his splendid bulk.

One evening as he was swinging along on his homeward way he saw a well-appointed brougham, driven by a rather reckless coachman, dash round a corner at a pace far in excess of the regulations. An old woman of the working class was crossing the road at the time—a little, feeble, old soul, evidently of nervous temperament. When she saw the spirited horses in the brougham she made a feeble dash forward, then, altering her mind, hesitated, and tried to scramble back. The last move was fatal; the horses were right upon her, and a wild cry broke from many lips.

M‘Glusky had seen it all, and somehow he seemed to divine that there would be trouble. When the woman ran back he knew that she would be under the hoofs of the animals unless help came from somewhere. He did not shout as the other people did. A couple of great springs took him into the roadway, one arm went round the waist of the woman just as she was falling, his other hand grasped the reins where they crossed, knitting the pair of horses together. The next instant he had thrown all the might of his great bulk on the arm that held the horses, and under that sudden pressure the pair of brutes were hurled back upon their haunches, the curb chains cutting deeply into each under jaw. There was a wild spatter of hoofs clashing on the metal highway, the iron striking fire in sparks that looked vivid in the gloaming. There was a short, fierce struggle; the coachman, unseated by the sudden stoppage, toppled off his perch, fell on to the haunches of one of the animals and rolled into the roadway. The poor old woman fainted upon M‘Glusky’s arm and lay a dead weight for him to hold. One of the horses reared up and struck out

viciously, but the hoof did not strike the Scot. He bore the weight of his shoulders on to his forearm and forced the brute down by sheer strength and held both animals quivering and snorting with fear.

He would have made a fine picture for a sculptor as he stood there, and so thought the woman who sprang lightly from the brougham and came tripping towards him. Never before had M‘Glusky seen such a woman as this. Her hand held her skirts clear of the mire of the highway, and the action showed a wealth of billowy, snow-white lace, a pair of silk stockings, and the very daintiest pair of pretty high-heeled shoes that ever held a woman’s feet. He saw all that and very nearly let the horses go. Then he raised his eyes and looked upon a lovely, laughing face, framed in a mass of yellow hair—hair that twined and curled and twisted whithersoever it listed. He saw a pair of eyes that were full of mockery, of mirth, of defiance of the world, and a mouth like a crumpled moss-rose moist with mountain dew.

Someone took the old woman from his arm. An officious policeman, who had remained gasping on the pavement until now, stepped forward, and noticing M‘Glusky’s working clothes officiously shouldered him aside and took possession of the now tamed horses, for he scented a reward and did not intend the working lout to get it.

M‘Glusky let his hand drop from the reins and took no notice of the officer’s rudeness. He just gazed like a moon-struck person at the dainty creature in front of him. Then he took a sudden look at the sky.

“Why do you look up there?” asked a voice that seemed like music to his bewildered senses.

M‘Glusky found his tongue.

“A was lookin’ for the hole,” said he.

A quick peal of laughter parted the crumpled rosebud mouth.

“Looking up there for a hole? What hole?”

“A thocht heaven must hae crackit a wee bit tae let ye fa’ through,” he answered in his solemn way.

The “vision” took a daintier hold of her skirts, and dropping back a step bent her graceful body in a curtsey that few who visit the throne-room of kings could have equalled.

“That is the prettiest compliment I have ever had paid to me,” cried she, “and yet I am not new to compliments.”

M‘Glusky did not answer the smile.

“Compliments are lees,” he said gruffly, “an’ A’m no leear. A’ll wish ye guid e’en.”

She smiled at his rude way of speech and held him, in spite of himself, with her eyes.

“Tell me your name,” she whispered very softly, and as she spoke she came close to him, and the perfume from her hair entered his being, and for the first time in his life he felt the power of a woman.

“A’m no ashamed of ma name,” said he, “but A dinna ken for why ye want it.”

“Tell the lady your name, you fool, or I will want a word with you later,” growled the officious constable.

M‘Glusky flushed crimson. Turning his angry eyes upon the officer he muttered:

“Ye bletherin’ blue-bottle, if ye sae much as pit fingers on me A’ll drar yer tongue oot sae far ye’ll be able to tie it in a knot behin’ yer heid.”

The look that accompanied the words was so full of menace that the officer, who seemed to think that he could find a better use for his tongue, got quickly out of harm's way.

"Won't you tell me your name and address?" queried the sweet voice persistently.

M'Glusky looked at the speaker, and his mouth grew parched and feverish, yet he would not surrender.

"For why should A?" said he, gloomily. "A want nae alms; A'm no' a beggar, an' ye canna want to ken me for freen'ship."

"Why not?"

He looked at his questioner, looked pointedly at her rich, dainty clothes, then at his own work-stained garments. The look was very eloquent.

"You won't tell me?"

"No, A'll no."

"Very well; I will find out later. I must go now. Good-evening."

To M'Glusky's unutterable amazement she put out her pretty, slender hand, daintily gloved. He touched it as if he feared he might crush it, but the slender fingers twined round his own and sent a thrill running along his spine like the touch of an electric wire. He caught a glimpse of a roguish face, heard the sound of a rippling laugh, and the "vision" vanished into the brougham.

The coachman, who had been standing by with the reins in his hands, eyeing M'Glusky with anything but friendly glance, said something very rude to the reformer. He meant his speech, terse as it was, for the ears of the man alone, but

some of the crowd heard it and they hissed. The “vision” heard it, and put her head out of the brougham to catch the answer. There was none—no verbal reply. M‘Glusky caught the fellow by the neck and a part of his nether garments, and, without an effort, fairly flung him up into his seat.

A cheer from the crowd, and a smothered laugh from the “vision,” and the coachman set the horses in motion and they sped away.

Like a being dazed M‘Glusky stood on the pavement. The crowd, finding nothing further to interest them, moved off, and still the Scot stood there, until a feeble touch on his arm roused him. Looking round he saw the old woman whom he had saved. It was a good old face, lined with Time’s tracery. She thanked him for saving her in a thin, quavering voice, adding:

“I had a son like you once long ago, but he ’listed for a soldier and went away.”

“Yes, mither,” he replied simply. Then, seeing her about to depart, he took hold of her feeble arm and helped her across the busy street.

Again she thanked him. As he turned to leave her she touched his arm with timid fingers.

“That was a bad woman,” she said. “You are not bad; never speak to her again.”

M‘Glusky gazed at her in surprise.

“A bad wumman, mither; ye say she is a bad wumman! Dae ye ken her weel?”

“No,” answered the old dame, “I never saw her until this evening.”

“Hoo can ye ca’ her a bad wumman, then, if ye ken her nae mair than A dae masel’?”

“I am a woman, and a woman knows these things by instinct. She is bad to the bone.”

“Hoo can ye tell that?” demanded M‘Glusky, stubbornly. “Tell me hoo ye ken the evil frae the guid.”

“It was in her eyes when she looked at you; it was in her laugh when she made merry; it was in every movement of her body when you were near her. She is one of those women who soil men.”

M‘Glusky gripped hold of the old dame’s arm and bent his flushed face close down to the withered lips.

“Mither,” he said, in a voice that was half a growl, “mither, dae ye mean to tell me she is a dochter o’ the scarlet wumman? A’ll no’ believe it. She looked lik’ an angel tae me.”

“She may be what you say openly, laddie, but she is bad to the bone—bad to the bone. Men are such fools, they understand everything else in Nature, but a woman can blind them with a smile.”

M‘Glusky dropped the arm he held and pushed his way off amidst the crowd. And that night, for the first time in his life, a woman’s face and form haunted his dreams. At dawn he awoke and lay dreaming with wide-open eyes. He saw again that witching face, heard the merry laughter, and saw the dainty shoes peeping out from amidst a maze of snow-white lace. He put the vision from him, and turning on his elbow tried to sleep, but sleep would not come. Tossing from side to side he sought forgetfulness, but he was face to face with a problem that defied his powers of mind and will. The woman

came back to him in spite of himself. At last he leaped out of bed.

"A'm possessed o' a deil, A'm thinkin'," he murmured. "A'll wrastle wi' it an' cast it behin' me."

Putting on some of his garments he made his way, in the chill of the day just born, to the courtyard abutting on his lodgings. In the centre of the court stood the pump, and he made his way to it. Twisting his head and shoulders under the spout, he worked the handle until the ice-cold water gushed over him in a stream. It was a queer way to try and get rid of a devil, but most of his ways were queer. When he had pumped until his arm ached he made his way inside, and there was Jean bustling about getting his breakfast ready. The sight of her face did more to remove the devil than the pump had done. She was singing as she worked, a quaint old ballad that he had often heard her sing before, and the sound of her pure young voice did him good.

"Ye're early afoot, lassie," he called as he passed the kitchen door.

She said that she had a busy day in front of her and did not feel like idling the morning hours in bed. Had she spoken the whole truth she would have said that his unrest had disturbed her slumbers, and that hearing him moving so early she had risen to get his morning meal. But the love that had prompted the deed also closed her lips in regard to it, so she said nothing, but went on looking after his creature comforts.

All the time M'Glusky was near her he was free from the fancies that disturbed his sleep and haunted his dreams, but when he left the house and went to his work the unrest came back.

In the workshop that day he was not a nice man to mate with. Stripped to the waist he worked like a creature possessed. He swung the great hammer as if it were a toy, and the clang, clang of his blows made the other workmen turn their heads in his direction many times.

During the mid-day meal hour he drew sullenly apart from everybody and ate his frugal repast in silence. Then he drew forth his old Bible and tried to draw solace from its pages; but a woman's face shrouded in yellow hair came ever between his eyes and the written Word, and above the acrid smell of burning metal came to his nostrils the perfume that the woman had carried when she stepped out of her brougham. He was glad when the whistle sounded calling the men to toil. If he had worked hard in the morning he fairly slaved in the afternoon. All the power that was in him he put into his work, until the beads of sweat stood out all over his back and chest, for he was naked from the hips upwards. It had come to be a custom among the other hands to jeer at him because he would not quarrel over a word. This day some of them followed the usual practice, and at the close of the day's work one fellow threw a jibe in his teeth, taunting him with seeking to curry favour with the foreman by working with such furious zeal. This taunt had often been flung at him before and he had not resented it, but to-night something was fermenting in his blood which made him touchy and ill-tempered. He turned on the man who taunted him with a black scowl on his face.

"Ye ca' me a time-server an' a lick-spittle, dae ye? Let me tell ye, A care nae mair aboot the foreman than A dae aboot ye yersel'. Burn ma gran'mither if A dae!"

The man laughed in his face and called him a toady and a crawler.

M‘Glusky brought the back of his horny hand across the fellow’s mouth with such force that he reeled a couple of yards from the blow. The man had a hammer in his hand, a two-pound bit of steel on an eighteen-inch ash handle.

With a cry of rage he rushed at the Scot, whirling the hammer round his head as he came. M‘Glusky sprang to meet him, and catching the man’s descending arm on his own forearm spoilt the intended blow. Then, grasping the fellow by both hips, he gave a heave, and as he did so he ducked his own head into his opponent’s stomach. That was all the beholders saw for a moment. The next instant they saw the fellow flying through the air, high over M‘Glusky’s head.

Right behind the Scot there was a low wall that separated the work-yards. The man went hurtling over this wall as if he had been fired out of a gun, and when he fell he crumpled up and lay still. A great awe fell upon all who had witnessed this feat of strength, but M‘Glusky pushed his way fiercely through the ranks of the workmen and went his way homewards. But his steps were heavy, his heart felt like lead. For the first time in his life he had turned his hand upon his fellow-man without having the solace of knowing that he had smitten in a good cause. All his other frays had been born of religion, but this was a purely carnal affair, and he got no joy out of it.

That night he had to preach at a street corner, but when he stood up to hold forth he knew that virtue had gone out of him. He spoke to the people of sin; he denounced the drink curse and the daughter of the horse leech, but there was no conviction in his words, because all the time he was

preaching he could see that wondrous face enshrouded in yellow hair, and above the thunders of his own voice he could hear the silver tinkle of a woman's laughter.

Jean looked into his drawn face when he came in for supper, and her heart told her that something had happened. She did not know what it was, but she knew that he was no longer the untouched, the unblemished savage that she had known, and her soul went out to seek his to comfort and console him.

On Saturday at pay-time a worn-looking woman with a child in her arms came to draw the few days' pay due to the man he had injured. The reformer had drawn his week's wage, and was standing alone in gloomy silence when he heard someone say who the woman was.

"She has that child and five others to keep, and a doctor's bill to pay," said someone.

M'Glusky counted into his palm the amount of money due for his weekly board and lodging. The rest he thrust into the woman's hand.

"Tak' it," said he. "A canna say A'm sorry, for A'm no'. The mon cam' seekin' trouble, an' he foun' it. A didna want tae hurt him or ony mon. A hae been a mon o' peace frae ma youth up. Gie yer bairns bread wi' the siller, an' as long as yer mon isna able tae wark ye can ca' here every Setturday an' A'll gie ye ma wages, keepin' back nae mair than ma board money. A maun hae that, for the folks A live wi' are puir an' A canna beg ma bread an' work as weel."

The woman gazed at him in wonder, and went away to talk about the wild creature who could half kill a fellow-workman and then give his own wages to keep that workman's wife and bairns from starving.

All these things went from mouth to mouth in Glasgow and made M‘Glusky an object of wonder and fear. He still kept up his nightly and Sabbath preaching, but somehow it was not the old M‘Glusky that spoke, and he knew it. He yearned with a yearning insatiable to look upon that witching face once more. At times he felt that he would almost forfeit his soul’s salvation to hear that silver voice and see those dainty feet enshrouded in filmy lace. And when this fit was on him he would wander through all the fashionable quarters of the city by night, peering into carriages and gazing into the faces of fashionably-dressed women, but all in vain. He could not find the one he sought.

Once, when on such a quest, he met Elise Hillberg, and she gave him a glad welcome.

“Aren’t you nearly tired of the life you have been leading?” asked the girl. “I had a letter from your uncle a little while ago. He wished to be kindly remembered to you if I met you. He is a childless man, and would gladly welcome you to his house now that he understands you. Why do you not go to him and be a son to him in his old age? Surely you do not want him to leave all his money to strangers when he dies?”

“He may tak’ his siller wi’ him tae the deil, or he may gie it tae the first loon he meets in the street. A want nane o’t. A can wark for a’ A need,” was the grim reply.

“If I did not know you and your mode of life,” replied Miss Elise, “I should say you had been drinking during the last few months, you look so terribly wild and haggard.”

“A dram has never passed ma lips since A was born, an’ never wull until A dee, Elise.”

“What is wrong with you, Ian? You were never like other men, but now you have a look in your face that will haunt me in my sleep. Tell me what is wrong with you.”

He laughed at her, but did not tell her what had upset his happiness and peace of mind. Indeed, he could not have put his trouble into words if he had been commanded to do so. All he knew was that some influence was at work within him which made his boasted religion seem like dead men’s bones. He craved for something that was not in his life, yet did not know what it was he craved. The longing had come to him that evening when the woman in the street had gathered her skirts in her two hands and had made him a curtsey that princes might have envied. He was under the boughs of the tree of knowledge, the tree of good and evil, and did not know it; but his whole nature was crying out for the forbidden fruit.

Elise made much of M‘Glusky. She had grown into a handsome woman, to whom many suitors came cap in hand, because she was rich as well as good to look upon, but she laughed at them all because the rugged Scot had touched a note in her nature that none of the others could reach. Such is the perversity of the sex the world over. She had many to choose from, but none found favour in her eyes, all because one man looked over her head and would not answer her love.

So the time came and went, and M‘Glusky saw nothing of the siren who had brought unrest to his soul. Now and again he met Elise when he was on his crusade against sin, drink and the scarlet woman, because she had taken up philanthropic work in Glasgow, and every day that passed made him dearer in her eyes.

At home he saw much of Jean, who did him more good in her quiet way than he ever knew or could know. At this time he began to mix politics with religion to some extent. Someone had started a movement in favour of abolishing the House of Lords, and M'Glusky entered into the spirit of this movement heart and soul.

"A can see a proper use for the artisan an' the mechanic in the scale o' things," he once told an audience at a public meeting. "A can see a use for the farmer an' the labourin' mon. A ken weel the Almichty made a place for the miner, the clerk, the sodger an' the sailor, but I dinna ken what use tae the warl' the aristocrat is, or ever has been. He disna toil nor spin, he's no' an ornament an' no' usefu'. He lives on the people, an' he treats the people like dirt aneath his feet. A'm thinkin' that when God Almichty made Adam an' Eve there must hae been some wee bits o' clay ower, odds an' ends nae worth gatherin' up, an' the deil maun hae tried his han' at makin' a mon oot o' sic stuff, an' made an aristocrat."

Then he brought forth his Bible to prove his contention that the leaders of the people should come from the ranks of the people.

"Dauvid was a great king an' a sweet singer, an' he wis a shepherd lad. The Mon o' Nazareth, wha's michty name has been the watchword o' millions o' people, wis a carpenter, an' wrocht wi' his twa han's for daily bread, an' because He wis o' the people an' wrocht wi' the people His michty name has travelled doon the ages an' wullna dee."

It was a non-democratic audience, and the people resented this element being drawn into the controversy, so they pelted M'Glusky from the platform with garden refuse and eggs that

were nearly as old as himself. One such struck him upon the cheek, and the odour from it rose to heaven.

"It's no' sweet!" cried M'Glusky, wiping the vile fluid from his face with the tablecloth, "it's no' a sweet savour in the nostrils o' a mon, but burn ma gran'mither, it's not hauf as foul as the soul o' the cooard wha threw it."

Scenting a good thing in the way of amusement, a prominent townsman, who greatly favoured the Lords, brought forward a basket of eggs that might have been an heirloom left by William the Norman, judging them by their unholy scent. He threw three at M'Glusky.

"Mon," cried the reformer, "A wud willin'ly carry a cross an' wear a croon o' thorns in a gude cause, an' A'll bear ma burden wi' meekness an' Christian fortitude."

At this juncture an egg, aimed by the prominent townsman, struck him on the chin.

"A'm no' takin' omelettes the noo," he roared, and dropping off the platform he swooped down on the man with the basket, and seizing him round the middle with one arm, and the eggs with the other, he marched back to the platform with his prize. The crowd roared with delight as he deposited the basket on the stage, then lifting his man up by the heels proceeded to bump his head into the unsavoury mess, quoting Scripture all the time.

"He that diggeth a pit for his neebor'll fa' intae it, neck na' crop."

Then he jammed the man's head in among the eggs again with all his force.

"Dae untae ithers as ye wud hae them dae tae ye, ma buckie."

Again he pounded the eggs with the head of the fellow.

“ ‘Measure for measure’ is gude Scripture, an’ ye canna squeal if ye get what ye gie. Noo,” he added, “ye can gang richt awa’ tae yer freens, an’ A wish them joy o’ ye, ma buckie. A’m thinkin’ ye’ll no see a hen for twa years wi’oot cluckin’,” and he drove the man from the platform into the front rank of the yelling, laughing crowd, none of whom apparently wanted to receive him until he had had a bath. And that man was the pious guardian of Elise.

A few nights later, as he strolled out to reform someone or something, his eyes fell upon a great building all aglow with lights.

“Wha’s awa there?” he asked a loiterer.

The person addressed told him that it was the opera house and that a great diva was to sing that night.

“A’ll gang inside an’ hear the wumman,” he said to himself; “maybe A’ll get inspiration for a new crusade oot o’ it. A feel as if a guid strong wrastle wi’ the deil wud brace me up. A’m no feelin’ quite richt wi’ the Lord lately.”

So he fought his way up to the gallery, regretting the awful waste of a whole shilling to hear a prima donna sing. There was a great shout, the diva tripped to the footlights, a creature all passion, fire and sinuous movement, and M‘Glusky saw once again the woman of the brougham, the woman who had haunted his sleeping and waking hours, and as he looked at her and listened all his religion, all the teachings of his boyhood, seemed to evaporate and vanish, and he went drunken with desire. He had sought the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and at last he had found it.

# CHAPTER X

## THE DOWNFALL

WHEN the opera was over M‘Glusky went with the crowd to the exit through which the diva would pass on her way home. A brougham was in waiting, and he at once recognised the horses. They were the same pair with which he had grappled on the evening of the accident. It was the same coachman on the box.

The crowd was very thick, for the diva’s singing had stirred the whole city. M‘Glusky did not deal gently with those who stood in his way. He meant to get to the front rank, and to this end he just arched his back, and lowering his shoulders ploughed forward. He forced men and women on one side. He trampled upon people’s feet, and dug his elbows into ribs or faces, and begged no man’s pardon for his uncouthness. A devil had entered into him and taken complete possession of him, body and brain.

A young constable, with all the arrogance born of a uniform, marshalled the crowd. He seemed to think that he was the most important creature in all creation at that moment. He flicked his white gloves in a girl’s face as he waved her back. He pushed the heel of his hand on a man’s chin and forced him further away. He threatened to take another to the lock-up if he had to speak to him again. He put his heel on the toe of another and balanced backwards so as to make all his weight fall on the toes of the poor wretch, and in this manner he lorded it all along the line, flouting men whom he would not have dared to quarrel with had he been out of that majestic blue uniform.

In due season he came opposite M‘Glusky, who was standing very still with white drawn face waiting to look upon the woman who had disturbed the whole current of his life.

“Git back!” It was the policeman’s voice that uttered the harsh command. M‘Glusky gave him first one hasty, impatient glance and tried to bear back, but the weight of the throng behind him was too great. A dray horse could not have backed a foot into that serried mob, and well the policeman knew it, but he resented M‘Glusky’s bearing. The Scot was not paying due deference to the majesty of the law. As a matter of fact, after that first hasty, impatient glance, M‘Glusky never looked in the officer’s direction. All his eyes were on the doorway through which the yellow-haired divinity was to come.

“Git back!” This time the policeman flicked one of his gloves across the Scot’s eyes.

“A canna, ye born fule. Dinna ye see hoo mony are ahint me?”

The constable put his hand on M‘Glusky’s chest and pushed with all his might. A grim smile flickered over the Scot’s face. The constable might just as well have crossed the road and pushed the stone wall of the bank; four such as he could not have budged the Scot against his will. The waiting crowd laughed, and the laughter heated the constable’s blood. He stood in front of M‘Glusky.

“You’re drunk,” he said.

“You’re a leear, an’ weel ye ken it,” was the laconic retort.

The officer seized M‘Glusky roughly by the arm. He brushed the arm away with contemptuous ease, much as if he was flicking away flies. A factory lass shouted shrilly to

M‘Glusky “not to hurt the pretty little boy in blue,” and the crowd giggled. The policeman lost his temper and his head. Seizing M‘Glusky by the wind-pipe with his left hand, he drew his baton with his right. Then two great hairy paws fastened themselves on the constable’s wrists. The officer bent and struggled, but the Scot never moved an inch. He just stood there and gripped with all his power, and it was as if the jaws of a steel vice had closed upon each of the policeman’s wrists. Slowly his hands unclasped themselves, the baton fell to the pavement with a clattering sound, his other hand came away from the Scot’s wind-pipe.

M‘Glusky was staring into his face now, and the light in his eyes was devilish, not human. Slowly, and without apparent effort, he brought the officer’s two hands together in front of his chest. Then those standing close by saw him hunch his shoulders, they saw the veins stand out on his neck, then they heard a scream break from the lips of the officer as he sank to his knees on the side-walk, for M‘Glusky was crushing the small bones of his wrists. All eyes were fixed upon the actors in this drama of the highway, so that none saw the diva trip daintily down the stairs and out into the street. She was right on top of the two actors in what might have developed into a grisly tragedy ere anyone was aware of her presence.

M‘Glusky let the officer go, and he sprawled on his back right across the narrow path that had been kept clear for the diva.

Standing there, with the light of the lamps full upon her, she laughed. Holding her skirts with jewelled fingers, she made a forward move, as if to step daintily over the prostrate man.

“Haud yer fute a wee an’ A’ll sune shift him. He isna fit for ye tae touch wi’ the hem o’ yer garment. Dinna kilt yer coats ony higher, lassie. The men are a’ starin’ at yer shanks the noo; they can see mair noo than ma mither wud think richt an’ proper.”

At the first sound of his voice the diva had turned her eyes upon his face, and his features were aglow with mischief.

“The wild Scotsman again,” she murmured. “Why, they told me you were a preacher and a reformer. Are you reforming the police force of this most ungodly city at present? Get up!” she said aloud, touching the officer with the toe of her shoe. “You are not hurt, you are only shamming.”

The crowd cheered. The officer tried to raise himself, but all the power was out of his hands for the time being.

“A’m no certain he’s no’ a wee bit hurtit. A gied him a twist or twa,” said M‘Glusky, thickly, and he bent down and picked the man up as easily as if he were lifting up a baby. “Gang yer ways, mon,” he growled, “an’ if ye set ony value on yer han’s, dinna claw haud o’ a Hielanmon by the lug again. Ye hae brocht this a’ on yersel’. Losh, if ye had hit me wi’ that bit baton A wud hae pushed it doon yer throat, an’ rammed yer innards intae a ba’ as hard as a bullet, an’ no’ muckle bigger; but A’m bearin’ ye nae malice. Gang oot o’t, an’ dinna apologise; A’m no’ a prood mon.”

The diva touched M‘Glusky on the wrist, and it seemed to him that her fingers burnt his flesh.

“Let me drive you part of the way home. I have never had an opportunity for thanking you for past services. Come,” she added, laughing whimsically. “You would not even tell me your name that evening, but I found out before I left

Glasgow, and now I have found you I want to talk with you, and when I want anything I get it."

A little crowd of well-groomed men in evening-dress had clustered near the diva, and any one of them would have given much to have received that invitation. They stared at the Scot in his rough tweeds, and some of them sneered in unmistakable fashion, but the woman ran her eyes over them as they stood in the lamp-light, and her artistic sense told her that this ill-groomed fellow was physically the superior of them all; he looked like a pine tree amongst hot-house shrubs.

All Europe had known her as a creature of moods; whatever pleased her eye was a law unto her for a time. The world's censure did not trouble her in the least. She knew too many great dames who had small room to sneer at their sisters of the marketplace. As for men in high places, she valued them not at all. They had trodden her in the mire, and stained her soul, in those old days when she was a struggling girl. None of them had ever helped her in her early career out of pure pity or pure friendship. All had had their price, and had claimed it to the utmost farthing.

She had given them of her beauty in order that she might get a footing on the operatic stage. Once there she had held her own by virtue of her gifts, and she knew that as long as her voice lasted she would reign and men would flock to her feet like ants to a honey-pot. She knew also that as soon as her voice failed and her beauty faded, those same men would pass her by as they would pass a flower-girl. So she mocked at women and jeered at men, using both and sparing neither when it suited her mood or her interest. She gave the

fashionable world back in full measure what it had given her in her girlhood.

This night the whim was upon her to toy with M‘Glusky. The man’s untutored strength, his virility, his originality appealed to her. She was sick of exotics, tired of hot-house flowers of artificial growth, and, perhaps, the wickedness within her made her wish to triumph over him, to crush the goodness out of him as others had crushed it out of her in her girlhood. She had been fulfilling a season’s engagement when she met him first, and she had learned who and what he was. Her agents had told her that he was a religious crank seeking to set the world on fire. They had laughed as they told her that the desire of his soul was to sweep the scarlet woman from the face of the earth. Perhaps she would have forgotten him if he had not come again into her life in such bizarre fashion. Having found him she meant to fulfil the whim of the hour, caring nothing what might be said or thought.

Once before in her career she had done similar things, and a great dame, who was noted for her amours and her religion, had said to her, with curling lips, “I suppose women who are famous can do anything that women should not do, and it is merely counted as the eccentricity of genius.”

“Yes,” she replied, “and women who are leaders of fashion and fill great social positions do the same things without the same excuse;” and that saying became a proverb because of its bitter truth.

Turning her back upon the well-dressed men, the diva this night picked her way daintily towards her brougham, and M‘Glusky, feeling like a man in a dream, followed her. A lackey held the door open. She half-turned her head to smile

at the Scot, and as she did so, she, with the coquetry that was part of her nature, whisked her skirts in a fashion which made her ankles seem buried in a sea of foam; it was a stage trick, and she knew its value. As she lifted one foot to the step M‘Glusky strode right up to her, and putting his chin on her shoulder whispered, “A’m ashamed tae tell ye, lassie, for A’m sure ye dinna ken it, but yer cloak is a fute ower short, an’ ye hae haud o’ yer coat sae high up ye’er showin’ yer shanks tae thae grinnin’ gommerels wi’ e’e-glasses stuck in their een, an’ the Lord only kens hoo muckle mair than yer spurs wull be on view if ye dinna tak’ care.”

The diva choked back the laughter that rose in her throat, for her knowledge of human nature told her that she must not flout the man until she had broken his heart. Perhaps she did not know that she was “kilting her coats” dangerously high; such a lot of ladies of high degree have the same habit. In the language of M‘Glusky, they show so much of their shanks in the park, and so much of their neck, shoulders and bosoms at theatre, opera or ball, that the wonder is that they do not discard dress altogether and front a gaping world in feathers and a necklace, with perhaps a touch or two of rouge on the cheeks to make full dress.

M‘Glusky hesitated at the door of the brougham, but the diva made room for him on the other side of her with an imperious little gesture, and he stepped in with the quick, firm tread of the athlete.

One of the men in evening dress stepped forward and slammed the brougham door, and leaning forward spoke to the diva. He was a vapid-looking person, with a round, full face, with just a suspicion of whiskers on each cheek. He was angry; in his wrath his face twitched and his eyeglass fell

from its accustomed place. M‘Glusky heard him say “To-night.... Your promise.... You make me a laughing-stock.... I shall be the talk of the town....” He could only catch a sentence here and there, but he felt an insane desire to leap out and do the man an injury.

The diva treated this person with a sort of studied insolence of manner. M‘Glusky caught a word here and there of her reply. “...take supper at home to-night ... talk of the town ... then you must have been boasting. I have not mentioned your name.... By all means.... Do not call again; I shall always be out in future—*to you*.” There was marked emphasis on the last couple of words, then the coachman, in answer to a signal from the diva, put the horses in motion, and the person in evening-dress was left standing, hat in hand, upon the kerbstone.

“Wha wis yon mon?” demanded M‘Glusky. “He spoke tae ye as if he wis yer keeper an’ ye a slave wench.”

“That would be about our mutual position if I allowed him to have his way.”

“Wha is the buckie?”

The diva leant towards him until her breath fanned his cheek and the perfume that had intoxicated him before drowned his senses. She murmured a name, a great name, in answer to his angry query.

M‘Glusky gasped. “Are ye sure ye’re no’ mistaken?”

The diva shook her golden head. “I have known him for five years,” she said.

“The mon is ugly as the deil himsel’. He hisna a face tae ca’ his ain. It’s jist a cheese wi’ hair on’t; it wud fricht a

mitherin' wumman tae meet him o' nichts. Burn his gran'mither."

"He has frightened a lot of women in his time, both in this country and in others."

"Ye dinna fear him."

"How do you know I am not afraid of him?"

"Lassie, dae ye think A'm daft or deaf, or baith thegither. A cud tell frae yer voice ye didna fear him."

"I do not fear him, or any man, now. But there was a time when a man in his position could prevent me from getting my living unless I became as potter's clay in his hands."

"Ye wudna dae that. A ken fine ye're a gude wumman. Yon hoodie-craw cudna mak' sic a wumman as ye pan'er tae his deil's desires."

"You really think I am too good to slip, no matter how I might be tempted?"

"Lassie, if ony mon alive cam' tae me wi' a lee like that on his lips, if he said ye werna a saint, A wud squeeze him doon intae his ain breeks an' draw him through the button-holes; A wud, by ma soul, A wud."

She nestled closer and closer to him. The brougham passed out of the city into the shady lanes of the country beyond, the horses moving at a steady trot. Closer and closer she clung to him, one little ungloved hand crept into his big paws. Her hand, though warm, was firm and steady, as a great surgeon's on the eve of a life-and-death operation. His mighty hand, that could crack a man's wrist bones, was trembling like a willow leaf in a breeze. Her yellow head slipped on to his shoulder, and she felt him quiver from head to foot.

“Have you ever loved a woman very dearly?” she asked, and her voice was like a sigh.

“A hae ne’er loved a lass in a ma’ days.”

“You men all say that. It is the tale you tell each poor girl who trusts you. All of you swear the same old lie in between the kisses.”

“A never put ma lips tae the lips o’ a lass in a’ ma born days. A ken richt weel maist lads ken a’ there is tae ken aboot wimmen afore they’re breeched; but it isna that wey wi’ me. A’ll tak’ ma deein’ oath on’t; A’m as pure as yersel’.”

The diva shivered slightly as she heard the latter part of his speech.

“You have never kissed maid or matron?”

“A niver did. A niver had ony yearnin’ that wey. A wud as sune kiss a coo as a lass.”

There was a long, long silence. The brougham drifted into a narrow lane where the foliage on either side was so dense that it almost shut out the stars. The diva’s cheek crept up against M‘Glusky’s hard jaw, and the man sat like one in a trance. He had often scoffed at Samson when reading of his weakness in the hands of Delilah, but he was not scoffing now. A little hand slipped up to his cheek; it passed round his neck; a soft, white bare arm pressed his head down, down, until he could look into two big, dancing, liquid eyes; down until his mouth was so close to the little rosebud lips that he could feel every breath the woman drew. Then suddenly the last vestige of saintliness departed from him like a riven garment, and the Berserker within him awoke. He gripped her so tightly that she cried out, and his mouth sought hers, and finding it, clung there. He wooed as he fought—fiercely, untameably. He crushed her in his arms until she could

scarcely breathe. He stifled her with kisses. He ran his great fingers through the glowing tangle of her yellow hair, and drew her head back until he could see the tracery of the blue veins on the white throat. He was wonder-stricken that she did not fear him, but she did not. She revelled in the storm she had provoked. He, poor fool, in that hour counted himself her master; he was her lap-dog, her slave, her toy.

So the time wore on. It seemed to M'Glusky that he had lived an age since his lips had clung to hers. Nothing was heard but the steady beat of the horses' hoofs. He held the woman to him in a grip that was like a girdle of steel, and the stars went behind the clouds. Away in M'Glusky's lodgings Jean was lying face down upon her bed, weeping as women weep only once in a lifetime. She was mourning for her heart's idol—a strong man fallen.

In another quarter of the city Elise was keeping watch over her own soul and trying vainly to tell herself that she did not care, that her heart was not aching. Sitting in her night-robe by her bedside she tried to soothe herself and failed. Every now and again she got up and looked at herself in her mirror, a full-length mirror that gave back every detail of face and form faultlessly. She tossed the great wealth of black hair back from her shoulders and laughed bitterly.

"It was not my face," she murmured sadly. "I am good enough to look upon. What was it, I wonder, that drew him to that yellow-haired woman? I am younger, and I am not soiled as she is, yet he went to her—went gladly."

So two good maids spent the night of M'Glusky's downfall. By some queer fatality they had both gone to the opera to hear the far-famed diva. They had gone, each unknown to the other, gone to the exit to get a nearer view of

her on her departure, and both had seen her meeting with M‘Glusky. They had watched her face with hot, jealous eyes as he gazed upon her; they had clenched their hands and set their teeth in their lips when he answered her lure and went away with her; and they both knew what that meant for him, for they were the daughters of women, and having no scales on their eyes they read the diva and her real nature as surely as a river knows its bed.

M‘Glusky did not return to his lodgings at the house of the dear old pastor after that fateful night. He took up his quarters at a little inn not far from the residence of the diva. Every evening she called for him in her brougham, and they went together to the opera and returned together. He used to go to her home and sup with her every night, and spend hours with her during the day. He knew that the price he was paying for his sinning was his manhood, yet he did not try to escape from his bonds. He mortgaged his soul to the devil and took full toll of his wages. He never asked himself how it would all end. He never dared in those days to look his naked soul in the face. His animal courage had departed from him with his purity. He was a pariah, and he knew it.

Once, when hanging about the opera house, he met Elise, and at sight of her his cheeks grew hot with shame. “Had she heard?” he wondered. “Did she know to what depths he had sunk?”

Something of his old pugnacity returned to him, and he determined to find out how much she knew. He walked towards her. He was better dressed than he had ever been in his life before, but he did not carry himself with the old pride. When the maid saw him she reeled as if she had been struck, for she had loved him as few men are ever loved, but her

agitation lasted only a moment. Pulling herself together she came steadily on, with the bonny head held high. He tried to meet her gaze, but if his life had depended upon it he could not keep his eyes steady. Time was when he would have lowered his eyes to neither man nor maid, but those days were dead. When only half a yard separated them they both paused.

Elise did not hold out her hand as of old, and he dared not offer his.

"Ye're lookin' bonny the nicht," he said lamely.

The lass laughed a bitter little laugh. "That is the first time Ian M'Glusky ever offered me a compliment," said she.

"A ken richt weel; A wis aye a boor, Elise."

"No, you were not, Ian M'Glusky. Once you were a man. Keep your pretty speeches for your leman; they suit her and you—now."

With a whisk of her skirts she passed him and was gone. A little time afterwards old John M'Glusky came from Lough Slough and called upon Ian, and the ancient Scot did not mince his phrases in his dealings with his brother's son.

"Dae ye ken what ye hae fa'en intae?" he demanded. "Dae ye ken ye're a pensioner on the bounty o' yin o' the vilest wimmen in the warl', a wumman wha's been a licht-o'-love in every capital o' Europe? Ye puir-spirited beastie, why dinna ye list for a sodger an' gang abroad an' get yersel' decently killed?"

M'Glusky sat with white, strained face, listening to the old man's bitter taunts, and answered never a word.

Old John drew forth his cheque-book and wrote out a generous cheque, which he tossed towards his nephew as he

would have tossed a bone to a dog.

"Tak' that!" he cried, "an' rustle it with the hell rakes o' this city. Throw the gude siller intae the lap o' yon harlot. Dae it publicly, mind ye. Let it be kent that ye hae come intae money. Let fowk think onything but the truth, for the truth is ower shamefu'. A'll gie oot that A hae made ye ma heir, an' the fowk'll think ye're makin' ducks an' drakes o' an auld fule's money."

He caught his breath with a sob.

"A wud gie every bawbee A possess tae see ye haudin' yer heid high aince mair, but that ye canna dae, ye wha are a wanton wumman's lap-dog. Dae ye ken yer auld grey mither is deein'?"

M'Glusky started to his feet with a cry.

"Ma mither deein'?"

"Ay, she is gone by noo, A dinna doot. She sent for me for A loved her when she wis a lass, but she gied her he'rt tae yer feyther, ma brither Jamie, an' A stood aside an' worked for mony a' ma days. She sent for me an' said, 'Whaur is ma laddie, Ian? He hasna written tae me this lang while.' A leed for ye. A kent fine ye were wi' the husks an' the swine, but A wadna send her auld grey heid sorrowin' tae the grave, so A said ye were a great reformer, workin' in the Lord's vineyard, daein' michtily a' yer days. An' she smiled through her tears. 'Dinna ca' him frae his labours,' cried she; 'he is daein' the Lord's wark, but A'm feared he'll hae to be tried wi' fire. Tell him, John, tae tak' heed hoo he standeth, lest he fa'. Tell him to beware o' the scarlet wumman, for he has wild bluid in his veins.' "

"Ye didna tell me," whispered M'Glusky, feebly.

“No, A didna. Are ye fit tae gang an’ stan’ by the bedside o’ the auld grey mither? Mon, she would read ye like a buik, an’ she wud mak’ the lang journey sorrowin’. A loved yer mither a’ my days, ye deil’s buckie, an’ A wud suner send ye black-handed wi’ sin an’ shame tae the deil than A wud break her he’rt on her death-bed. If A thocht ye wud gang near her the noo A wud strike ye deid. Gang tae yer painted hussy! Dinna glower at me. A’m no’ feared o’ ye. Ye were fearsome aince, but no’ noo, ye hired toy o’ a wanton!”

# CHAPTER XI

## A LOST SOUL

M'GLUSKY winced under the lash of his uncle's bitter taunts. He rose, saying, "A'm a' ye say, an' mair; A'll no' lee tae ye."

"Ye'll no' lee! Ye're a livin' lee, root an' branch, curse ye. Ye're a disgrace tae the M'Gluskys."

In his frenzy of wrath the old man struck the young one in the mouth, and the blood trickled down over his chin. M'Glusky did not resent the blow; he just lifted his heavy eyes to the old man's face and said heavily, "Stop yer bletherin'. Yer han' is ower feeble tae hurt ma body, an' yer tongue canna hurt ma soul." He paused and looked long and heavily at his kinsman. "Ye canna hurt ma soul, for ma soul is deid."

"It isna, it isna!" shouted John. "A day wull dawn when yer soul wull awake, for it's only sleepin', and then, Ian M'Glusky, may God Almichty pity ye, for the awakenin' wull be awfu'. Ye hae made a whole city mock at yer Maker's name. Men talk blasphemy, an' wag their heids, an' cry, 'Look at M'Glusky the reformer!' Ye hae crucified yer Maister. Some day ye'll carry His cross an' wear His croon, an' drink the hyssop mixed wi' gall left in His cup. Ye laid doon the banner o' the Michty in the mud. Ye trampled it in the mire, an' wi' yer ain han's ye lifted a harlot's banner high in this city. Ye discarded the ploo ye had put yer han's tae. Some day that ploo wull rip ye up furrow by furrow an' leave ye naked an' ashamed."

M‘Glusky cashed his uncle’s cheque. It seemed strange to him even then that wealth should be flung in his lap when he was living a life of idleness and vice, for well he remembered that when he was trying to follow the straight and thorny path he often needed a meal. A new phase of his nature came to the surface at this time. He who had been niggardly to the point of miserliness became a pure waster of money. He did not drink himself, but he spent money freely on others who did. It became a byword in the place amongst the wastrels, “If you’re short of a sovereign, ask M‘Glusky.”

These people flattered him even whilst they sponged upon him, but he was not deceived by their flattery. He wasted money because money no longer had any charm for him, but he gave none in charity. He threw money to the vicious, but turned a deaf ear to virtuous want, until it really seemed as if his boast to his kinsman concerning the death of his soul was true.

One day he met Jean. He would have passed her by without so much as a nod, but she caught hold of his sleeve and stayed him.

“Why do you never come to see us?” asked the lassie. “Have you forgotten the way to the old room?”

He shook her hand from his arm as if it were a poisonous thing, and jostled his way into the thick of a crowd. A constable who had witnessed the scene strolled across to Jean, and taking her roughly by the shoulder demanded to know what she meant by stopping men and accosting them in that manner in the public highway. “You are a brazen little ——” he added, “in spite of your innocent face. Clear out now and ply your trade somewhere off my beat or I will lock you up.”

The lassie's eyes filled with tears of anger and shame, for she understood the officer's meaning.

"He was a friend of mine—once," she faltered.

"Seems to have had all he wants of you, you young Jezebel, judging by the way he shook you off just now. Come, clear out of this!" So saying Robert gave Jean a push, and the idlers standing near laughed, and one man followed her and tried to link his arm in hers, talking to her the while of money. It was well for that policeman and for the strange man that the old M'Glusky, the M'Glusky of the days of the reformation and the rivetters' factory, did not come upon the scene, else there would have been two beds filled in the nearest infirmary.

Poor, pretty, winsome Jean, her heart was so nearly broken just then that she took little notice of the importunities of the stranger. But at last she turned her sweet eyes upon him, saying, "Sir, have you a sister or a mother?"

He swore a strange oath that had a savour of the sea in it, and wrinkling his shaggy brows he looked very hard at her. She bore his gaze, and slowly a flush of shame ran under the tan of his brown skin.

"I ought to be shot," he muttered, "and that cursed officer wants kicking from here to Ireland. I'll go back and have a word with him."

He lifted his cap as he spoke and was turning away.

"Don't get into trouble for my sake," murmured Jean. "The officer was cruel and thoughtless; he did not know me; and he did not pause to consider what a bitter wrong he was doing a girl."

“I will give him something to keep his memory green,” cried the stranger, breezily.

Just then the old pastor, who had wandered forth, tempted by the fineness of the day, came up to the pair, and when the stranger heard Jean’s cry of “Father,” and saw how she clung to the old man’s withered hand, he dropped his eyes and ground his teeth with rage, for he knew the nature of his mistake and called himself a cur. Something in the agitated manner of his daughter and in the manner of the stranger woke suspicions in the simple mind of the pastor. He noticed how Jean, still agitated from her meeting with M‘Glusky, clung to his arm, and he noticed the flush of shame on the stranger’s face. A shrill cry broke from his lips, and raising his cane in his feeble hand he brought it down on the cheek of the unknown. Then his limbs shook under him, and he fell fainting into his daughter’s arms.

It was then that the stranger proved that he was not so bad as his first actions had warranted him. Calling a cab he lifted the pastor in, and held him gently in his arms until the home was reached. Then he carried the old man to his room like a baby. Baring his head in front of Jean, and bowing himself humbly, he begged her forgiveness.

“I’m only a sailor man,” said he, “first mate of the *Angeline*, just ashore after a cruise to the Congo, miss. I’ve behaved like a cur, and I’m glad the old man struck me. I haven’t a friend in the world that I know of, and a friendless sailor has nothing else to do but drift to the devil when he’s not on duty.”

“Would you like a friend—a real friend?” she asked.

He nodded his head vigorously in the affirmative.

"Wait a moment, then," she whispered. With a sad little smile she slipped away, and coming back placed a little old worn Bible in his hand. "Keep that near you night and day and you will never be friendless."

He asked her to keep it for him. "I'll come back for it if I'm alive," he promised her.

"But why not take it with you? You may come again to-morrow and see my father. He will welcome you when I have explained what happened."

"I would rather not, miss."

"Why not?"

"Well, to tell the truth, I want to go back and see that constable, and if I can coax him into an alley-way to have a drink it will be a long time before he forgets this day. He'll perhaps forget his birthday, or his wedding day, but he'll remember this day till he dies."

But Jean would not permit this. "I am a pastor's daughter, and you are my friend now, so you must do my bidding;" and in the end he did.

Later, when they knew him better, he rented from them the room that had been M'Glusky's, for they were so miserably poor that the rent of that room was needful to them; it meant all the difference between one meal a day and three meals, small as the amount was. And so Esau Bent, the sailor, came into their lives—a bluff, simple, wayward fellow, with far more of good than evil in him.

The end was drawing near for M'Glusky as far as the diva was concerned.

The closing scene came quickly. It was a night on which a new tenor had made his *début* with the diva. He had a voice

like a bird and the brain of a peacock—a shallow, vapid creature, who aped æsthetic ideals without knowing what they were.

The diva found him a striking contrast to the rugged giant whose furious passion had at first intoxicated her. He scored an immense success that first night, and at the close he went from the opera house with the diva upon his arm. M'Glusky was waiting by the brougham as usual. The diva gave him a frozen little nod as she stepped in and took her seat, then she beckoned to the tenor to follow her.

M'Glusky looked in a dazed way at the yellow-haired beauty. "Dae ye mean," he said thickly, "that ye dinna want me tae come wi' ye?"

She leant forward and tapped him with her fan. "Don't make a scene. Go away. I am weary of you—weary to death."

The tenor pushed his pallid face close to M'Glusky, and as he did so he brushed back a mass of lank black hair that fell over his forehead. "If," he whispered, "if *monsieur* is a gentleman he will understand. These things happen in good society often."

For an instant M'Glusky's hand closed on the nape of the tenor's neck, as if he were holding a rabbit, and such force was in the grip that the tenor's big eyes started from his head and he emitted one squealing cry of terror.

"Ye hae reached yer top note verra quickly," growled the Scot. "Dae ye say A'm no' a gentlemon? A wud hae ye ken that the meanest loon in a' the Hielan's is high as the hills abune a briar bush compared wi' ye an' the —— of Babylon beside ye."

The diva, braver than the tenor, threw a scornful laugh in the face of the Scot, and the brougham moved away, leaving

M‘Glusky standing, the cynosure of many curious eyes.

“Your turn now, my gigantic friend,” remarked a voice in his ear.

Turning in dazed fashion, he looked into the face of that man who had been flouted by the diva the first night he had ridden in her brougham. It was the face he had described as “a cheese wi’ hair on’t.”

“So she has thrown you away at last, has she? Well, you cannot complain. You have lorded it over her longer than some princes I have known. I suppose you have gone through all your money?”

“She didna rob me o’ ma siller.”

“You are the first man who has passed through her hands who could say that. What has she robbed you of, man? I’ll swear she has taken something.”

M‘Glusky put his hands on the man’s shoulders and drew his face within an inch of his own bloodshot eyes. “She has robbed me o’ ma soul.”

That was all he said, and he reeled off to the nearest bar and called for a bottle of brandy, the first drink he had ever called for in a lifetime. The other man stood and watched him. “Poor devil! I wish I had a soul to lose, but I think I was born without one.”

# CHAPTER XII

## M‘GLUSKY THE DEMON

M‘GLUSKY did not drink as men do who get a pleasant and convivial time out of dissipation. He drank because a new-born devil within him was urging him on to madness. All his days he had not known the taste of intoxicating liquor. Nor until this night, when the woman for whom he had thrown aside his religion had discarded him, had he felt the faintest craving for it.

Often he had argued with drunkards and dipsomaniacs concerning the drink craving, and when they told him, as they often did, that the thirst that came to them was not earth-born, but a gift of the devil, he, in his self-righteous strength, had sneered at them savagely, and called them weaklings, not knowing that some men are born with a little bit of Egypt in the back of their throats; a little dry patch that may lie dormant for years, and suddenly wake a man in the middle of a night and send him forth in quest of strong drink like a raging lion.

Spiritualists claim that it is not a physical affliction at all. They assert that at given periods some men become possessed of a devil; a spirit takes possession of them and makes them mad for stimulants. Who knows? Who will dare dogmatise in this age of marvels? All we are sure of is that men who are normally sober, industrious, decent fellows suddenly shed their respectability and become a bit lower than the beasts of the field. Whether it is demoniacal possession or hereditary taint, the result is the same.

M‘Glusky must have had a taint in his blood, handed down to him by some bibulous old Highland forebear, or else an imp of evil entered into him. He drank, and the blood in his veins bounded to the call of the fiery fluid, and all that was wild and reckless in his nature leaped to the surface, all that was good in him shrivelled up. He was seized with a desire to visit his old haunts, to look upon the slums where he had laboured so long as a preacher.

Somehow his feet took him to that very den where he had once laboured so mightily to plant the good seed of temperance and holiness. As he looked at the place, the memory of that other night came back to him, and he chuckled, but there was no real merriment in his mirth.

“A’ll gang inside,” he murmured. “Maybe they hivna forgotten me. They may push a quarrel on me, thinkin’ A’m still a dreamer an’ a milksop. They were ready enough tae mak’ trouble wi’ me in the auld days, when A wisna a mon o’ strife but a puir chiel wi’ nae knowledge o’ the warl’. They manna think me a bearer o’ olive branches this nicht if they tread on ma corns.”

Had he only known it, there was not a man who had joined in that former night’s strife who did not dream of him at times and wake up sweating. He saw a stream of lasses go through the green baize doors, and a number of men and lads.

Giving another twitch to his hat, he strode forward and entered the door. The big landlord was just within the bar, having condescended to drink at the expense of some poor fool who had worked hard for the money that paid for his liquor. He caught sight of M‘Glusky, and his drink went down the wrong way, so that he spluttered and coughed and

made much ado. Then he looked rapidly round for a weapon, for he, at all events, had not forgotten that peaceful invasion.

M‘Glusky went to him swiftly.

“A dinna come here tae mak’ trouble; A’m mindin’ ma ain business noo-a-days, but, mon, A wud like tae ken if ye’re spittin’ yer liquor at me, because, if sae, ye’re seekin’ tae insult ma mither’s son, ma buckie. A’ll tie yer legs in a knot ahint yer heid, an’ pump a’ the whusky ye ever drank oot o’ yer ears. A wull that, burn ma gran’mither if A’ll no’! A cam’ tae ye aince before, dae ye mind? A cam’ in peace, wi’ love an’ gudewill in ma he’rt towards a’ men, an’ ye made merry wi’ me, but dinna try it the nicht or A’ll put the cellar o’ yer hoose on the roof.”

The landlord groaned, for if the last-time visit was this wild Scot’s idea of making merry, what would a real row be like?

M‘Glusky called for brandy and gulped it down, then seated himself at a table near a couple of women and filled their glasses for them.

The landlord stared in amazement. Could this, indeed, be the apostle of purity, the scourge of the Lord, the wild cyclonic reformer who had set out to cleanse the world of its sin? He could not credit the evidence of his own eyes; it seemed incredible, yet there the man sat, drinking and sneering, between two painted hussies who were trying to outdo each other in the matter of obscene story-telling.

After awhile the liquor made him mellow and he began to sing. His voice fairly thrilled the idlers, and they applauded him, and heaped flattery on his head, and plied him with drink, until he rose rather unsteadily and announced that “if

ony ane wud gie a skirl o' the pipes he wud show them a' hoo tae dance."

Someone got a wandering piper to stand in the street in front of the den and play, and as the piper burst forth M'Glusky leaped to his feet and dashed his hat to the floor. Then, with both hands raised high above his head, his fingers and thumbs snapping, he danced just such a dance as some mad dervish might indulge in. He leaped and pranced and bounded, whirling here, there and everywhere, capsizing chairs and tables, and stamping on toes with almost a horse's force. Every now and again he gave a yell, the wild slogan of his clan; the sweat rolled down his face in big beads, his cheeks flushed crimson; his eyes were pretty nearly out of his head for the brandy was going to his brain. He danced until he could dance no more, and when he crashed into a seat the den rang with applause. But he heeded none of the things that went on around him. He just drank.

At last a truculent mood came over him, and he battered the table by which he sat with his big fists and offered battle to every man who even looked his way. But at a sign from the landlord the two wantons sitting with him kept replenishing his glass until his humour changed and he became maudlin. In the broadest of broad Scots he babbled of his childhood, of his "mither an' the auld poley coo at hame on the hill side." He wept maudlin tears and made a spectacle of himself generally.

The news flew round the slums in the vicinity, and men and women pressed in to see the reformer in his degradation. He lounged back in his chair, an arm round the neck of each painted wanton with whom he had been carousing, a vacuous

smile on his once manly face, a sight for men and gods to weep over.

It was the best advertisement the den had ever had. Far and near in Glasgow city men and women talked of it and wagged their heads knowingly, saying, “Oh, these reformers are all alike when you know them,” and they made a mock of every good thing under the sun, after the manner of their kind, because one man had gone astray, and that man a champion.

In those few hours M‘Glusky did more harm than he had done good all the days of his life. He had not only disowned his Master; he had helped to crucify Him afresh.

When it came near closing time the landlord, who had been watching M‘Glusky with an experienced eye, saw that, like Samson of old, he was shorn of all his strength. Then he walked to the side of the grinning giant and struck him with his clenched hand in the mouth, and M‘Glusky, being past that stage when an action of self-respecting manhood is left, wept maudlin tears. Then they turned his coat inside out and did the same with his hat, and put them on him again. Someone stuck a clay pipe in his loose jaws, upside down, and the lassies and the lads pelted him with beer corks, calling him an old Aunt Sally. Yet every now and again, when he stirred his great limbs, they drew away in fear, for the memory of what manner of man he was when sober was strong upon them.

At closing time the two wantons slipped quietly away, leaving him to the mercy of his enemies, for they had deftly picked his pockets of all they contained. Then the landlord, remembering the awful battering he had received on that other occasion, pushed M‘Glusky out of the chair and kicked

him through the doorway, and a potman, who was cousin to the man who had lost an ear, kicked the reformer from the doorstep to the gutter, where the police found him and took him away.

There is no need to follow the fallen wretch too closely in the downward career. For months he wallowed in brutish viciousness, a terrible object to look at, a worse creature to deal with.

One night, when the rain was falling drearily, and a bitter wind was sweeping the alleys and the lanes, he was half-leaning against, half-clinging to a lamp-post for support. He was not drunken, for no barman or barmaid would serve him with a drink.

When he entered a public-house the potman promptly threw him into the street. This was an easy task, for the life he had led had sapped his splendid strength; drink and want of food had made a wreck of him. So he clung to the lamp-post shivering, his clothes in tatters, his face unshaven, his hair ragged and unkempt.

A couple of gutter urchins came upon him, crying, “Look, here’s the reformer,” and they pelted him with any odds and ends of garbage they could lay hands upon, and the trembling wretch only hung his head and shivered.

A slender, girlish figure, dressed in black, ill-clad against the inclemency of the weather, came down the street, and noticing the gamins and their cruel sport, stopped to chide them.

“Why should you hurt the man? He is miserable enough as it is,” she said.

The arabs laughed rudely in the speaker’s face. “It don’t matter what we do to him,” jeered one; “it’s only the

reformer."

With quick, fluttering steps the figure in black went to the wretched man's side and put a little shabbily-gloved hand upon his arm. He turned his drink-sodden face towards her, feeling her touch, and as his heavy bloodshot eyes roamed over her figure his mouth began to work.

"Don't you know me, Ian M'Glusky?"

The man laughed a stupid, jeering laugh. "Ay, A ken ye fine, ye she deil. The pit is fu' o' wimmin like ye; tae —— wi' ye. Gang yer weys; A hae nae siller."

"Hush, hush, for God's dear sake, don't speak to me like that, Ian. Look at me! I am Jean!"

"Ye're a dom leear," came the thick voice, "ye're no' Jean, winsome Jean, ye're ane o' the dochters o' the scarlet wumman. Jean wisna like ye. Jean, winsome Jean. A wud like tae tear the lugs oot o' ye, an' A wull tae, if ye say that name again. Gang aboot yer trade, ye dochter o' the horse leech! A'm M'Glusky the reformer."

A wild burst of half-maniacal laughter broke from his lips as he finished, and lifting his heavy hand he struck the woman down. She fell at his feet in a crumpled-up heap, the rain beating down on her white, upturned face pitilessly, whilst the madman clung to the lamp-post, babbling of "Jean, winsome Jean," who was too good for this world of wickedness and shame.

The boys had gone on, the rain and the wind was too much even for their hardy bodies to bear. The fellow, looking down at the woman, became possessed of a new impulse. Slipping down the post, half-falling, half-clinging, he knelt by his victim and ran a trembling hand over her face.

“Losh, ye maun be drunk as a fiddler’s vixen. Hae ye ony siller? Gie me drink!”

The white lips never moved in reply.

The frenzy of thirst took possession of the man.

“Gie me a drink the noo or A’ll hae nae mercy on ye.”

His big hand closed around the white, slender throat, cruelly, slowly, but surely. The strength which the liquor craving gives came to him, and in that moment Jean opened her eyes and looked up at him, looked right into his frenzied eyes, and knew that he was trying to kill her. She saw that he was mad and past all reasoning with, even if she could have spoken. Her religion came to her aid in that awful moment, because hers was not as his had been. His had been all self-glorification and reformation; hers was self-sacrifice and love. She prayed, even in the shadow of death, with a madman’s grip on her throat, and her prayer was answered.

Out of a dark alley-way opposite came a well-clad man. He caught sight of the woman on the ground, the awful figure kneeling over her, holding her by the throat, not such an uncommon sight in those back slums as some who do not know them might imagine.

With a quick rush the newcomer covered the ground that intervened, and with a kick that scattered M‘Glusky’s few remaining wits sent him rolling away from his victim. Then the rescuer bent and very gently lifted Jean to her feet, and held her in the hollow of his arm until her strength came back to her. He could not see her plainly, because her head was drooping, and he mistook her for one of the army of wretched women to whom vice means bread. He spoke to her, and his voice was musical and cultured.

“My poor girl,” he said, “let this be a warning to you. If I had not arrived on the scene as I did, you would have been done to death by that ruffian. Turn over a new leaf from to-night. Don’t you know who sent me to your aid? Don’t call it chance, my lass; it was not chance.”

She lifted her big, kind eyes to his face and answered simply, “I know who sent you, for I prayed to Him and He heard.”

The man nearly dropped down beside M‘Glusky, so great was his astonishment. Then he swept his hat off and stood before her bareheaded, and did not heed the rain that beat down upon him.

“You?” was all he could say. “You?”

“Yes, why not? Is it not written, ‘In the highways and byways ye shall find the lost and strayed’?”

“But, Miss Jean, this is no woman’s work.”

“When men who are paid to do it neglect it, why should a woman not try to help?” she asked.

The man flushed crimson under her quiet gaze and winced under her words. “Who is the fellow who was trying to kill you, Miss Jean—some pariah of the slums?”

“He is the chief of sinners in this city, because he has stoned the Master.”

“Who is he?”

“M‘Glusky the reformer.”

“What?”

The speaker drew his slender figure up to its full height, and one white hand was thrown out with a peculiar gesture, the forefinger pointing to the insensible figure on the ground.

“That M‘Glusky?”

“Yes, that is the ruin of what was once Ian M‘Glusky. Do not point to him like that. Once, long ago, he went to you to ask you to help him to close the vilest haunt of evil in all Scotland, and you stood, as now you stand, and pointed him to the door. Had you helped him then you might have drawn him to you, and he might have learnt from you many things which his untutored mind was ignorant of.”

“He was an impostor and a charlatan.”

“He was not. He meant well, but his faith was founded on shifting sand, and he fell when he was tempted.”

M‘Glusky stirred and tried to raise himself. The girl knelt beside him and lifted his head in her hand. The prince of the Church bent over the horrible-looking face and shuddered.

“Man,” whispered the Churchman, “is your soul quite dead?”

M‘Glusky sat up, and a reckless laugh broke from his parched and cracked lips. “A’m no thinkin’ o’ ma soul, ma buckie,” he jeered. “A hae nae soul. A sold it tae a deil wi’ yellow hair, sold it for a mess o’ pleasure as Esau sold his ain birthright for a mess o’ parritch. Tae —— wi’ ye an’ yer havers! Gie me brandy or let me dee! A dinna care much which.”

# CHAPTER XIII

## A LABOUR OF LOVE

A MOMENT later his chin sank upon his chest again and he was helpless.

"We must get him into the hospital at once," said the Churchman.

Jean caught hold of one of the speaker's slender hands. "No, no, no," she whispered vehemently, "the Lord has given him into my hands and I will not let him go to strangers. He shall come to my home and my father and I will nurse him. Father loves him like a son."

At that instant M'Glusky lifted his bleared eyes to the white, clean-cut face of the Churchman.

"Gie me brandy," he growled thickly. "Dinna say me nay. Wud ye like me to crack yer lug?"

"I do not like to leave you alone with this madman, but I must get help," whispered the Churchman, "We are all soaked to the skin as it is. I do not think he will prove dangerous to you," he continued, "he is too weak."

"Go and get help," answered Jean, sturdily. "There is One watching over me whose care never faileth; my trust is in Him."

So the man went swiftly, leaving the lass with the reformer, who was alternately calling for brandy with awful oaths, that sounded doubly terrible in the bitter night, and anon babbling about "the auld poley coo, and his dog Larch, and his mither."

As Jean, kneeling beside him, trying to shield his bruised and battered face from the rain, heard him babble of his old home, her tears trickled down her face.

Once or twice he mentioned her own name, and she felt her face flush with strange pleasure, for always he spoke of her as "a lily o' the valley," or as a "gude angel," the hem of whose garments he was not fit to touch.

The help came at last, and three strong men carried M'Glusky to the humble home of the old pastor. When the old man heard the sound of many feet he came to the head of the stairs, shading a candle with his hands. His white hair fell about his face like a veil of silk. There was an anxious look on the drawn features, and when he saw the stretcher and the bearers a bitter cry broke from his lips. But Jean, standing just behind the bearers, read what was in the old man's heart, and instantly her sweet young voice rang out, "All is well with me, father. I have brought the prodigal home."

Then they who watched saw the aged pastor shake like a reed smitten by the wind. They saw him turn his eyes towards the skies, and saw his lips move mutely, and they knew that he was giving thanks for the safe return of his ewe lamb.

A man came out of M'Glusky's old room. It was Esau Bent, the sailor, who was a lodger under the roof.

"Some poor beggar nearly slipped his cable, eh, Miss Jean?"

A wan little smile ran across her lips at his salt sea phraseology, for she had learnt to like the man who had once insulted her. "I do not always follow the meaning of your sailor talk, Esau," she answered, "but I think I know what you mean now, and this is one who has drifted on to the rocks, and we are going to try and save him, father and I."

Esau looked at the awful wreck on the stretcher, and a low whistle broke from his lips. “Dragged his anchor and run aground, Miss Jean. What are you going to do with him?”

“Carry him to my room and put him into my bed, please.”

A dark frown knitted the sailor’s brows, and a flush of anger showed under the tan on his weather-stained cheeks. “You can’t put that thing in your bed, Miss Jean. Here, take him to my room, mates, and I’ll find another berth.”

But Jean would not have it that way. “My room!” she commanded imperiously, and the men picked up their burden and did her bidding.

“I think it’s the old pastor’s black sheep son come home like this,” whispered one of the bearers to the sailor, and he was surprised to note the look of pleasure that transfigured Esau’s face. “You had better get out of those wet clothes, Miss Jean, and get some sleep. I’ll take the first watch,” suggested Esau, as soon as the helpers had gone.

Then he noted the bruise upon her forehead that M‘Glusky’s big fist had made, and a word that was never in the prayer-book broke from him.

“How did you come by that?” he asked, and the way he ground the words out made her think that this merry, careless fellow might be a bad man for an enemy to meet.

She could not tell him nor any man the truth, and she would not tell a lie, so womanlike she turned the subject deftly. “I’m so wet and cold, Esau; I’ll change my things and rest for a little while. You will watch Ian carefully; he is crazy and may do himself mischief, and we must not lose him now he has come back to us, and father is too old and frail to hold him if he struggles.”

“Yes, yes, run away and tuck yourself in warm and snug. I’ll keep my weather-eye on your brother.”

She thanked him again in her pretty way, and, glad to escape his questions, went to her father’s room and stripped off her soaking garments, for she was a sensible lass, and long experience in the slums had taught her that without health man or maid can do but little for those they wish to aid, no matter how willing the spirit may be.

Esau went almost reverently into the room where M‘Glusky was lying on Jean’s bed. He felt somehow that he was treading upon holy ground, for Jean’s bedroom seemed to the rough sailor like a sanctuary. He saw the old pastor on his knees by the bedside praying. His two frail, white hands were clasped around one of M‘Glusky’s big paws, and an unfamiliar lump rose in Esau’s throat.

M‘Glusky sat up in bed and glared at the old man. He did not seem to be conscious of the presence of a third party, nor did he evidently know the kneeling figure.

Speaking thickly, and moistening his parched lips with his swollen tongue, whilst his red eyes glared wolfishly, he said, “Ye leein’ gutter drab, ca’ yersel’ Jean agin an’ A’ll tear yer jaws asun’er. Ye’re no’ Jean.” Then, wrenching his hand from the feeble clasp of the loving hands that held him, he raised his clenched fist like a hammer to bring it down on the bowed head beside him. But with a cat-like spring the sailor was upon him in time to stay the blow.

The drink demon was inside M‘Glusky now, and for some minutes he struggled fiercely. The sailor had handled men in that condition before, and he did not spend his breath in words, for he realised that the creature he was dealing with was for the time being beyond the pale of reason.

It was an awful struggle while it lasted, for the reformer's old power of body seemed to have come back to him. He grasped Esau by the throat with his left hand and dealt him blow after blow on the side of the head with his right fist, until the room rocked and swayed before the sailor's dazed eyes. But he hung on to the maniac, nor was he over gentle in his methods. He got hold of M'Glusky's left thumb and gave it a wrench and a twist that nearly tore it from its socket, and so freed his wind-pipe. Then the two strong men wrestled and twisted about on that little white bed, one fighting for his life, the other thirsting to kill, and the poor old pastor leaning against the opposite wall could do naught but pray.

It came to M'Glusky in his madness that the devil had put on human shape and form and was wrestling with him for his soul. "A ken ye the noo, ye auld deil's buckie, A ken ye!" he raved. "A'm no' feared o' ye. A'll skelp ye back tae the pit."

Esau answered never a word. He was trying to wear the madman out, and past experience taught him that more lives than his own might be trembling in the balance.

"Get ye ahint me, Satan!" yelled the reformer, and Esau, who knew something of wrestling, wished most devoutly that he could get behind his man and pin him face downwards until the frenzy passed.

"A'm the flail o' the Lord. A'll beat ye as wi' a besom!" shrieked the writhing giant, and, suiting actions to words, he rained blow after blow on the sailor's ribs with such tremendous force that the wonder was he did not stave the sailor's ribs in.

Esau knew that he could not stand this sort of thing much longer. He was a very strong man, but his strength was ebbing fast.

“Ye’ll no’ drag me doon tae the pit, ma braw deil, an’ if ye dae, A’ll fecht wi’ ye amang the cinders, A’ll wrestle wi’ ye on the hobbs o’ —— itsel’. Dae ye tak’ a M‘Glusky for a weaklin’? Ye ocht tae ken us better, for ye hae had some o’ us in yer time.” He threw both his arms around Esau’s body, clenching his hands just where the buttocks and the backbone meet, and gave a mighty heave. Neither man nor devil could have stood that strain. With a sobbing, gasping cry Esau bent inwards and lay limp in the grasp of the Scot, and as he did so a white-robed figure, almost childish in its slenderness, came swiftly from the doorway, bearing a harp.

M‘Glusky, sitting up in bed holding the limp form of the sailor in a granite grasp, watched this apparition. Jean, for it was Jean who had sprung out of bed when she heard the sounds of strife, sat herself down without a word, and her fingers swept the chords with unfailing touch. Then her voice, sweet and low, floated on the air:

“While shepherds watched their flocks by night.”

It had been M‘Glusky’s favourite hymn in the old days, and her woman’s wit had told her this would soothe him if anything would. His grisly, battered head, to the adornment of which Esau had added not a little in the late encounter, went up and down, to and fro, accompanying the air. Then he laughed.

“The auld deil’s deid as a ham!” he shouted, and he sent poor Esau crashing to the floor as though he had tossed a bundle of papers.

Jean sang on. The big tears rolled down the madman’s face. His frenzy passed away, and with it his strength, and he lay back as weak as a mothering woman. Then Esau rose, and

taking a stout cord from around his own trunk he lashed M‘Glusky securely to the bedstead. He was a past master in the art of tying knots, and he tied the Scot so that he could not move more than a few inches either hand or foot. It hurt Jean to notice the grim force he put into the knotting.

“Don’t hurt him more than you can help, Esau,” she pleaded. “He was a good man before—before the fall.”

“So was Adam,” remarked Esau, “but he made the devil’s own trouble after, begging your pardon, Miss Jean, for the language. Don’t fear that I shall hurt that lamb. Why, he’s as hard as boiler plates, and if he got hold of me when he was fit and well I couldn’t live three minutes with him. I’ve handled sailors and firemen mad with drink many a time and never met a man I couldn’t best, but that man hauls and pulls like a donkey engine. He’s a steam-winch in trousers, that’s about what he is. Now, you take the pastor away with you; I’m going to nurse this patient my own way, sailor fashion, and you will only be in the road.”

“You won’t hurt him more than you can help,” she pleaded. He laughed then in spite of the terrible pain in his ribs. “He’s not easy to hurt, Miss Jean, but you can rest in peace, I’ll do him no harm.”

When they had left him Esau slipped quietly into his own room, and diving his arm into his trunk drew forth a bottle. He found it easily in the dark, because, sailor-like, he knew every inch of his own trunk, and could find a needle in it without a light.

Going back to the patient he lit his pipe, forgetful for the time of the room he was in, because the awful mauling he had received at the hands of the reformer had taken a lot of the piety out of him.

After a while M‘Glusky began to writhe and moan.

“Gie me a drink! A’ll gang ma weys as quiet as a lamb if ye’ll gie ma just wan glass o’ brandy.” He was pleading with some pot-boy in one of the low haunts he had been in the habit of frequenting; a moment later he was foaming at the mouth and spitting out blasphemies of the most awful kind.

Esau poured some brandy into a cup and held it to his lips. He gulped it down as if it had been milk. “Mair!” he cried, “gie me mair;” and when he could not get it he raved and struggled like a demon, until the sailor gagged him with a towel, and he lay glaring at the white-washed ceiling, unable to rise, and unable to make a noise.

After a long time a timid knock came on the door. The sailor went and found poor Jean, very hollow-eyed and weary, on watch outside.

“Is he any better now?” she whispered.

The kind-hearted sailor took in the situation at a glance, and determined to risk his soul by lying once more in a good cause, comforting himself afterwards that he had often done a similar thing in a bad one. Putting his finger to his lip he whispered back, “Hush, Miss Jean, hush, he’s as quiet as a babe.” This was true, for the cords and the towel were doing their work wondrously well.

“Is he asleep?” she asked in the same guarded manner.

“Sleeping like a saint,” lied Esau, unblushingly. “Now, Miss Jean, you run away to bed and get some sleep too, for you will have to stand your watch later on, and he may not be so peaceful when he wakes.”

She touched his hand with a little caressing motion of her own soft palms and went off to her bed, leaving the sailor

thrilling and throbbing from head to foot with the magnetism of her touch, for though she did not know it, the sailor was ready to lay down his life for love of her. Every now and again Esau removed the gag and gave the frenzied creature on the bed a dram.

In the morning, when she came to him to ask after the patient, he added still further to his sins by vowing that his office had been a sinecure. “He never disturbed me once, not even when I dozed off in my chair for an hour.” She beamed upon him on receipt of that glib falsehood and wanted to know if he thought the drink craving was dying.

“It’s dead, or pretty near dead, Miss Jean. You run out and get a little fresh air, and ask a doctor to come and see me. I want a little talk with a medicine man for I know a famous cure for brandy craving.”

When she had gone he hid the empty brandy bottle in his sea chest, for he would not have let her know that he had deceived her for all the gold in Glasgow. But he was not so reticent with the medico when he came. “Send a man to relieve me, watch and watch about. I’ll pay the score,” said he. “And look here, sir! Send me some more brandy. Put it in a stone jar and label it ‘Embrocation.’ Say it’s for my damaged ribs. Get me a good man to help me, and we’ll pull this chap through, though he’s had a rough passage. But he has the strength of a young volcano just starting business, and that will stand to him in the end.”

The doctor had had a lot of experience—most Scots doctors have in cases of that kind—and he found a good man to help Esau, and in the end they pulled him through.

The first time he saw Jean after he had regained his senses he said bitterly, “Weel, weel, A micht hae kent it wis yer han’

that pu’ed me back tae life, but A dinna think ye acted wisely. A wud be better deid.”

# CHAPTER XIV

## IN THE DRINKING DEN

SLOWLY M'Glusky mended, and his strength came back aided by the careful nursing of Jean and Esau; but his spirit was gloomy, for his conscience troubled him sorely in that house, where every nook and cranny spoke to him of the days when he was a Christian with a mission. Never a word of reproach left the lips of winsome Jean or her father. The old pastor clung lovingly to the man in his downfall, treating him with wondrous gentleness. He seemed to divine that M'Glusky's soul was too sore to hear reproof, but he prayed for him in the seclusion of his own room and left the rest in the hands of his Master. Poor Jean was nearly happy again, waiting upon the stricken giant. No one knew better than she how low he had fallen, for she heard his name mentioned scoffingly every time she went out to attend to her mission work, and yet he was dearer to her in his downfall than he had ever been when he fancied himself a pillar of the world and the mouthpiece of God. After a time Elise called to see Jean and met M'Glusky, and her heart softened towards him when she saw what a wreck he had become; womanlike, she blamed the woman who had brought about his downfall more than she blamed the man himself. After that she became a frequent visitor, and in the end old John M'Glusky came, and he and Elise carried the reformer off to his uncle's home. It grieved both the old pastor and Jean to have the prodigal taken from them in that manner. To Jean it was especially hard, because she felt somehow that the Lord had given him into her keeping, when she remembered how she had found him that wet and bitter night hanging to the lamp-post in the

slum, and remembered also how he had raised his hand and beaten her to the ground; she felt that the Lord had given her a special mission to help this man on the path of his own reformation; yet she did not utter a word when old John M‘Glusky, in his masterful way, informed her that he intended to take his nephew out of Glasgow.

“A wull tak’ him awa’ wi’ me frae this accursed ceety,” said the old Scot, “an’ maybe in time he wull forgit hoo low he has fallen, an’ when he is his ain mon again he may marry Elise an’ gladden ma auld he’rt, an’ his bairns may grow up roon ma knee an’ gladden the winter o’ ma life; but, Jean, ma lass, he will no soon forget yersel’ an’ yer kindness.”

And Jean had smiled bravely and let M‘Glusky go with his relation without a sign of the pain that was gnawing at her heart.

The news that M‘Glusky had returned to Lough Slough spread like wild-fire. The folk had not heard of his fall, and they feared greatly that he was coming to reform them, and a lot of them at once joined the various benefit societies in the district, so that in the event of his ministry taking a physical shape they might have the benefit of sick pay and a decent funeral.

But Sabbath came and Sabbath went and he did not interfere with the life of the place, and they wondered greatly. He did not go amongst the people at all. A tall, gaunt, grim figure, he usually moved about just after dawn, and at the fall of the day returned to his uncle’s house, only to move out again after dusk.

Elise was a kind of guardian angel to him during those weeks and months. She never worried him, she did not try to draw him on the question of the diva. She knew all about that

episode, and, if the truth must be told, she liked him better for his sinning than she ever liked him for his saintliness. She knew that he was human, and everything that is human is frail, and not one woman in a million likes a flawless man.

He found her sympathy very soothing. A man who has been hurled headlong out of every hotel he entered for months is apt to long for peace and quietness, and M'Glusky had had his fill of unrest.

One day, when she was more than usually gentle with him, he said to her:

"Elise, lassie, dae ye ken A been herdin' wi' swine an' livin' on husks?"

"Why talk of it, Ian," she had answered. "Let it be as a dream of the night. Try and think of it as something that has passed and gone. You are like a soldier who has been in battle. You have your scars, but now the bugle is still and you can rest. Forget it all, and think only of the joys that lie in front of you."

He lifted his big eyes to her face and they were full of sorrow.

"A'm like a sodger, an' A hae ma scars o' battle as ye say, lassie, but," he added with a sob, "a' ma wounds are ahint me, lassie. They're no' honourable woun's. A got them rinnin' awa', no' standin' up fechtin' like a mon. A'm nae dom guid, an' that's the truth o't. A'm a cooard."

But she would not listen to him.

"I saw her," she said, "and she was enough to turn any young man's brain. She was full of charm and beauty."

"Tae the deil wi' her," he growled. "A wudna gie an auld cloot for a dozen sic as she wis. A wis sae cocksure o'

masel'; that did a' the mischief."

"Come and sing," cried she, "and forget the past;" and she ran her fingers over the keys of the piano and sang for him, soothing the bitter mood and drawing him out of himself, until he once more had eyes to see with, and he saw that she was passing fair. He noted how glossy her hair was, and how big and bright her eyes. He saw that she had a figure that would just fit the crook of a man's arm, and something stirred within him.

It was in the spring time, and he was still only a young man, a very young man, and his blood rose, so that he began to follow her about with his eyes, and the rustle of her skirts was pleasant music in his ears, and old John M'Glusky, fancying he could already see that wonderful cradle which he was to rock in the sunshine, made sly, pawky jests, which sent Elise flying out of his presence with blazing cheeks and tip-tilted nose. Whereupon old John would chuckle to himself, and treat himself to an extra glass of his favourite beverage before turning in o' nights, for he flattered himself that he was the slyest old matchmaker in the world and a great hand with the lassies and their affairs.

But a lot of rain had to fall before his wishes were realised. One fine day that other guardian of Elise's, the merchant prince from Glasgow, came to Lough Slough, and he at once set himself to upset the match. He knew all about the reformer's wallowing in the mire, and he did not scruple to let Elise know all that was in his heart. She despised the man because she did not believe that he had an atom of real religion in his composition. He told her that until the terms of her father's will were satisfied she should not touch a bawbee of his fortune unless she married a man of his choice, and he

let her know that M‘Glusky was not the kind of person he would ever approve of as a husband for his ward. He rolled his eyes and pulled down the corners of his mouth, and likened himself to a guardian angel watching over a priceless treasure, until Elise felt ill in his presence, for she had long made up her mind concerning the worth of his religion. She had not lived in his house for years without hearing hints dropped by seafaring visitors concerning his coffee plantations in the Congo State, where slave labour was used to grow the bean out of which this pious vessel made his fortune.

Once she had heard a bluff, rough skipper cry passionately to the pious fraud:

“I would not drink a cup of your coffee, man, for a hundred pounds, for I should be drinking the black blood of women and men who are crucified in order that you may pile up your millions.”

M‘Glusky avoided the Glasgow guardian. He knew the fellow was a fraud, and, low as he had sunk, he had yet manliness enough to feel that this person had touched depths which he could never bottom, because his sins were the sins of impulse and passion, whilst the merchant’s sins were the outcome of a lifetime of careful cold calculation.

But it seemed as if Fate was playing into the hands of the old hypocrite, for one night as M‘Glusky was passing through the village of Lough Slough a devil came to him and tempted him so that he fell again. He could not tell just how it happened. All he knew was that he had started out for a walk, feeling much as usual, when, as he was passing the door of a drinking den, there came to him a longing for just one dram. He fought against the craving with all his might, but the devil

he was carrying upon his back whispered, first in one ear and then in the other, “Just one drink—no more.” He gave his mighty shoulders a shake as if to unseat the imp and moved on, but it takes something more than human will to get rid of a devil of that kind. One needs the help of God at such times, nothing else will do. Had he wheeled off the highway and dropped down in some quiet nook upon his knees and offered up the prayer of the publican, “God help me, a sinner,” he might have been saved, for, let sceptics say what they will, there is more efficiency in that old-world cry than in anything else that ever left human lips. It is so human, so real, and God who made us knows and understands.

But M‘Glusky had not yet learned his lesson thoroughly. He was still a stiff-necked barbarian at heart, and he had to drink sorrow’s cup to the dregs before he could be purified. He thought he was strong enough to stand alone, and he trusted in his own strength, boasting inwardly of his will power. Yet his feet brought him back to the door again and again, and at last he entered, determined to have just one dram and then leave. He felt sure he could control his appetite, and the devil riding upon his shoulders grinned, feeling sure of his victim. He went to the bar and called for a brandy, and as soon as he tasted it he felt like a man who lays aside a heavy burden. The liquor went straight to its mark. He felt light and happy. Why should he now care? Why not do as others did? So he filled his glass again and yet again.

A miner present sang a song. M‘Glusky lifted up his voice in the chorus and sang also. Then he drank again, and so the hours sped on, and he was the blithest of the blithe, and the men crowding round him made him a sort of pot-house hero.

Suddenly someone tossed a jest in his teeth that he did not relish, some reference to his old preaching days. He pushed his way towards the speaker.

"A'll thank ye tae mak' nae mock an' scoff o' religion," he scowled, pushing his white face into that of the man he addressed. He had reached the sure and certain stage when drink makes a man nasty and ready for any trouble.

A good-natured toper standing by thumped him hard on the back. "Don't get quarrelsome, Mac! Fill up and drink with me!" he cried.

"A'll be thankin' ye no' tae belt me on ma backbane. A'm no' wantin' ony thumpin' unless—unless," he repeated, "ye're seekin' trouble. If ye are, maybe ye'll get mair than ye can carry."

Seeing his mood, the miners left him to himself, and he stood and drank alone, savagely and quickly, and every glass added a new devil to his blood.

The potman, who was new to the district, recognised that M'Glusky was a note of discord, and advised him to clear off home. He spoke loudly, like one anxious to cover himself with glory. The men who were drinking stayed their hands; some held their pots or glasses to their lips and looked sideways at M'Glusky; some, reaching out to take up their liquor, refrained from lifting it. They watched to see the effect of that speech, and the potman, noticing the effect of his oratory, felt very proud of himself.

Putting his elbows on the bar, and craning his neck forward, he repeated the advice previously given. Without a word the reformer reached out both his big hands, and, taking the potman, a big, bony fellow, by the ears, commenced to draw him bodily over the bar.

“Let go!” shrieked the fellow. “Let go, you maniac, do you want to pull my head off?”

“A’m no parteec’lar, ma buckie, but if yer ears dinna come oot A’m thinkin’ yer heid will, unless ye clammer ower this side quick.”

The potman took the hint and clambered over the bar, and when he did so M‘Glusky hurled him through the door out into the night. An onlooker ventured the opinion that M‘Glusky was a misbegotten savage, unfit to be at large, whereupon the reformer fell upon him, but every hand was raised against him, so that he got more than he gave, and he did not stint in his giving.

For nearly a week he wandered about Lough Slough, a terror to mankind and a curse to himself. Elise was fiercely contemptuous, declaring that he was not worth a second thought, but all the same she mourned for him in secret, until she became haggard and careworn and the bloom left her cheeks.

Vainly John M‘Glusky pleaded with his nephew. Whilst the fit was on him, drink he would, and nothing seemed able to stop him.

The other guardian of Elise, meeting M‘Glusky one afternoon, told him that he was a disgrace to humanity. M‘Glusky looked at him for a moment. Then, the drink working in his excited brain, he whispered hoarsely:

“A ken ye, burn yer gran’mither. A ken ye. Ye’re the mon wi’ the coffee plantations in the Congo. Noo, dae ye ken me?”

The old hypocrite declared that he did. “You are Ian M‘Glusky, a drunken, worthless outcast, that’s who and what you are.”

“Ye leear, A’m no’ that. A’m the embodied spirit o’ the puir slaves ye hae dune tae death in the malarial swamps oot yon’er. A’m gaun to tak’ vengeance for a’ the wrangs ye hae dune tae them, ye Bible-preachin’ hypocrite.”

At that moment he was just mad enough to imagine that he was anything or anybody from Joshua downwards. The liquor had got to his brain again, and it was a bad moment for the pious fraud. Arching his back and spreading his fingers until they looked like claws, he began to dance round Elise’s guardian like some imp in search of a soul. Great beads of sweat broke out all over the victim. He fancied that his last hour had arrived. Every moment M‘Glusky became more mad. He was on the verge of delirium, for he had been drinking raw spirits like water for many days and had eaten next to nothing. “A’m a deil an’ a servant o’ the deil, an’ A’ll tak’ ye tae yer maister the noo.”

Snatching the trembling wretch up in his arms as if he had been an infant, he ran with him to the edge of an old quarry.

“Wud ye like tae say a wee bit prayer afore A throw ye ower?” he demanded.

The merchant said he was not fit to die.

“A ken that richt weel. Ye’re no’ fit tae dee, an’ ye’re no’ fit tae live, ye slave-drivin’, money-grabbin’ deil’s buckie.”

“Give me time to prepare my last account,” wailed the merchant.

“A’ll gie ye sax minutes, nae mair. Gang yer ways ahint yon clump o’ bushes, an’ pray wi’ a’ yer micht, for ye’ve got an awfu’ lot tae answer for, mon. Hurry wi’ yer petition tae the pearly gates, or maybe ye’ll get tae the bar o’ Judgment afore yer ain prayers.”

“I will, I will,” moaned the fraud. He tottered to the bushes, and M‘Glusky turned his back and peered over the edge of the quarry.

The pious humbug took one good look at the madman, and then, tucking up his coat-tails, he fled with all the speed his years and weight would permit. He seemed to have an idea that the “pearly gates” were on earth, and a good distance off by the way in which he got over the ground. As he ran he did not pray. All his thoughts were bent strictly on business, and it was his business just then to put a mile or two between himself and the lunatic who wanted to represent the souls of slaves who had perished in the malarial swamps of the Congo. Every now and then he turned his head so that his chin rested upon his shoulder, but he was not admiring the scenery.

When the six minutes had expired M‘Glusky went to the clump of bushes and discovered that the sacrifice had fled. Looking round the landscape he caught sight of the fleeing form afar off. Without a word he started in pursuit, and people going and coming on their daily business were amazed to see the big, bony Scot tearing across country, taking hedges and ditches in his stride like a wild thing.

The merchant, thanks to the start he had got, arrived at John M‘Glusky’s house just in time to bang the door and turn the key ere the reformer reached the step.

“What’s awa’ wi’ ye?” cried John, but the merchant answered never a word. He dived down into the lower regions of the house and hid in the coal cellar, and there he prayed more devoutly and fervently than he had ever prayed before, but he did not pray for rain, nor for the sinful soul of the reformer.

That night M‘Glusky disappeared as if the earth had swallowed him up. At dusk some boys saw him sleeping by a hayrick, and that was the last of him for many a long, long day in those parts. He awoke, and somehow his brain had cleared, and he knew what he had done, and a great shame fell upon him. He thought of Elise and of old John M‘Glusky, and wished that the hills would fall upon him and envelop him.

Brushing the wisps of hay from his clothes, he strode off and cared not where his feet might lead him. He had only one idea. He would reach the sea and cross the water to a new land where no man knew him. On and on he walked, and asked no man what lay in front of him.

“A’ll gang whaur ma destiny leads me,” he muttered to himself, “it disna maitter whaur.”

When he was hungry he poached from the preserves of the rich. He stole recklessly, but his very recklessness was his safeguard. All the tricks that he had learned from the gipsies on that first tramp of his he put into practice, and easily snared game enough to satisfy his needs. He would walk boldly into a cottage, throw down a rabbit or a pheasant, or any other fruit of his depredations, pick up a loaf of bread and stalk off without a word, and the women saw something in his face that made them pity him, so that they held their peace until he was fairly upon his way.

At last he saw the sea, and the sight made him hurry his footsteps. He did not linger in the streets of the seaport town. He just strode on until he came to the docks, where he saw a vessel making ready for immediate departure. He went up the gangway as if he owned it.

“Are you a passenger?” asked an officer.

“Are ye the mon in chairge o’ this vessel?” he demanded.

“No, but—”

“Weel, then, keep yer lugs closed an’ dinna yammer at me. A’m wantin’ wark, an’ A’m gaun tae hae it.”

The officer laid his hand on a belaying pin in an aggressive fashion. The reformer moved close to him.

“A’m no’ a mind reader,” he whispered sweetly, “but if ye’re thinkin’ o’ swattin’ me with that ye’d better no’, for if ye dae A’ll mak ye bite bits aff it, an’ eat a’ ye bite, burn ma gran’mither if I dinna.”

The officer laughed.

“You’re a beauty, you are. Are you looking for a job as skipper, or as lady’s-maid?”

What M‘Glusky might have said in reply is not mine to chronicle, for at that instant the chief engineer came hurriedly up from below, and his face was black with rage.

“Hello, Dougal, what’s up below?” called the officer, who was fondling the belaying pin.

“A’m twa men short in the stokehole, that’s what’s wrang wi’ me, an’ A’ll no’ start twa men short for ony skipper. A had enough o’t last trip.”

“A’m wantin’ wark,” put in M‘Glusky, with scant ceremony.

“Are ye desertin’ yer wife, or are ye breakin’ gaol, ye lang gallows-lookin’ loon,” sneered the chief engineer, whose strong point was evidently not civility.

M‘Glusky looked him up and down in his gentle way. Then, addressing the universe generally, he said:

“A Hielanmon’s a gentlemon, nae maitter hoo puir he may be, but a Lowlan’ Scot’s got nae mair breedin’ in him than a

street dog. A'm thinkin' there's a Lowlan' Scot no' far frae me this minute. A can smell somethin' that mak's ma stummic heave."

The chief engineer took the handspike from the officer.

"When ye hae signed on for this trip, ma buckie," said he, "A'll belt ye fore an' aft wi' this if ye dinna ken hoo to be civil."

M'Glusky gazed over the chief engineer's head as if that person did not exist in the flesh. Then wreathing his weather-beaten face into what he considered a smile, he said to the mate:

"Wud ye min' len'in' me a sma'-tooth comb?"

"What the devil do you want with a small-tooth comb?" chuckled the mate, who scented trouble not afar off for the engineer.

M'Glusky pointed his finger meditatively towards the engineer and said solemnly:

"A want tae catch that. A dinna like tae see it crawlin' aboot the deck."

Without another word the engineer swung the handspike and levelled M'Glusky with the deck, and then kicked him into the scruppers.

"There!" he cried, as he turned to go down into the engine-room, "if ye sign on ye ken what tae expec' frae Red Dougal, the engineer. Maybe A'll no' mak' a gude fireman oot o' thee, but A'll mak' ye a civil mon or a corpse."

A deck hand threw a few pails of sea water over M'Glusky and revived him.

"Are you going to sign on for this trip?" queried the mate with the grin.

"Wherefore no'?" demanded M'Glusky.

"Oh, I've no objection," was the reply, "but I thought perhaps you might consider the 'chief' a bit too hasty-tempered to suit you."

"Are ye meanin' him wha swatted me wi' the crawbar the noo?"

"That's the gentleman I was referring to."

"Yon mon is a wee bit hasty," admitted M'Glusky, as he wiped the blood that was trickling into his eyes with the back of his hand, "but A dinna think he's what ye micht ca' a spitefu' mon."

"Good Lord!" whispered the mate to the purser, "what kind of a cannibal is this we have shipped? He does not think the chief spiteful. Did you see the gash in his skull the handspike made? I wonder what kind of a person he would label real bad-tempered?"

"I know his sort," was the purser's reply. "I shipped with one once, named M'Glusky. You mark my words, old man, Red Dougal will wish he had gone to sea short-handed before we reach the Congo."

By one of those strange freaks of fortune which seem so unaccountable to mortals M'Glusky had drifted on to the ship which Esau Bent had so long served on as first mate, but Esau was not travelling to the Congo this voyage; he was staying with Jean and her father in the little room that had once been M'Glusky's. The old pastor was lying at death's door, and the good-hearted sailor would not go to sea and leave the lass he had learned to love with all his heart alone to battle with poverty and sickness. So he had pleaded ill-health and had missed a voyage, and both Jean and her father found him a comforter and friend.

From some words the dear old Christian had let fall Esau learned that the man he had nursed through the drink delirium was no relative, only a sinner whom the pastor loved. From Jean he gathered the story of M'Glusky's departure to Lough Slough with Elise and Uncle John. But she did not tell him of that second fall of the reformer's, though she knew of it; neither had she told her father, for she knew how such news would grieve him, and Jean made it one of her life's tasks to keep sorrow away from everyone when she could do so.

Once when Esau was sitting with the dying pastor the old man said:

"Esau, I would give much to see Ian M'Glusky once more before I die. He is with his relatives at Lough Slough, but if the laddie knew that my sands were nearly run I think he would come to me and bid me farewell. I loved him, Esau, and I think he loved me."

"I will go and find him and bring him to you," said the kind-hearted seaman, "and when he comes we will take watch and watch about and nurse you back to health."

The pastor smiled sadly, for he knew that the shadows were already around his feet and that he would soon have to take the last long journey.

It was a sorrowful household that Esau found at Lough Slough. He learned from Elise that M'Glusky had gone, and from the Glasgow guardian he learnt also that there were some who devoutly hoped he would never return. The guardian told him of the hunt, and the hide in the coal hole, adding:

"The man's possessed of a devil. He sought my life."

Now Esau knew a good deal about the business the guardian did in the Congo, and it struck him that if M'Glusky

had taken the old sinner's life he would not have left the world much poorer.

It was with a sorrowful heart that the sailor returned to Glasgow. He was not a religious man, but he hated giving pain to those who were undeserving of suffering, so in the hope of doing good he did evil. He lied first to the pastor and then to Jean. M'Glusky was away, he said, and he painted a word picture of the reformer that would have made an angel tilt its halo a bit on one side with pride and vain-glory. He told a gorgeous falsehood concerning M'Glusky's mission work among the rough miners of Lough Slough, saying that the reformer had stamped out drink in the place and had wrestled mightily with the devil and won.

A look of ineffable joy spread over the aged pastor's worn face.

"Poor, dear, brave Ian," he lisped. "Do you hear what Esau says, Jean? Our Ian has overcome the tempter and is doing mighty work in the vineyard of the Lord, and Esau says that the people say Ian has become as gentle as a lamb."

As a matter of fact, at the very moment the pastor was uttering this eulogy M'Glusky was fighting a battle royal with three firemen on board ship, and the willow wand of peace he used on that occasion was the blunt edge of a fireman's shovel.

Jean knew that Esau was lying, but she could not find it in her heart to reproach him in the presence of her father, for she saw that the sun would not rise and set very often ere he would be done with earthly troubles. But when, a little later, Esau tried to tell her some more of M'Glusky's goodness, she told him that she knew his story was false from end to end, and bade him beware of imperilling his immortal soul. Yet

when Esau retired crestfallen and shame-faced from her presence, she almost loved him for trying to shield the character of the friend of the family. She knew that the sailor loved her dearly, knew that the time was very near when she would be homeless and well-nigh friendless, and her woman's instinct told her that the sailor would make a husband who would shield her from all trouble and distress. She knew that he would be good to her, and wrap her round with his honest love as a Scots mother wraps her bairn in her plaid to shield it from the winds of winter.

Late one night M'Glusky, in mid-ocean, was drinking raw rum out of a tin pannikin in the firemen's quarters of his ship. He was black and grimy with the toil of the day, and a crowd of men equally dirty and thirsty were sitting or sprawling round him. The den was stifling, but a slush lamp threw a sickly gleam here and there; the talk was putrid, the talk that is common to such places. It might have been a little nook cut out of Hades, with M'Glusky as the master fiend. One of his eyes was quite closed by a lump of discoloured flesh, his mouth was all awry, and the rest of his face was like a lily that a twelve-stone barmaid has sat upon in the dark. He had had an argument with the chief engineer, Red Dougal, and the chief had snatched up a spanner, a favourite toy of his under similar circumstances, and had visited the face of the Scot with it.

"You look awfu'," said a youth, peering over the rim of his pannikin at what M'Glusky called his face.

"A'm no' feeling as if A wis han'-painted tae be hung in the Royal Academy," replied the Scot. "Red Dougal is very handy wi' a bit spanner." Then he chuckled and spilt a lot of his rum down his naked, hairy chest. "A may be wrang, A

maistly am, but A haud the opinion that Red Dougal isna a sicht tae win a beauty prize the nicht. A held him by the whiskers wi' his face up against the drivin' wheel o' his engines when it was revolvin' twa hunner and twenty times tae the minute, intil I cudna tell which was the lower lip an' which was the bald patch on the top o' his heid. A dinna think A hurt the mon as much as he deserved, but A gied him a bit tae remember me by. A saw ane o' his eyebrows clingin' tae the drivin' wheel efter they carried him tae his bunk. A'm hopin' he'll no' need it in his wark later on, for he has his guid points—when he's sober."

At that precise hour Jean was playing to her father and singing. He had asked her to bring her harp out of its hiding-place, and she had obeyed him, though her heart was very heavy within her.

"I wonder where Ian M'Glusky is now?" he murmured as she ceased singing. "I am happier now that Esau has told me of his new life, his gentle life. I feel sure he will make a great man some day, Jean."

"I hope so, dear father," she answered.

"I feel," mused the dying man, "that wherever he is a spiritual message from us will reach him and help him to fight the good fight. Sing, Jean, sing for Ian."

"What shall I sing, father?"

"Sing my favourite. I feel it will reach our wanderer." And Jean, holding down her face so that the dim, tired eyes could not note the burning blushes on her cheeks, sang:

"My heart is weary, for the day is long,
Guide and cheer me, keep me straight and strong,
Nothing I need since in Thy smile I bask,
Night draweth near, and rest is all I ask."

When next she bent over him the brave old heart was still for ever, the tired eyes had looked their last on earth and earthly care, and then Jean sobbed as if her very soul would leave her, and her head was resting on the only resting-place that was left her. Esau's broad shoulder was the pillow that her aching brow found. Had M'Glusky been there it might have been different, but M'Glusky was stretched upon his bunk, dazed and stupid with the effect of the raw rum he had drunk. Even in his dreams he did not think of that peaceful haven and the dear old man whose voice he would never hear again. It was not of Jean and her harp he dreamed; instead, he was hunting a red-haired engineer round a swiftly-revolving fly-wheel, with a spanner in his fist, whilst he cursed everything and everyone born in the Lowlands of Scotland.

# CHAPTER XV

## M‘GLUSKY THE SLAVE

“A’ᴍ no’ certain,” remarked M‘Glusky to himself as he walked about on the sun-blistered coast of the Congo, “A’m no’ certain that A hivna made a mistake regardin’ comin’ here. It’s no sae invitin’ tae a mon on the spot as a mon micht think at the ither end o’ the warl’.”

He had forsaken his ship and tried to get work, but found, in a country where black labour was as cheap as mud, a white workman stood no show at all. Nearly all the trade of any importance was in the hands of Britishers, but the Britons did not want a white man when they could get a nigger for a third of the pay that would enable a man of white blood to live.

M‘Glusky tramped near and far, and found that one place was much like another. He found the agents of firms which stood high in England, and he tried them all, but he found that he did not rank higher in the market than any other animal. He was just a working creature, no more, no less, and muscle was cheap on the Congo. Some of the firms he interviewed were very big concerns indeed, and the heads of them ranked high in England, especially amongst the religious societies; but that did not prevent their agents from crushing a white man down to the level of a nigger in the Congo.

So M‘Glusky took work at nigger pay, and he received nigger treatment. He was treated by the agents of the great and good firms as a beast of burden. His life became a hell to him. Toiling in the fever-laden swamps with the mosquitoes biting his half-naked body until they drove him nearly mad,

sleeping at night with the natives, whose bodies reeked until the air in the huts grew putrid, he learned to know what life for a poor white on the Congo really meant. He tried every time a ship came in to get away by working his passage, but nearly all the poor whites in the district were men of very bad repute, and no skipper would ship a hand unless forced to do so. An ordinary captain would ten times rather give a nigger a berth than one of those white outcasts, many of whom had been "marooned" for crimes on the high seas.

There are many things done on the far outskirts of civilisation that would make the hair of the ordinary stay-at-home citizen stand on end, and M'Glusky was in the whirlpool and could not get out of it. So he did his best, and his best was represented in his capacity to work. A man who can work is never hopeless. It is the wastrel who is too lazy to work who is hopeless and past all redemption. But it really seemed for a time as if the Lord had forgotten M'Glusky, he had to go through so many things. He had to go to his toil so early and remain so late that he could not be clean, and he became as verminous as the gang of niggers by whom he was surrounded.

Once a big black nigger overseer on the plantation came upon him trying to make himself clean, and he gave the Scot a cut with the whip. He had been in the habit of cutting folk with his whip on the very smallest provocation. M'Glusky did not say a word when the lash fell upon his bare skin, but his eyes turned red. The nigger overseer was a giant, a man of splendid physical proportions, but he had never met a white man like M'Glusky.

The Scot dropped his hoe and went to the side of the overseer.

“Ye hit me wi’ that whip,” he said in a quiet sort of voice that did not carry any terror to the mind of the negro, who knew not M‘Glusky. “Ye hit me wi’ that whip, an’ noo A’m gaun tae mak’ ye eat it, A am that, the fourteen feet o’ lash an’ then the han’le.”

The big nigger stared at the Scot and raised his whip once more, and as he did so M‘Glusky was on top of him with a bound. The black was of gigantic strength, but for a big man M‘Glusky was wonderfully swift, and speed tells all the time between big men in a struggle. The negro put both his arms round his opponent’s body, and clasping his hands over the spine he did his level best to crack his man’s backbone. But the Scot was not idle. He did not know a thing about scientific wrestling, but he had an intuitive sense in regard to the soft spots of a foe. When he felt the negro’s arms tightening upon his spine like steel bands, he just let his body go with the strain, so that he was as close to the man as if they were under the same skin. This took half the power out of the black, because he had nothing to strain against, and he began to yell and whoop in his rage; but the Scot made no sound. He was grimly quiet, and it is not well to meet a Scot like M‘Glusky when he is quiet in his wrath.

First he took a neck hold and did all that was in him to break the negro’s spinal column, but finding the black too powerful, he shifted his hands and took hold of both ears, working his thumbs towards the man’s eyes all the time.

At first it did not dawn upon the black that this lean mass of muscle might be dangerous, but when he found that the white man was in earnest he also altered his tactics. With a sudden swing he lifted M‘Glusky from the ground and fell forward on the top of him, and then the things he did to the

Scot may not be put in print, but the white man hung on with the tenacity of his breed. Two things he loved with all his soul—money and battle—and it took a great deal to shake him off either when he got to grips.

The black began to grow a little scared of the silent creature who just glared into his face and nearly pulled his head off.

"I will kill and eat you," he blustered.

"A'm thinkin' ye'll no' hae room for me inside ye by the time A hae stuffed that whip han'le doon yer neck," whispered M'Glusky, placidly. "An'," he added as an afterthought, "A'm no' certain A'll no push ma hoe doon on tap o' the whip. Twa courses mak' a meal for a mon."

By-and-by he got the grip he wanted, then his thumbs steadily pressed the eyeballs of the black, and the man at once loosened his hold and tried to tear M'Glusky's hands from his face; but the long, lean, sinewy fingers were like tempered steel and took a lot of shifting. The black rolled off and M'Glusky got on top, but all the time he hung on to his hold.

"Ye hae dealt verra harshly wi' ma mither's son the noo, but A'm thinkin' that by the time A hae dune wi' ye we'll be quits. A'm no' positive, but it's ma opeenion." Saying this he took the negro by the throat with his left hand, and raising his right as if it were a hammer, he beat on the African's nose. In between the blows he spoke quietly, like a philosopher enunciating a great truth.

"A'm no' a vengefu' mon. A dinna cherish hatred in ma he'rt; but A pey ma debts tae the uttermost farthin' an' A like a receipt. A'll no' knock yer nose aff; A'll just beat it in, an' A'm thinkin' ye'll no' lay yer whip on a Scot ony mair in this

warl'. If ye're missin' yer nose ye can jist mak' anither oot o' a bit hoop iron."

Then he did as he had said to that misguided son of Ham. When he felt that he had got a fair return for all the things the black had done to him, he sat upon his chest and began methodically to push the whip down the black's throat.

"A'm of the opeenion," he growled, "that A canna get it a' doon, but A'll gie him enough tae gang on wi', an' the han'le'll keep for anither day."

It was a sight that would have charmed an artist's eye. There lay the mysterious Congo country with wondrous stores of ivory and rubber—"red rubber," as a clever story-writer has called it, because every bit of it is dyed with the blood of slaves done to death in the pathless wilderness of the weirdest country on earth. The semi-tropic foliage rose all round; the waters of the big mysterious river that runs from the Hinterland to the sea so silently, yet with such tremendous volume that a good warship has to struggle to get up it, shimmered in the rays of the setting sun; birds of gorgeous plumage fluttered about in the early evening light; strange, half-intoxicating scents rose on the heavy air; and in the midst of it all sat M'Glusky, nude to the hips, stuffing a fourteen-foot whip-lash down the inside of a badly-battered black overseer who had dared to beat him like a dog.

Out of the plantation came a girl, black as the ace of spades, black but comely, just a slip of a thing, budding from girlhood to womanhood, and the whole of her outfit would not have made a patch to cover the eye of a blind man.

M'Glusky looked at her, and for a moment forgot his vengeance. He noted the almost perfect symmetry of her figure, the beautiful proportions of her limbs, for she was

fashioned upon lines that any sculptor might have taken for a model. He saw that her eyes were big and beautiful, that her teeth were wondrous white and even, and he forgot that she was black.

"Losh!" he whispered, "the lassie has got her bathing suit on the noo, an' A'm thinkin' A had better look doon the throat o' this mon until she passes; it's no richt for a mon tae be peerin' at sic a wark o' Nature."

The lass did not go on to the river. She came quickly to M'Glusky's side and touched him on his bare white shoulder with the tips of one dusky hand.

"Why do you kill the man?" she queried in her quaint, broken tongue.

M'Glusky kept his eyes steadily glued to the ground whilst he motioned with one hand towards his jacket, which hung on an adjacent bush.

"If ye hae nae claes o' yer ain, ma wench, dinna stan' near a puir body like a Scotsmon imperillin' his immortal soul. Tak' ma jacket an' put it on, an' dinna waste ony mair time aboot it than ye can help, for A'm Scots, ye ken."

The nigger wench tossed the jacket across her shoulders and tied the sleeves around her neck, and in this way the garment may have kept the mosquitoes off her back, but if so it was all it did.

"Na, na," cried M'Glusky, "ye micht as well put on a pair o' spurs an' ca' it fu' dress. Mak' an apron o' it an' A'll be able to haud up ma heid."

In her native innocence the damsel did not see anything to blush at, but apparently M'Glusky did, for he kept calling to the maid either to "mak' an apron o't or tae climb a tree."

Finding the maiden obdurate, he snatched the jacket from her neck and put it on her much as a housemaid puts on an ordinary apron, and then he bound it in its place with the overseer's whip.

"Noo, ma wee bit lassie," he said, with a chuckle, "ye're fit for inspection; onywey, ye're mair sae noo than when ye first cam' on ma line o' sicht. A modest mon can stan' in fron' o' ye an' no drap deid wi' shame, but A wudna say muckle for a back view o' ye, ma dear."

The lass turned out to be the daughter of a small negro chief who made his living by driving slaves from the interior down to the coast, where they were purchased by Europeans of all nationalities for plantation work in the terrible miasma swamps where coffee and other things were grown. Some of these planters were Englishmen, be it said to their eternal shame and everlasting disgrace. They procured the slaves upon a six years' tenure, knowing well that not one in fifty of them would live three years on the plantations, and this they called "hiring negro labour," though right well they knew that the poor wretches themselves had no say in the matter. All of them were captured in the Hinterland by well-armed bands of Portuguese and sent along to the coast under armed escorts. If any of them fell sick by the way, man or woman, they were hanged, or flogged until they died. If they made an attempt to bolt they were shot down like wild dogs.

All of the planters' and manufacturers' agents were not guilty of participating in that bloody trade. A few of the better sort refused to touch the traffic in human lives, but this latter sort were few and far between. Most of them took what the Portuguese sent them and asked no questions. Human

life, human souls were nothing, but cheap human labour was everything—for it spelt profit.

M‘Glusky walked by the side of the dusky daughter of the slave-driver, but kept just a little in front of her, because, he said to himself, “A’m no’ likin’ a back view o’ a lady wha disna wear even a coat o’ paint. It wudna maitter sae muckle if she only wore hoops an’ a hat-pin; a mon could imagine she had the rest o’ the gear on.”

She kept up with his long strides easily enough, for like all her people she was a famous walker, and her figure was as upright as a dart. She told him that her father had sent her to find a white man who would travel with his band and act as a sort of intermediary in the matter of buying and selling ivory and rubber, and right well the reformer knew there would be the matter of slave-dealing and stealing also, but all his moral senses were blunted now. He was no longer the man of high and lofty ideals that he had once been; he had fallen to a lower plane, and his one dream was to make money, big money, that he might go back to the old land and flaunt himself before the eyes of all who had known him as a successful, self-made man. Once he had wanted to set the world right, now he did not care if the world stood up on its edge, as long as he himself got wealth. He had sunk into the pit and was unclean.

As he tramped along by the side of the dusky Hebe he suddenly thought of Elise, and he grinned. The damsel saw his mirth and showed her beautiful teeth in a sympathetic smile, for she had been making violent love to him with her eyes ever since they had started to find her father’s camp.

“A’m wonnerin’,” mused M‘Glusky, “A’m just wonnerin’ what ma lady Elise wud say if she met me at this minute wi’

ma new lady-love? Losh!" he gasped, as, coming to a bend in the river, the girl promptly whipped off her newly-found wardrobe, and placing it upon her head waded into the water. She evidently knew that the water at that bend was not more than thigh deep, for she went forward fearlessly, turning to him to beckon him onward. He stood upon the bank hesitating, partly because he had heard that alligators were not scarce, and partly because he did not want to completely spoil his one remaining pair of boots and trousers. She evidently discovered this difficulty, for she came back and wanted to know why he should not do as all the natives and Portuguese did on similar occasions.

"Hoots, toots!" he shouted, "A tell ye A'll no' dae it. If A had a wee bit sporran A micht risk it, but a white mon canna look dacently dressed only in his hat an' a plug o' tobacco. It's bad enough for a blackie, but A tell ye a white mon wi' naething on him is jist an awfu' sicht. A wud blush to see masel' in the water."

The girl only laughed in his face, which roused his wrath.

"Rin, rin, cross the bit o' water, an' dinna look ahint ye till A whustle, ye black diamond. A'm thinkin' there maun be dochters o' the scarlet wumman baked black as weel as white, an' A'm wonnerin' if ye're ane o' them. A ken weel it wis a white sister o' yer ain that made the son o' Jamie M'Glusky an ootcast an' a wastrel. Rin, wumman, or by the Lord A'll dress ye frae heid tae fute in a coat o' river mud an' stick grass a' ower ye."

The girl did not understand half this tirade, especially that part relating to scarlet women, but she could tell from his manner that he was angry, so she fled. Then, planting himself behind a cactus bush, the reformer unrobed and made himself

a kilt of boughs torn from a leafy bush that grew near by. This he did by pushing the prongs of the bough through his belt.

"A'm no' what A wud ca' in fu' dress even noo," he muttered complacently, "but A'm no' a white heathen. A wudna like to meet Elise the noo, especially as the win' is beginnin' to blaw an' the leaves on ma kilt seem tae stan' on edge, but A'm thinkin' it'll dae for a blackie, especially if she disna get a view o' me sideweys. A wud gie a dollar for a goat's-hair sporran this minute, it wud add dignity tae me. A'm hopin' the water will no' carry ma bush kilt awa'. If it does I'll hae to gang oot o' the river on the other side backwards, an' even then A'll no' be without reproach. A wudna walk doon the high street o' our village like this on the Sawbath for twa poun's in siller. Burn ma gran'mither, but I wudna."

However, the water did not carry away his bush kilt, and he landed on the other bank with some show of self-respect.

Without any further adventure he reached the camp of the slave-driver and began at once to haggle for terms, and so well did he battle for big wages that he went up very high in the estimation of the dealer in human lives, who considered that he had found a treasure.

"When dae we start?" he demanded when terms had been arranged to his satisfaction. The slaver was anxious to be off at once, but M'Glusky would not agree. "Yon Portuguese mon owed me twa dollars an' a hauf, an' A'm no gaun tae let him dae me oot o't. A'll jist gang awa' an' git it, an' then mak' ma way back tae ye wi' a' speed."

It was twelve miles each way through rough jungle, and most men would have forfeited two and a half dollars rather

than tramp that distance to get it, especially when it was borne in mind that the river was dangerous to a man who did not know the shallows, on account of the alligators. Then there was the fear that the friends of the nigger overseer might seek to make trouble in return for the things M'Glusky had done to that coloured personage, and, lastly, it was almost certain that the Portuguese owner of the plantation would try and shuffle out of the debt, small as it was, for a Portuguese trader and planter never pays anyone if he can help it.

Taking all these things into consideration very few men except M'Glusky would have gone for that little bit of cash; but he would have talked in his sleep for two years if he had lost as much as a dollar, let alone two and a half. It was only when his thirst had possession of him that he lost the value of money. Then he became a spendthrift, and fretted his soul out afterwards over his wasted cash.

The negro girl offered to accompany him when she found that he was going to return to the plantation, but the Scot declined hastily, saying:

"The mair A see o' ye, an' the mair ye look at me wi' thae big, flashin', wicked black een o' yours, the mair A think ye're a scarlet wumman dyed black; an' A'll no' risk ma immortal soul wi' ye. So gang yer weys tae the deil."

But the dusky creature only laughed at him and would not be offended.

He went upon his journey alone, and did not meet with any happenings of note by the way. When he called upon the planter for his money the Portuguese refused point blank to pay him a cent, alleging that he had done ten dollars' worth of harm to his overseer.

M‘Glusky screwed up his face into a tender smile, and began to try to wheedle the money out of the brown-skinned gentleman, who looked so refreshingly cool in his snow-white suit of duck.

“A hae been a mon o’ wrath in ma time, but A dinna want to mak’ ony mair trouble in the warl’ wi’ mon or wumman. A’m fair weary o’ kickin’ against the pricks. A want tae be a mon o’ peace, but, ma buckie, if ye dinna pey me the siller A hae warked sae hard tae win A’ll beat ye intae sae fine a jelly yer wife’ll be able to pour ye into a jar an’ keep ye corked for future reference. A’ll dae that tae ye, burn ma gran’mither if I dinna.”

The Portuguese gentleman raised his hands to heaven on hearing this gentle threat, and he let it be known at once that he did not want his mortal remains poured into a jar. He told M‘Glusky in very picturesque language what he thought of him. He said that since the Scot had worked in the plantation on equal terms with niggers he was no better than a nigger, and as he had fought with his bare hands like a mere savage he was only entitled to be treated as a savage, and he intimated that if M‘Glusky attempted to put his threats into force he would shoot him with as little compunction as he would shoot a dog or a black man. Just by way of emphasising his statement he drew forth a pair of beautifully-mounted pistols and laid them on the table in front of him.

With the pair of pistols on the table in front of him the Portuguese sat back and sipped his wine, crossing one leg over the other and daintily blowing rings of tobacco smoke from his cigarette in between the sips of wine. He thought he was master of the situation, and rather seemed to enjoy the comedy. He was a man of immense wealth, and two and a

half dollars were no more to him than a speck of mud on the hide of an elephant. But he liked the power of refusing to pay a white man. Like most of his mongrel breed, he was a tyrant to all who were under his heel. All the money he had in the world he had made by slave labour, and such money brings a curse with it always. It is tainted, soiled, unclean money, and brings no real joy to any man.

The Scot looked at the Portuguese, and in his heart the pride of race, always dormant in a Scot, began to surge up. The pistols did not frighten him a bit, but the studied insolence of the Portuguese roused his heavenly temper and made him itch to pick the fellow up neck and crop and throw him out of the window.

"A cam' frae the Hielan's o' Scotland," he said by way of preface, and his rugged face was aglow with wrath.

The Portuguese waved his hand, making a little line of smoke with his cigarette as he did so. Then he shrugged his shoulders and lifted his eyebrows. There was something in the gesture, in the grimace, that carried an insult all the time.

M'Glusky tapped the table with his finger-tips.

"A wud hae ye ken that A'm the meanest bred mon in Scotlan', but I'm better bred than ony son o' a Portuguese drab in a' the Congo. A tell ye, mon, ma mission here is a peaceable ane. A wudna hurt yer feelin's by word or deed, but a Scot's dog is mair o' a gentlemen than the best Portuguese ever born, an' yersel' are the meanest bred cur o' a mean lot. Ye canna wark, an' ye canna fecht; ye hae nae brains an' nae courage; ye can ony steal, ye copper-coloured son o' the spawn o' Judas, an' A wudna say a harsh thing tae ye, but a mon is nae mon if he disna speak the truth at a time like this. A tell ye, if ye were in ma ain toon in Scotlan' they

wudna let ye lick the brine frae a herrin' barrel—ye're no' clean enough."

The Portuguese grew black in the face with wrath, and his thin brown fingers played nervously with the butt of one of the silver-mounted pistols.

"You have not a dollar in the world, you dog," sneered the planter.

"A hivna got a dime the noo, but A'll hae twa dollars an' a hauf afore A leave this room, if A hae tae tie yer ears in knots ahint yer heid tae get them," was the grim reply.

Suddenly M'Glusky's temper gave out under the insolent, contemptuous looks of the planter. Slipping his toe in under the table, he gave it a sudden kick which sent it flying, and the two pistols fell on the floor, far away from the reach of their owner. Then the Scot picked the Portuguese up by the feet and shook him just as if he were shaking a flour bag; a lot of money fell out of the fellow's pockets, out of which M'Glusky collected two dollars and a half.

"A tak' ma ain. A'm no' a thief, ye yellow monkey," he growled, "but A'm o' the opeenion that A ocht tae tak' a bit mair, in the wey o' expenses. A lawyer body wud ca' it 'costs,' but A'm o' the opeenion that 'costs' are maistly a kin' o' legalised robbery, an' A'll hae nane o' it, so A'll jist tak' ma ain twa an' a hauf dollars, nae mair, nae less. An' noo for anither maitter." He picked up the two pistols, and taking a cambric handkerchief from the planter's coat pocket he held one end of it between his dirty thumb and a forefinger. "Tak' haud!" he commanded.

The planter took hold of the other end of the bit of cambric, and the two men glared at each other with just that bit of space between them. The Scot motioned to the two

pistols he had placed on a chair at a convenient spot within reach of his free hand and the free hand of the planter.

"A'll tell ye somethin', ma mon. Ye wud hae shot me when A wis unarmed an' at yer mercy. Ye spoke michty big when ye had twa pistols an' A had nane. Noo, A'm no' a murderin' cooard ready tae shoot an unarmed mon, but A'm a Scot an' A stan' ready tae tak' a fair chance wi' ony mon leevin'. The twa pistols lie there, as near ye as they're near me. When A whustle ye grab a gun an' shoot, an' A'll grab the ither ane an' shoot. A may miss, but A dinna think A wull. A think A'll shoot the tap o' your heid aff, ma buckie. Noo, get yersel' ready, A'm gaun tae whustle, an' when A whustle A'm gaun tae shoot."

The sweat broke out all over the planter's face. He looked across at the white handkerchief and saw the set face of the man he had been insulting, and knew that his dark hour was not far away.

"Haud yersel' thegither, ma buckie; dinna lose all the nerve ye ever had, ye cooard. Are ye ready? A'm gaun to whustle."

He did whistle, and as he did so the planter dropped his end of the handkerchief and dashed headlong through the casement window out into the night.

"Burn his gran'mither!" growled the Scot. "A'm thinkin' A'll hae tae whustle a guid while tae bring the loon back. A only wanted tae dae him a favour. A wud hae killed him wi'oot ony fuss at a'; killed him like a gentlemen. A'm thinkin' it's no' pistols, but a sma'-tooth comb a mon wants when he fechts wi' a Portuguese body."

# CHAPTER XVI

## CONGO ATROCITIES

WITH his "twa dollars an' a hauf" in his pocket M'Glusky made his way back to the slaver's camp, feeling quite satisfied with himself, in spite of the deep scratches upon his legs caused by the thorns of the cactus plants, which bit into his flesh as he strode onwards. He had satisfied two streaks in his nature by obtaining that money. One was his inborn love of siller, the other his pugnacious spirit. He had got his own back in more ways than one, and that is a delight to the soul of such men.

"A'm ready tae gang wi' ye noo," he said to the chief. "A hae put the fear o' the deil intae the he'rt o' that Portuguese mon."

The chief remarked that he would not have offended a person so powerful for two hundred dollars.

M'Glusky looked at the black and his eyes bulged. "Ye wud pairt wi' twa hunner dollars rather than mak' that mon yer enemy?" he gasped. "Dae ye really mean it?"

The chief said he did.

"Mon," whispered M'Glusky, "A wud skin him alive for fifty, an' wud eat him raw for twa hunner."

The next day they broke camp, and the Scot's life as a slaver commenced. Once in the Hinterland he could not get near liquor, and as long as he was free from that curse he was not likely to do any foolish things. His one source of tribulation at this period was the slave chief's buxom daughter. The black belle had made up her mind that

M‘Glusky was the man Nature had designed for her, but the Scot could not, or out of the perversity of his soul would not, see eye to eye with her in the matter.

“A shipwrecked ma soul in Scotlan’ ower a dochter o’ a scarlet wumman. A’m no’ gaun tae shipwreck ma money in Africa on the same rock, lassie,” he said once, “sae as I dinna want tae hurt yer feelin’s A’ll jist bid yer gang tae blazes an’ fin’ anither mon tae grin at. A’m no’ wantin’ ye. A can see the licht o’ Hades in yer big een when ye stan’ glowerin’ at me. A’m no’ a fule. A ken weel what’s in yer min’, an’ A’ll hae nane o’ ye. A’m gaun tae marry a white wumman if A marry at a’,” he added.

The African nodded and laughed. “All white men do that when they leave Africa,” she said. “Lots of them bring white missies here, but they have black missies as well, even the missionaries.”

“A’m no’ believin’ that aboot the missionaries,” snarled M‘Glusky.

“If it is not true,” demanded the unabashed belle, “how is it so many children near the mission stations are neither black nor white?”

“A’m no’ a prophet or a seer, sae dinna speer intae ma min’ ony mair. Maybe the wee buckies are no’ white an’ no’ black because the nigger wimmen at the station hae tae wear claes, or maybe it’s a change o’ diet. A’m no’ a missionary. If A wis A wud put dacent claes on ye the noo, if A had tae mak’ them oot o’ the bark o’ a tree; for it’s no’ improvin’ tae the religious principles, or tae the peace o’ min’ o’ a mon, tae hae a lass hangin’ roon him day an’ nicht, dressed in naethin’ but a smile an’ a clay pipe ahint her ear; oot an’ awa’ or A’ll say things tae ye that’ll either mak’ ye blush or blister yer hide.

Satan is michty po'erfu' when he arrives at a mon in the shape of a bottle of guid speerits, an' the auld deil wrestles michtily wi' the soul o' a sinner when he tempts him wi' siller, but when he comes at a Scotsman in the disguise o' a wumman, losh! he shakes a' the goodness oot o' him as a wench shakes ashes through a sieve." He followed the retreating figure of the damsel with admiring eyes. "Losh! she's as black as the inside o' a dark nicht, an' nae mair tae be dependit on than the promises of a politician on the hustings; but, as ma soul liveth, she's got a bonny figure; ye cud stan' a sodger's lance upricht an' it wud touch the back o' her heid an' the back o' her heel as she walks, though maybe it wud hae to bend ower a trifle in the middle. She's a gran' wench tae look at; licht o' the pins as a buck in the season o' matin', an' as strong as a coo. A wunner what King Dauvid wud hae dune in ma place. He was an awfu' mon on the wimmen. He had acres fu' o' them. A'm feared he'd jist hae ta'en this ane an' settled it wi' his conscience by ca'in her a concubine; but King Dauvid wis a Jew, an' a Jew can get oot o' ony difficulty that needs brains. A'm thinkin' that if A took her A wud hae tae ca' her by anither name, bein' only a Scot an' a plain mon."

Just then the ebony Hebe turned right round facing him. She waved her hand in friendly greeting.

"Losh!" groaned M'Glusky, "if she only had an e'eglass or a hat, it wud be somethin'. A'll gang richt awa' an' hae a swim. A'm mair frichtened o' that wumman than A am o' the alligators. If aince A come unner the heel o' her influence she'll lead me intae trouble as sure as trout like flies."

Pushing into the Hinterland, his party came in contact with a big band of warriors under the command of a chief whose

name struck terror into the hearts of all peaceful natives who belonged to small tribes or clans. He was not pure negro, but a half-bred Portuguese, a little man physically, with an ape-like face and the brain of a demon. His father had been one of the most important officials in that part of Africa, his mother a slave girl, and he had inherited the bad qualities of both breeds and very few of the good points of either. He was a tool of his half-brother, a son of his father's by a Portuguese wife. This man was the leading slave-trader of the country, and had almost unlimited influence, not only on the Congo coast but in Portugal and Belgium. The world may have owned a worse man than this person, but it is open to question. He had the polish which cities give, when he liked to display it, and he had all the savagery of the Dark Continent. Only one person living had any real influence over him, and that was the half-negro brother who acted as his man-catcher, and on many occasions as his butcher. In London, or in Lisbon, the Portuguese knave posed as a philanthropist whose one aim in life was to benefit the poor negroes who existed in a state of savagery. He would stand upon public platforms and melt audiences to tears with his descriptions of his life-long endeavours on behalf of black humanity, yet on the Congo he would sell black men, women and children in droves, like sheep or cattle, *and is doing it to-day*. He was rather a fine-looking man, and no lines upon his smooth face indexed his real character. The natives had a legend which stated that wherever he put his foot the grass withered. Certain it is that wherever he sent his armed bands, villages and towns were decimated, houses were burnt, fruitful fields were trampled flat, women were outraged, men were slain, and the young and lusty youths were driven off to be sold into bondage.

This person was with the half-breed when M‘Glusky’s band came across them. They had looted many villages and had stolen much ivory and rubber, and were after more, but their march was hampered by the presence of many slaves, so they welcomed M‘Glusky’s band, and promptly struck a bargain for the conveyance of the loot to the coast.

The wretched prisoners were compelled to act as beasts of burden, to carry their own property to the coast for the spoilers. M‘Glusky’s employer set an armed guard over the slaves, some marching in front, some on either flank, and some in the rear. Each slave had his neck pinned in between the prongs of a forked bough, so that if he tried to fly his progress would be so slow that he would be easily overtaken in the thick jungle through which the party would have to pass.

You who read have all seen cows in English meadows secured the same way, in order that they may not force a passage through the gaps in hedges. Each slave had to carry his burden upon his head, and balance it as best he might with one hand, whilst he pushed back interlacing boughs of jungle trees with his other hand, and all the time the heavy butt of the pronged neck-yoke would be butting against the slave’s naked knees and shins.

Just as the *cortége* was about to set forth the two chiefs of the main expedition came along to give their final instructions to their tool. M‘Glusky heard the half-breed say, “If any fall sick by the way, do not leave them alive. It will only encourage the others to pretend to be unable to march. Give them a spear-thrust each. Put the blade between the shoulders, and so make sure.”

M‘Glusky’s hair fairly bristled, like the hair on the back of a mastiff, when he heard these words, for the half-breed had spoken just as if he had been talking of sheep or goats, not human beings.

“A wud like tae hae the han’lin’ o’ that buckie wi’ the face like a whusky-sodden ape,” muttered M‘Glusky. “A wud mak’ him sit on the point o’ a spear an’ carry him shoulder high for a mile or twa. It wud dae him a warl’ o’ guid.”

The petty chief had no such scruples. He had conducted many similar expeditions, and knew well what was expected of him, and said so.

“The slaves come from a fighting breed, and are all warriors,” continued the half-breed. “We out-numbered them ten to one, and took them by surprise in the night, but even then we had to leave a ring of dead around their village before we captured these. So watch them closely, do not feed them too well; give them just enough food and water to keep them on their legs, no more, or you will have trouble. If you have a mutiny, just hang a few of them to the trees, and make the others carry their burdens. That will quieten them, and the dead men you leave hanging will act as a warning to those who come along with the next band we send to the coast. You have to make a new track to the coast, and we shall want a few landmarks of that sort. No half measures, mind, for if one escapes he may carry news to other tribes, and you may be pursued and lose all the ivory and rubber. If you do, then see to it that you never look on my face again, for I have a way of my own of dealing with men who fail me.”

M‘Glusky, listening to this speech, gritted his teeth hard, till they grated like a boot heel on thin glass.

“There is a wey,” he muttered. “There is a wey o’ ma ain A wud deal wi’ yon deil’s imp, burn ma gran’mither if there isna. A wud fill him wi’ gun-cotton an’ mak’ him sit ower a slow fire till it pleased the Lord to lift him higher than a hill, the misbegotten gommerel!”

“When you get to the coast,” remarked the Portuguese, speaking for the first time, “place all the ivory and rubber with my agents, and get a receipt for the stuff, and then feed the slaves well for a few weeks, and let them rest and wash themselves. When they are fresh take all who have no yoke sores to the different planters in small batches, and indenture them to those who pay the biggest price. Go to the English coffee-planter first. He wants slaves, he is always wanting slaves, for they die upon his swampy lands like flies. He will not buy them outright because he knows if he did so there might be an outcry if it leaked out in any British newspaper. But,” he added with a devilish grin, “the Englishman will indenture them for four years at a good price, knowing that no slave can work three years in his accursed malarial swamps and live. No slave has done so yet, and I have sent many to him in my time. All die, my friend, and the dead can never tell what happens on the coffee plantations of our good, pious English friend, who loves his dear black brother better than anything in all this world except money. Some day,” he added with a chuckle, “our good Englishman will die and be gathered to his fathers, and then, if there is any truth in the gospel he is so fond of preaching, he will meet the souls of many thousands of his labourers, and they will pay him back through all eternity for what he has done to them.”

M‘Glusky could not keep his mouth closed any longer.

“What aboot yersel’, ma buckie?” he demanded.

He could never tell afterwards what had happened to him. It seemed as if a cloud had dropped from his eyes and from his soul, and all his old religious feeling came surging over him like a flood, and he was ready to stand up, and, if need be, die for the faith he had deserted and dishonoured by his apostacy.

If one of his slaves had dropped his burden and smitten the great trafficker in flesh and blood across the mouth with the back of his hand he could not have been more surprised than he was when the stern voice, with the Scot's burr in every note, fell upon his ears.

"Who the devil are you?" he demanded.

"A'm Ian M'Glusky, son o' Jamie M'Glusky o' Scotlan'."

"Special correspondent for some cursed newspaper, I suppose?"

"Ye're yelpin' oot o' the wrang side o' yer lug then. A hae sunk verra low in ma time, A'm no' disputin' it, but A hivna come doon tae that level yet. A wud as sune be a politician and shout for beer wan day an' temperance the next. Na, na, A'm jist Jamie M'Glusky's son, nae mair, nae less."

"Your father must have been a nice kind of hound to have begotten such a son," sneered the Portuguese.

With a couple of magnetic strides M'Glusky was in front of the fellow and had him by the neck.

"Say wan word agin ma mither or ma feyther, ye mongrel, an' A'll—" He looked round and saw a mule with its mouth agape. Pointing to the open jaws he said fiercely, "A hae nae feud wi' ye or yours, an' A wudna wish tae dae ye hurt, but if ye misca' ma parents A'll push ye doon yon mule's throat head first, an' sew the mouth o' the beastie up efter, burn ma

gran'mither if A dinna; an' if ye ever get oot o' the mule ye'll hae tae climb, ma buckie."

The half-breed brother of the Portuguese was essentially a man of action. Slipping behind M'Glusky he struck him a blow with the flat of his spear that would have cracked the skull of nine men out of ten, and the Scot reeled a dozen paces backwards. Then it flashed into his mind that he was no longer a degenerate but a servant of the Lord engaged upon a mission of righteousness, and a holy glow swept over him.

"Gie me grace to prove masel' worthy the noo," casting his eyes swiftly but reverently upwards. "Dinna forsake thy lamb jist returned tae the fold. Oot, ye black-an'-tan deil, tak that!" As he spoke he kicked the half-caste, who was rushing upon him, full in the stomach, and lifted him up like a kite. Then tearing a great ivory tusk from one of the loads he pranced into battle, as careless of odds as Samson himself. "If Samson cud slay his thoosan's wi' the jawbone o' an' ass, A can dae pretty well masel' wi' the tusk o' an elephant, for Samson was a Hebrew an' A'm Scots." Placing his back to a tree he beat off all comers for a long time, whisking the ivory round his head, or thrusting with it. He was pretty nearly as formidable as if the tusk had been in the head of its original owner. At last, finding his strength beginning to flag, he decided to make a sortie, for the Scot's love of a rush and a hand-to-hand grip was strong within him. Lifting up his voice he chanted:

"Mow them doon, mow them doon,
Like the grass o' the field,
The sinners wha choke up the garden.
The Lord is ma buckle an' ma shield,
A wull send them tae hell withoot pardon."

“Oot, ye sons o’ the pit, ye thustles an’ cactus bushes in the vineyard. The son o’ Jamie M‘Glusky is comin’ tae correct ye the noo.”

To this day the men who witnessed that charge of the Scot’s talk of it with bated breath around the camp fire. Crouching as a lion crouches, he drew a long, deep breath, and then he was amongst them, and they learned a lot of things about ivory, besides its market value, during the time he was upon his feet. Ever and anon his battle-chant burst forth:

“Mow them doon, mow them doon,”

and the tusk rose and fell like a flail, until the Scot sank to his knees from sheer exhaustion.

Then they fell upon him and bound him securely with many bonds, after which the half-caste chief came and kicked him in the face, and spat upon him, calling him a dog and the son of a dog, but M‘Glusky heard none of these things for he was blissfully unconscious.

When he came to himself again, after many hours, he let his thoughts drift over the proceedings of that day, and he was strangely happy and uplifted.

“A hae lost ma freedom an’ twa teeth, an’ maist o’ the skin on ma body an’ a lot o’ ma hair, but A hae foun’ ma religion,” he whispered. “A went oot o’ the fold like a he-goat, but A cam’ back tae it like a lamb that had gone astray, an’ A’ll nae leave it mair.”

Then he thought of the battle he had fought, and his hard face relaxed in a complacent smile.

“A’m thinkin’,” he murmured, “A didna sae bad conseedeerin’. A wud hae made a bigger impression on the heathen though if A had had an axe.”

Evidently he had made quite sufficient impression on the Portuguese to satisfy that gentleman, for M‘Glusky found himself drafted into the slave gang. He had a pronged yoke placed round his neck, and a bale of goods was given him to carry, and, what mortified him more than anything else, he was stripped as bare of clothing as the rest of the gang. So he was forced to march towards the coast. The sun blistered and burnt him, the flies and the mosquitoes made every living moment a torture, the hot earth baked the soles of his feet until they peeled and were practically raw, his food was of the scantiest and scarce fit for a dog.

When he lagged on the way the overseer either lashed him with a whip on his blistered skin, or a guard joyously poked him with the point of a lance. The great wooden yoke galled his neck and knocked his shins and knees to pieces, whilst the load he had to carry made his head throb as if it would split.

At times a fierce yearning came to him to drop his load and leap upon the spear point of the nearest guard and so end his sufferings; but, seeing that the negro slaves bore up until they died or went mad, he told himself that he owed it to his Scot’s breeding to hold out as long as one nigger carrier remained on the march.

At night time as he lay with the almost intolerable yoke still fastened to his neck he was conscious of a strange presence. Something, or someone, was always near him, comforting him. At first he put it down to his imagination. “Yon black-an’-tan monkey must hae scattered ma wits when he gied me that clout wi’ the spear,” he argued.

But the presence came every night, and somehow he felt that he was being watched over by a being unseen.

At last he realised what it was. He was glaring savagely into the ebony darkness one night, when he became aware of a pale, white light approaching him. Soon the pale gleam took shape, and he saw distinctly the face and form of the man he had loved, and he knew that it was Jean's father in the spirit. He hid his face in his hands for he was afraid, but after a while peace came to him and he looked up. The spirit of the old pastor was smiling down upon him wistfully.

"A ken ye," whispered M'Glusky. "When did ye dee?"

A dog that had been crouching close by began to bark, and M'Glusky could see by its glaring eyes that it was looking straight at the spot where the wraith was standing. He tried to soothe the creature but it would not be stilled. A guard came forward and strode right over the spot where the pastor stood, but the black apparently saw nothing, felt nothing. The next instant the wraith was in front of the Scot again.

"A'm either daft, or A'm in better company than A hae been this mony a lang day," commented M'Glusky. "Maybe A'm no daft, maybe A'm saner than A hae ever been. A'll ask for a sign."

He looked at the beautiful old face and said humbly:

"Ye ken hoo A fell frae grace in Scotlan'. Wull ye tell me hoo tae keep frae fa'in awa' again?"

Instantly the wraith joined its two hands and raised its eyes to heaven as if praying. A great awe fell upon the Scot.

"A'm no' daft," he cried, "an' A ken yer meanin' fine."

Then for the first time in his life M'Glusky prayed as a man should pray—humbly and meekly, not with the vain-

glorious cry of the man who thinks he is better than his fellows and is fit to save the world from sin and shame, but simply, like a child, who feels its own feebleness and seeks a guiding and protecting hand.

When he opened his eyes the pastor smiled upon him with a smile that must have come straight from heaven's gates. Then he vanished, and M'Glusky slept, a happier man in his bonds than he had ever been as a freeman.

The next day was the hardest he had ever known. The sun was blistering hot, a scorching wind blew in the faces of the marching men, the flies were terrible; they found every cracked sore and every smarting wound, and made life hideous.

The hot wind parched the throats of the slaves and caused their lips to swell, crack and burst. One man went mad, and throwing down his load plunged headlong into the red dust and began to strike out with his limbs like a practised swimmer, thinking, in his frenzy, that it was water. The guards put a spear between his shoulders and grimly ordered the rest onward.

At noon a halt was called, and as M'Glusky sat down upon his load, too dazed with bodily agony to think or pray, a black hand slipped in under his chin, his head was raised and tilted back, a gourd full of water was put to his blistered lips and he drank, drank as only man on the verge of madness through thirst ever drank; and then, looking at his deliverer, he saw that it was the dusky daughter of the chief of the expedition. She had not added to her wardrobe, but in that respect the Scot had now no room to be censorious, for he had not enough between himself and nakedness to have made a garter

for a gaiety girl. All he could boast of were wounds, and gall sores and dust, and a multitude of bruises.

That night, when the camp was wrapped in darkness, she came to the prisoner and fed him. He ate like a wolf and drank the cool water she had brought him greedily. Then, as best she could in the darkness, she bathed him, cleansing him of much of his vileness, and at last she anointed him from head to foot with the foul-smelling but healing grease that negroes use to keep away mosquitoes and the savage little sandflies that burrow into the pores of the skin to deposit their eggs, a process which causes the most agonising itching that a man can know.

The dusky beauty ran no small risk in the performance of her labour of love, but it was M‘Glusky’s fortune to make women like him well enough to risk much for his sake.

Day after day the dread march continued, and never a day passed without its grim tragedy. Sometimes a slave, driven beyond endurance, leaped upon the point of a guard’s spear, glad to find death so easily, and these were the most fortunate.

As for the Scot, he would have died or gone mad had it not been for the help he received from the chief’s daughter, and for the visits of his spiritual friend during the night watches. The pastor came to him and soothed his wounded soul, even as the black damsel soothed his tormented body. There may be many who will scoff at this assertion, but there were millions who, a few years ago, would have jeered openly at wireless telegraphy, or at electric power, or at the power to conquer the air by means of airships.

At first the shade of the old pastor was content to convey comfort and help to M‘Glusky by mere gestures and smiles,

but after a time words came on the night air in the well-known voice that the Scot had loved during his sojourn in Glasgow, and M'Glusky learnt that he had been chosen for a great task. He was told that his footsteps had been guided to the Congo for a purpose. But he cried in bitterness of spirit:

"A'm nae worthy tae serve the Lord! Hae A no' persecuted His people? Hae A no' made a mock o' His name? Hae A no' denied Him?"

And again the voice replied:

"Others, whose names have rung down the pathway of the ages, denied Him also. You are being purified by fire and that you may be fit for the task that lies in front of you."

"A'll no' be able to stan' the strain o' purification much longer. A'm gey weel spent," moaned the Scot.

"Your strength will not fail you," answered the sweet, clear voice. "Great as your burden is, strength to bear it to the appointed end will be found for you, and I am near you always, night or day; fever shall not kill, nor the spear slay you until your allotted work is done."

Then the wraith vanished and the Scot slept, and as he slept he smiled, for the peace that passeth all understanding had come to him.

The following day he had a distinct proof that the master's message was real and not a figment of a distorted imagination. On the march a slave, moving just in front of him, fell. He had tripped over a gnarled root that lay across the track. The black was so weak that the desire to live had gone out of him, therefore he did not try to rise and pick up his burden. The slave-drivers fell upon him and flogged him with their raw hide whips, until the black skin burst in many places and the blood spurted out.

M‘Glusky, who had put down his load to rest his aching head until the march should be resumed, looked on and shuddered.

“Every drap o’ that bluid,” he murmured, “helps tae keep some white deil in a carriage an’ a gran’ hoose in some pairt o’ the warl’!”

Suddenly a great pity for the tortured wretch woke in his soul. He stepped forward with extended hands, crying:

“Dinna whip the mon ony mair. A’ll carry his burden as well as ma ain until his strength comes back tae him.”

The brutal drivers, completely taken aback by this new phase in the wild, white man’s manner, stood for a few moments dumbfounded, whilst he, stooping down, put his arms under the armpits of the fallen slave, and exerting his great strength lifted the man to his feet. The abundant food which the black Hebe had supplied him with by stealth had brought back all his old vigour. Looking round him with a smile he cried:

“Let yon mon walk withoot his load for a wee bit. A’ll carry it masel’. A’m as strong as a lion, an’ as gentle as a milkin’ goat.”

Now, the milking goats must have been very queer cattle to handle on M‘Glusky’s native heath if what followed was a proof of their gentleness.

# CHAPTER XVII

## M‘GLUSKY’S VISION

A DRIVER, more brutal than the rest, pushed his way forward and commenced to flog the slave again, bidding him take up his load or a spear should be thrust between his blade-bones.

“A’ll no’ be harsh wi’ ye, ye puir, misguided Pagan body,” whispered the Scot, “but I wud ask ye, hae ye nae pity for ane o’ yer ain colour?”

Again the raw hide whip came down on the poor trembling slave. It fell right upon his neck, and with a moan of agony he dropped to his knees.

Then M‘Glusky proceeded without further preamble to demonstrate the exact quality of the gentleness of a Scot’s milking goat, unto which he had likened himself—and may God in His mercy prevent me, a scribe and a sinner, from ever seeking to earn the bread that perisheth in a Scot’s milking-shed if his definition stands true. He sent his left foot well forward until it rested between the two feet of the slave-driver. He arched his back until it was formed like the back of a man about to lift a load, then, putting every ounce of his great might, from the hips upwards, behind the blow, he hit out straight from the shoulder, landing his massive fist clean under the chin. So clean was the blow, so terrific the power behind it, that the first thing that struck the ground was the exact top of the slave-driver’s head. The soles of his feet pointed to heaven, then he fell full length on the ground. A spearman dashed at M‘Glusky and thrust with all his power full at the broad, naked white chest of the Scot. M‘Glusky had not time to move or swerve. He stood stock still to take

the steel like a man. In his blind fury the spearman tripped over the body of the kneeling slave, and the gleaming blade passed harmlessly between M'Glusky's widely-distended legs.

"A'm no' wantin' ye, ma buckie," whispered the Scot, gently, and drawing back his right leg he kicked the man's head almost off his shoulders. Then, picking up the double burden and dumping the two loads together on his head, he wound his arm around the waist of the half-fainting slave and coolly resumed the march as if nothing had happened. And as he went he communed with his own soul, saying:

"Noo, A'm sure beyond a doot that the Lord has saved His servant tae bring peace intae the warl'. Losh, but A'm a happy mon the day."

At last the slave gang reached the coast, and M'Glusky counted his hour of deliverance well-nigh arrived, but there was that in store for him which would have made him a Bedlamite if it had not been for his new-found religion. It had never entered his thoughts that he might be indentured as a slave. He knew that many very irregular things were done on the Congo, but that a British subject, even if he were a derelict, could be sold into bondage had not appeared possible. It was the chief's daughter who gave him the first hint of this danger; when he grasped her meaning he scoffed at it as one of the impossible things.

"You will disappear as the black men disappear," she assured him stubbornly, "and when once you are on the plantations in the fever swamps who will know anything concerning you and your fate? No one ever goes there except the doomed men and women, and the owners who just visit the plague-spots from time to time at long intervals to look at

their property. They are not likely to cry your fate in the ears of any of your countrymen."

M'Glusky, who at the time was sitting on the ground, beat the hot earth with his bare heel for a moment or two. Then he said:

"Dinna fash yersel'. Nae mon wud dare dae sich a thing tae a Scot, for if he did, a British gun-boat wud blaw the Portuguese toons tae Tophet. Ye mean weel, lassie, an' A thank ye, but A hae nae fear. A'll sune be free, an' then A'll want a wee bit quiet crack wi' the yellow deil wha made me march wi' slaves. Though A'm nae sae sure A didna deserve it a', because A went intae the Hinterland on an unholy expedition, an' the Lord has dealt wi' me righteously."

As the days wore on, however, he became very uneasy, for he plainly saw that he was not to be liberated. The ivory and the rubber were delivered to the people they were consigned to, and the slaves were all being fed up and washed to make them fit for the market.

Again and again the dusky maiden dropped unmistakable hints in his ears, until at last he asked her what he should do in order to save himself. He had hoped that he would have come in touch with some white trader, who would have communicated his position to some British person in authority, but he was kept a close prisoner in the encampment, and no one was allowed to know of his existence.

When he sought the maid's advice she promptly told him to ask her father to allow him to take her as his wife. "Do that," she said, "and he will send you far away with me to his own tribe, and you will be safe."

But M'Glusky would not.

“A’m no’ gaun tae lee tae ye,” said he. “If A took ye tae wife A wud consider masel’ boun’ tae ye as long as A lived, an’ A dinna think it richt for a white mon to mate wi’ a black wench. The white mon tae the white wumman, an’ the black mon tae the black. A feel in ma soul that wis the Lord’s intention when He made us. He never meant a white mon tae marry a black wumman, or a brown wumman or a yellow wumman, ony mair than he meant the daylight tae mingle wi’ the darkness, an’ A’ll no’ sin wi’ ma een open.”

“There is no other way,” she answered.

“A’ll mak’ a bolt o’ it, an’ tak’ ma chance like a mon.”

She pointed to the guards and shook her head.

“They will not let you run away. They have orders to watch you night and day. Take me for your wife and we will escape. It is the only way, for then you can be of service to my father in another place, and he will risk much to please me.”

“A wullna,” he answered stubbornly, “for it isna richt.”

She dropped her head upon her breast and went away weeping, but that night she crept to the spot where he lay and whispered to him that on the morrow he was to be taken to the swamps, and the news made him shiver, for he knew what life and death in such a place of torment meant.

Again the daughter of Ham pleaded with him to save himself by taking her to wife, but he pushed her gently from him with his manacled hands.

“Dinna tempt me,” he murmured, “A’m no marble, A’m maistly mud, though I thocht different aince.”

Suddenly she stooped over and began to free his neck from the yoke, and as she did so he felt the tears drip from her eyes

on to his face, and his soul was filled with wonder. When she had loosed all his bonds she whispered to him to rise and follow her.

"Ye ken A'll no' mate wi' ye," he whispered.

She struck the ground angrily with one naked foot for answer and moved away. Safely she guided him through the outposts, and when she had done so she pointed in the direction he had to take.

"Put your chin on your chest," she said, "and run. Do not pause until your legs fail you, then rest until you are strong enough to start again, and once more run. Do not pause anywhere for anything, for the greatest of the Portuguese slave-dealers, the man you struck when you were with my father's band, has doomed you to the swamps, and he never forgives. Had you taken me to wife my father would have sworn that you died and that the vultures picked your bones, but he will not do that now. You must run until you find a countryman strong enough to protect you, but if you stay in this country you will go to the swamps in the end, or die by poison, for you know too much."

She did not wait for thanks, but slipped quietly away like a shadow. Then M'Glusky put his chin upon his chest and ran. He ran until his lungs choked up and he fell gasping. Then he rested awhile until the strain passed, and rising, ran on, until at last the harbour lights came in view, and he counted himself saved. He was reeling like a drunken man, and so far spent that he could scarce keep on the move when he entered the seaport town. He had forgotten that he was dressed in nothing but Nature's garments, and his only thought was to board the first ship he could reach.

Now, a nude black man was a common enough sight in those parts, but a naked white man was a rare sight. Instantly a crowd of jeering black youths were at his heels, and before he had gone far the Portuguese police patrol were upon him and made him prisoner. He was so worn out that he could offer but a futile resistance, and a few moments later he was safely housed in the local gaol.

That night he slept like a man in a coma. The life was nearly out of him. Yet when he woke he felt secure. He would tell his story to the authorities in open court and claim the protection of his nation. But he never saw the inside of the court-house.

The news of his escape had been passed on to the chief of the Portuguese slave-dealers, and as most of them were Government officials who made a nice addition to their salaries trading in slaves on the quiet, it was not long before it was known that the nude prisoner was the missing man, and he was quietly handed over to those who sought him. The British resident did not even hear that a countryman was in distress. They manage those things remarkably well on the Congo. As the Scot was carried away he could hear the band on a British man-o'-war joyously playing the National Anthem, and he saw the great guns that he knew would have overawed the town if the commander of the ship had only known what was happening so close by.

Once again he was a slave. They marched him with a mob of others to a spot where the air smelt of the rottenness of the soil, and he was put to work with a gang of hopeless-looking negroes. When he saw his surroundings his big heart nearly failed him. He saw men of splendid frame who were worn to skeletons, their eyes were sunk far back in their heads, their

cheeks were hollow, and though their eyes were burning with feverish light yet their teeth chattered in their jaws, for they were doomed men. There was fire in their blood and ice in the marrow of their bones. One moment they were burning hot, the next deathly cold. The twin demons—fever and ague—had possession of them, and were surely and swiftly eating them up. The ground on which he had to work was oozy; the rank grass that had to be hoed away sweated unwholesomely; the air was fœtid, even in the glare of the sun. But it was just after sundown that he saw it at its worst.

Happening to look round him as he rested a moment from his hoeing, he saw that the whole landscape was slowly filling up with a thin, filmy, white mist. He looked again a little later, and saw that all around him this mist had deepened until it lay as thick as a fog near the ground.

When he noticed this thickness at first it had risen only a couple of feet from the earth, but when he looked again it was as high as a man's shoulder, and was rising steadily like a thick pale blue smoke. He knew what it was; it was the malarial mist which kills ninety-seven out of every hundred who breathe it for any length of time. Yet, strange as it may seem to men who do not know the countries where it abounds, it is from the very soil that exudes those poisonous gases that the richest harvests of certain crops are raised. This is one of Nature's secrets which scientists have as yet failed to unravel. No man, black or white, works for any time in those regions of his own free will, hence the so-called indentured labour which is slavery and murder naked and unashamed.

There was no braver man in all the world than Ian M'Glusky, but when he saw the blue-grey mist, with the

strange phosphorescent light hidden in its folds creeping over him; when he looked around him on the slaves, whose chattering jaws made hideous music, as if playing an accompaniment to the dance of death; when he saw the gleaming eyes, the parched lips, the palsied hands that feebly guided the hoes, a sense of terror came upon him, and lifting his hands high above his head he called upon his Creator, asking for annihilation or pity; a swift death or a swift release. Such men as he can charge the guns and laugh as they charge, but they cannot calmly face the leprous death of the malarial swamps of the Congo.

The drivers used their whips upon him, but he heeded the falling blows no more than he had heeded the falling sleet on his native hillsides when a schoolboy. They drove him to the huts with the rest at last, and he had to herd with all the hopeless wretchedness of the place.

The huts were packed so close that the atmosphere soon became stifling, and he staggered to the door, and looking out saw the moon through a haze of miasma. Everything was uncanny, weird, terrible, and he felt the full force of his surroundings, until a feeling of mad desperation took possession of him and he determined to sally forth until he met the guards. He had a great longing on him just then to die fighting; it was the old blood of the clansmen stirring in his veins. A swift death, a clean death, did not seem very terrible to him just then. But to live until he grew like one of those awful things inside, that thought was unbearable.

All at once he knew that he was not alone. He felt someone walking by his side. He turned his eyes and saw, as plainly as he had ever seen in the flesh, the face and form of the old Glasgow pastor, the father of Jean.

“When you left your father and mother years ago you went out into the world to do whatsoever your hand found to do for the Lord. Is it not so?” demanded the sweet voice.

“A did!” cried M‘Glusky, vehemently. “But the Lord has cast me intae hell.”

“The Lord has sent you here to do his work, Ian M‘Glusky, son of Jamie M‘Glusky and Margaret his wife. You were never a coward. Do not play the coward now. Prove both your faith and your blood.”

M‘Glusky stopped in his walk, and his sinews stiffened.

“Tell me hoo,” he whispered thickly, “tell me hoo, an’ A’ll play the mon. Shall A snatch a spear frae ane o’ the guards an’ fa’ upon the lot o’ them? Shall I dae tae them as Gideon did tae the Mideonites? Shall I whang them hip an’ thigh? Gie me the word o’ grace an’ A’ll push a spear doon the throat of the officer o’ the guard, an’ put ma fute intae the pit o’ the next mon’s wammale. A wull fecht michtily the nicht.”

“None of those things, Ian M‘Glusky, are appointed for you to do this night; go back into the pest-house and kneel by the side of those who are dying, and tell them of the glad awakening after death.”

There was a solemn pause, then the sweet voice continued:

“It was for this work that you were led step by step from your father’s door, for only he who has strayed knows the need of salvation. Your work lies here, do it like a man, for it is work which only a strong man, a bold man can do.”

Like a being dazed with wine M‘Glusky stood still for a long time after the voice was stilled. Then he pulled himself together, as bold men do when they find their feet in the last trench.

“A see it a’ noo,” he whispered. “A wanted tae fecht; A wanted tae skelp the whole warl’ an’ drive sinners intae the fold instead o’ leadin’ fowk intae green pastures where the sweet streams rin. A’m like Demos run mad. A hae sense an’ courage but no sense o’ proportion. A ken noo ye canna put the grace o’ God Almichty intae a mon by kickin’ him in the wammale. Ye may kick sin oot, but ye canna kick love in. A’m feared reformers wha dinna unnerstan’ their wark dae mair harm than the sinners. A mon needs tae be disciplined by the han’ o’ the Lord afore he’s muckle guid in the warl’. Noo, A’ll awa’ tae ma task, an’ the Lord gie me grace tae dae it wi’ gentleness.”

He went into the pest-house and listened for a while to the sounds that filled the air. The great slave pen was filled with moanings, like the wailings of the lost, the packed bodies of men and women exhaled an odour that was terrible. M‘Glusky groped his way to a spot where a man lay in the last stages of fever. He carried the dying wretch to the doorway so that he might get at least a little air that was less vile than the great bulk of the atmosphere.

Then he went in search of water and moistened the parched lips. Having done this he got more and cleaned the body as best he might. Then, kneeling by the negro, he told the old, old story in language that fitted the occasion. That was the beginning of a new life to the rugged Scot. A spirit of gentleness came upon him. He helped all who needed help and bore his own burdens uncomplainingly. When a slave died, which was almost a daily matter, he used to dig a shallow grave and give the body a decent burial, afterwards holding a sort of religious service over the body. Before his advent the keepers used simply to toss a dead body into a

deep pool that lay in the marsh and the alligators used to do the rest.

He could not save any lives, because the malaria was so intense that even the best medical skill in the world could have done little for the slaves who had to work amidst it, but he made dying an easier matter. It is one thing to die like a dog, unattended and alone, unwashed and athirst, without a word of comfort or pity from any lips; it is another matter when kind hands wipe the death sweat from the brow and a gentle voice talks of a life beyond the grave.

It was wonderful to note the way he kept his strength up at that period. He did all the work he was set to do, and after the long hours of labour he toiled amidst the stricken wretches the best part of each night, still his health kept good.

For a time the keepers did not spare the lash. It was a novelty for them to be able to whip a white man, and they made the most of their opportunities. M'Glusky stood it all with splendid patience for a long time, but one day his meekness fell from him like a mantle and the old Adam awoke. The lash was falling upon his bare back. He dropped to his knees.

"A canna bear ony mair, O Lord," he cried. "A dinna think ye wud want me tae. A maun swear or fecht, an' swearin' is sin, but a wee bit o' a fecht tae cool ma bluid an' teach yon grinnin' monkeys a lesson canna be a' wrang. A hae nursed the sick an' tended the deein', an' A hae turned the left cheek tae the smiter when he has smitten on the richt lug, an' noo A'm thinkin' it's time tae gie them a wee bit o' Scot's deecepline; it may save their sinfu' souls."

The drivers were crowding round him, whips in hands that spared not. A shower of blows fell upon him.

“A’ll deal gently wi’ them, O Lord, because they hivna seen the licht.”

There was one little imp-like slave-driver standing right over him, a wizened, bony creature, whose cruelty was ghoulish. Night and day this evil thing persecuted both men and women, for the fountain of pity had dried up within him.

“Mon,” said M‘Glusky, “ye carry a deid soul within ye, like a shrivelled kernel in a dry husk. A’m the instrument o’ the Almichty. His wrath is upon ye.”

Snatching the imp by both ankles he rose from his kneeling posture and whirled the slave-driver around his head and then charged the rest, using the “imp” as a weapon, just as he might have used a log of wood. As he did so he burst into a wild chant:

“Thustles, thustles in the vineyard,
Brambles and thorns o’ sin,
A’ll root ye up an’ burn ye noo
Tae let the licht shine in.”

The slaves, leaning upon their hoes, saw the reformer letting in the light, and they wondered, for surely no man had ever fought as he fought.

By-and-by he dropped the “imp” and looked round him, his big chest heaving and his hair bristling.

“A wish A had twa score guid Scots lads wi’ me the noo; A wud skelp ye a’. A wud fill ye sae fu’ o’ fear yer wammales wud cleave tae yer backbanes, like pea-soup tae a sailor’s monkey-jacket, ye slave-drivin’, body-stealin’, soul-killin’ buckies, burn ma gran’mither if A wudna. A wud purge the lan’ o’ slavery, A wud that, dom ye a’ an’ the men wha mak’ a profit oot o’ sic wark.”

The chief slave-driver, a very stout man, who had not seen the earlier part of the fray, came upon the scene, and rushed at M‘Glusky with a rhinoceros-hide sjambok, a terrible weapon in a strong hand. The Scot charged in under the upraised arm, seized the fellow around the middle and flung him across his shoulders, holding him there in spite of his struggles. Then with long strides he strode off towards that pool where the dead slaves used to be thrown. Slaves and slave-drivers followed in a wild mob, all awed by this white-skinned creature who knew no fear. On the banks of the pool half a dozen alligators were basking in the slimy ooze. At the sound of the approaching feet they slid slowly into the filthy black water. M‘Glusky poised the slave-driver in his arms to throw him, but the wretch screamed for mercy.

“Mercy!” growled the Scot. “Dae ye ken the meaning o’ the word? Dae ye ever show mercy to mon or wumman?”

At that instant, clear and distinct as a silver bell, came the voice of the old pastor:

“Give the man mercy, Ian M‘Glusky.”

The reformer started, and all the power went out of his muscles, so that he dropped his victim in the ooze.

“If A hurtit ony mon past mendin’ A regret it. A didna mean tae, but A wis a wee bit carried awa’ in the joy o’ battle,” he murmured contritely. “A hae been cultivatin’ a speerit o’ gentleness,” he added, “but A’m no’ perfect yet.”

Then, turning his eyes upon the stout slave-driver, he gave him a kick in the stomach that would have broken a boiler plate.

“Gang yer weys!” he shouted. “Gang yer weys afore A’m temptit tae deal harshly wi’ ye.”

After that the drivers kept their whips off him, and he was able to help many a poor suffering creature, who otherwise would have died under the lash.

In due season the harvest time came round, and M‘Glusky wondered at the extraordinary richness of the soil. Every acre of that deadly swamp land was a gold mine practically. The ooze and the slime brought forth riches in abundance. That kind of soil meant wealth to the owners and certain death to the workers.

After a time fresh batches of indentured labourers were brought in to take the place of those who died, and everyone was satisfied, except the unfortunate creatures whose lives paid forfeit to the lust of riches.

At length even the reformer’s cast-iron strength and stamina began to fail. His muscles grew flabby, the flesh seemed to melt from his bones, his cheeks became hollow, his eyes sank far behind the big brows, and he walked always as in a dream. His day of usefulness was well-nigh ended. He had helped hundreds of hopeless wretches to cross death’s border hopefully, and he had eased the agony of numberless death-beds.

The flinty-hearted head slave-driver, who went away from the swamps every alternate week to recuperate by the sea coast near by, had learned to look upon him with a sort of wondering admiration, and was not as harsh with him in his hours of weakness as with some who failed.

One evening as he was lying on the slimy soil just outside the door of the pest-house, holding his burning brow in his skeleton hands, his teeth were jarring together, rattling in that horrible way which men never forget if once they hear it.

"A'm gaun daft, A'm thinkin'," he murmured thickly. Then his thoughts ran back over the past, and he traced his fall to that moment when the yellow-haired woman stepped out of her carriage and smiled on him in the streets of Glasgow. "Ma mither wis richt. She kent oor breed weel. She didna hae the havers when she warned me tae keep clear o' the scarlet wumman. A wonder what befel her in the end. She wrecked mony a mon, that yellow-haired she-deil, but it was a mon that wrecked her first. A'm hopin' she saved her soul, puir lass, puir lass; she wis a bonny wench. A canna unnerstan' why ane sae fair wis made tae be wicked an' tae wreck ithers. A'm thinkin' there's mair things in this auld warl' than Ian M'Glusky, son o' Jamie M'Glusky, hisna tae unnerstan' or comprehen'. Experience disna mak' it plain, philosophy disna solve it, there's on'y religion efter a', on'y religion." He let his head fall forward on his shrunken chest and dropped off into the coma which heralds the beginning of the end.

A couple of slave-drivers coming by saw him; one of them touched him with his foot.

"That white fellow is almost finished, we won't get another day's work out of him. Shall we throw him into the pool to-night or to-morrow?"

M'Glusky opened his heavy eyes, and looking up into the two black faces, with no reason or understanding in his gaze, began to chant feebly:

"Thustles, thustles in the vineyard,
Brambles an' thorns o' sin."

"Come away and let him die in peace," whispered the driver who had not previously spoken. "He is talking to his

Fetish, and he may rise and fall upon us in the last agony. Come, I have heard that he comes of a tribe that loves to die fighting, and if that is so I do not want to be near him when he dies."

So they left him to die by himself in that awful spot.

A little later a black girl and a white man were looking into M'Glusky's face.

"This is the man," said the girl. "I know him, but he is changed. When they brought him here he was great and strong; now he is a skin full of bones, no more, and the life is almost out of him. The fiercest warrior in my father's band was a plaything in his hand before he came to the swamps. Now look, his hair is white, he is old and dying; it is the swamp fever that spares none."

"I will not spare your father either if ever I lay my hands on him," answered the white man with an oath that had full flavour of the sea in it.

"My father is dead. The Portuguese poisoned him in order to get his stores of ivory and rubber. If my father had been alive I could not have brought you here; a child may not destroy its parent," was the reply.

The man stooped over M'Glusky and shook him gently.

"Wake up, man! I have help, and plenty of it close by; wake up!" He spoke with fierce energy for his blood was boiling. M'Glusky looked at him vacantly, then he said:

"Thustles, thustles in the vineyard,
Brambles an' thorns o' sin."

"Oot, ye de'il. Gie me a wee drappie o' rum or A'll push the croon o' yer heid doon yer throat. A wull that, ma

buckie.”

The kneeling man sprang to his feet with white, scared face.

“Good ——!” he gasped. “It can’t be. Yet it must be he; no other man in God’s world could mix rum and religion and fighting in one breath as he did. It’s the man I nursed through the drink madness in the pastor’s house in Glasgow, and bonny Jean was right, the man lives, though everyone said he died three years ago.” He thrust two fingers into his mouth and emitted a shrill whistle which rang eerily in the miasma-laden swamp. Instantly a dozen similar whistles answered the signal.

“The Portuguese will come too!” cried the girl.

“Will they?” was the grim response. “Will they? Well, if they do, more will come than will go away again. These men who are coming to help me, girl, are British sailors, and the Lord have mercy on anything that bars their path when they see this man on the ground.”

“Sailors from the warships?” she asked.

“No, sailors from my ship in the harbour, mostly shell backs gathered from every seaport in Britain; they don’t wear uniforms, but they are men who fear neither man nor devil.”

# CHAPTER XVIII

## A WOMAN'S LOVE

ESAU bent over the reformer and shook him back to life again.

"Wake up, M'Glusky!"

The Scot opened his heavy eyes and swore fluently.

"A'll gie ye ane in the wammale," he said thickly, "if ye dinna let me bide; it's no ma shift; A've only just turned in." He was back in fancy working as a fireman on the ship that brought him out to the Congo.

"Pick him up, lads, and carry him aboard; then you can come ashore again to-night and have a word with every yellow-skinned Portuguese devil you may happen to fall foul of."

"What does it mean, cap'n?" asked one of the men who carried M'Glusky.

"What does it mean, lad? Why, it means indentured labour in the Congo swamps, and you and I are working on a ship owned by the man who runs this plantation. But, as sure as my name is Esau Bent, I'll have a word to say to the psalm-singing old knave when I get back to Glasgow."

"Why not tell the commander of the war-ship in harbour, skipper? No British ship o' war would be idle if this thing were known."

"I'm going to tell him, but it will do no good. The Portuguese will swear the man signed on of his own free will, and get plenty to swear to the truth of this yarn; but I'll get the blue-jackets out of the way to-night, and you can get all

our firemen and sailors, and all the mercantile service men in harbour to-night and have your will of the town. We can't make an international affair of it. The poor beggar who is going ahead of us was a derelict. It was his thirst put him into Portuguese hands. Still," he added musingly, "a couple of dozen of you fellows out on business ought to be able to teach the yellow hides a lesson that will make them careful how they meddle with a Briton again. It's not lawful, I know, but there are lots of things done on the outskirts of the world without the aid of the law that would make home-staying Englishmen drop their whiskers."

"You're coming ashore to-night, skipper?" demanded the sailor with a grin.

Captain Esau Bent gazed long and steadily at his interlocutor.

"You ask no fool's questions, my lad, but if you see a man ashore using a belaying-pin, and he looks like me, you just call that man Smith and do as he does and you won't be idle."

Esau Bent was the skipper of the vessel on which he had been only a mate when we first met him. He had always been a splendid sailor, but the wild blood in him had been apt to come to the surface until he met winsome Jean. She had changed the whole current of his life, as good lassies are apt to do with wild-blooded men. He was Lancashire born, but had run away from the cotton mill where he had been employed owing to the brutality of the foreman, and had taken to the sea. He might have obtained the command of a vessel long before he did had it not been for the fact that every now and again he let the old Adam within him have full sway, and when that happened he undid in a week the good impression of a year's fine work.

The world is full of such men. Sometimes a woman comes along and takes possession of their lives, and they settle down and make their mark in life. Sometimes the wrong kind of feminine gets hold of their heart-strings and they go to the devil hand over fist. Jean, winsome Jean, had entered Esau's life and made a real man of him. For her sake he steered clear of liquor, and the scarlet woman he kept afar from him. His life was clean and manly after he met her, though somehow religion did not take possession of him in spite of her example, and he was too manly to pretend what he did not feel.

When Jean's father died Esau had waited until a decent period had elapsed and then had offered the lassie his heart and a home. But Jean had told him that though she liked and admired him she did not love him as she thought a lass should love the man whom she meant to wed.

Esau had been keenly disappointed when she refused his offer of marriage, but he did not despair. He just set himself to win her heart, and rough as he might be when handling men, he proved that he could be very gentle and loving to the lass who had drawn his heart to her as the moon draws the sea. He took lodgings for her with the wife of a seafaring man whom he knew, and made arrangements for payment, which Jean would have wondered at had she only known. He knew that she would not permit him to pay the weekly board, so with shrewdness born of love he arranged with the woman to keep the matter of payment a secret from Jean. Thus he lied, acting on the principle that a lie, though an abomination to the Lord, can at times prove a help in time of trouble.

The woman told Jean that if she would help her in her household duties in her spare time she in return would give

her board and lodging, but she was to be free to come and go as she pleased.

This arrangement pleased Jean beyond words, and when she told Esau of the offer the good-hearted sailor expressed the profoundest astonishment, saying he thought it was a wonderful piece of luck.

“Not luck, Esau,” answered the lass; “the woman has a little lass of her own, and God has put it into her heart to help me. May the bread she is casting upon the waters come back to her after many days; if not to her then to her child.”

Esau did not know how to look her in the face as she was speaking, because he knew that he had paid her board bill six months in advance, in case of accident. He took lodgings for himself not far away. The landlady had offered to make room for him also at her house, but Esau would not accept that offer. He knew the world, and knew that there are men and women in it whose foul tongues will soil an angel’s robes if they can only find a peg to hang hints and innuendoes on; and he did not want to give them a chance to soil sweet Jean’s good name.

At last he went to sea again on his own ship, determined to make his way in the world. Three or four days before the vessel put to sea, the owner, who was that merchant who was Elise’s Glasgow guardian, came aboard and brought Elise with him, and the maid at once recognised Esau, for she had seen him more than once when she had called on Jean to try and learn something of M‘Glusky after the reformer had disappeared.

It did not take the shrewd sailor long to learn that Elise was fretting her heart out over the wayward Scot.

“Do you think he is dead, Mr Bent?” she asked one day.

“It is hard to say what might happen to a man like that,” he answered, “but his sort are hard to kill. It’s more likely,” he added, with an ill-suppressed grin, “that he will kill a few other people before his turn comes. I’ve handled men like M‘Glusky many a time, Miss Elise, and they have ninety-nine lives as a rule. Possibly he may have drifted away across the seas to foreign parts. Fellows of his temperament have a knack of taking to the sea as firemen or deck hands on steamers. I think you will hear of him again.”

“He had a very tender heart under his wild manner,” she answered, and Esau, who had heard much concerning M‘Glusky from folks who had known him when he was eating the husks and herding with swine had to turn his head away to look at the weather, to hide his face from the eyes of Elise. But before the ship sailed he mustered up sufficient courage to ask Elise to be a friend to Jean.

“Is she your sweetheart then?” she asked him, and he noticed with surprise that there was a warm flush on her cheeks and a glad light in her eyes as she spoke, for though Esau did not know it, Elise had all along been jealous of Jean. She had fancied, somehow, that the pastor’s daughter had given her heart to the reformer in the days when he was plucking thorns and thistles from the vineyard by sheer force.

“I hope she will be my wife some day,” he answered, looking the ward of his owner fearlessly in the eyes. “There’s no promise yet, Miss Elise, but when I get command of a vessel, I hope she will help to keep me straight.”

“I will help her, and I will help you also, Esau. I will speak to my guardian. He is a very religious man and likes his skippers to be the same. I have heard him say so.”

“So have I,” replied Esau, “but I haven’t been trading to the Congo so many years without knowing something of the nature of the religious gentlemen who trade with the Portuguese, and I don’t think my want of religion will stand in your guardian’s way if he sees there is money in me.”

“You don’t think he is a really good man, then?”

Esau walked to the scuppers and spat over the rail into the sea before he replied.

“If I was to tell you just what I think of your pious guardian, Miss Elise, I’d have to use language that would start the pitch boiling in the seams of the deck planking, so we’d better not start on that subject. He wants men who run his ships cheaply and well. He wants men who can get the most work at the smallest cost out of a lot of wild devils who ship for the Congo trade because they find it hard to get a berth anywhere else. I can handle that kind of men, because I’ve been that kind of man myself in my time, but I tell you frankly, if your holy guardian offered me a partnership in this vessel I would not touch his shore work on the Congo side with a shovel. But that is his lookout. I’ll work as mate on his ship to carry cargo, and if I get a chance I’ll take a command from him, for his vessels are good and the pay is sure. I’ll never forget your kindness if you will try and help Jean. She is very proud and will not take money help, but you who are a woman will know how to help her in other ways.”

“I will speak to my guardian. He has much influence in religious circles, and we will get her mission work.”

“No, please, not from your guardian,” said the sailor. “She will be my wife some day, and I would not like her to be beholden to that man.”

“You take his pay.”

"Yes, Miss Elise, I take his pay, but I am not as she is. I've done too many things to be squeamish now, but I would not have her soiled."

"You are a lover to be proud of, Esau," laughed the lass. "What a lucky girl Jean is!"

"Lucky! Miss Elise. You have thousands, and Jean has not a shilling in the world."

"I would give it all, every penny of it," cried the lassie, passionately, "for the love of such a man as you. Oh! I envy Jean her fortune."

Without giving him time for another word she stepped quickly on to the gangway and went ashore.

"There's a bonny wench eating her heart out for love of that mad Scot," muttered Esau as he watched her go. "She's just sick with love and longing, and she's bonny enough to make a man's mouth water. She's almost as good to look at as my winsome Jean, only she's different."

The owner came towards him. "Good-day, Mr Bent."

"Good-day, sir," answered Esau, gruffly enough.

"You are going to ship with us again. Why did you miss the last voyage? Drink and other abominations, eh?"

"I've given up those things. I had business ashore. The skipper knows all about it, sir."

"I am very glad to hear you say so, Mr Bent. I like God-fearing men to man my ships and officer them. I have found during a long lifetime that godliness, chastity and purity of heart are a man's most precious possessions in this world. A good man is a lily-of-the-valley in the eye of the Lord."

A half-drunken deck hand who was working close by squirted a mouthful of tobacco juice over the owner's shoes.

“Ye’re a nice lily-o’-the-valley, ye auld deil’s buckie; ye’re no fit tae shake cinders through the gratin’s o’ h—. They ken ye fine in the Congo, ye psalm-singin’ auld soul-slayer. The deil wull roast ye when he lays han’s on ye as yon one-legged mon on the quay roasts chestnuts. A wudna be foun’ deid wi’ ye. Ye’re no’ a lily-o’-the-valley; ye’re a —— crimson poppy.”

He lurched forward to spit more tobacco juice on the owner, but Esau gave him a blow which sent him reeling across the deck, for such a breach of discipline could not be tolerated.

“Who was that man?” gasped the owner. “I did not get a good look at him. Is his name M‘Glusky?”

“No,” answered Esau. “His name is M‘Taggart. He’s a good man when he’s sober, but he’s been on the spree in port, and when he’s half-drunk he would insult a king or anybody else.”

The owner put a shaking hand upon Esau’s arm.

“There was a man, a mad Scot,” he whispered, “named M‘Glusky. He went out in this ship as a fireman to the Congo. I trust that he is dead. If he is not, and he ever tries to get back to this country, mind you do not ship him. I would discharge any man who gave him a berth. Let him rot in Africa, let him die there. Keep him away from Scotland. He —he tried to take my life. He hunted me as a hound hunts a hare. Do you hear me, sir? Let me know at once. I would give a thousand pounds to be sure that he is dead—at least,” he added, his native caution coming to the surface, “I would leave a thousand pounds in my will to the man who assured me of Ian M‘Glusky’s death.”

"I'm not out for blood-money," retorted Esau, stoutly, "but if I hear of the man's death I will let you know."

On his first voyage he heard much concerning M'Glusky, especially from that chief engineer with whom the Scot had had so many battles.

"M'Glusky wisna a bad mon at he'rt," said the "chief," "but he was a wee bit contrary and snake-heided, especially when he had a drap o' auld Jamaica under his belt. One day he gied me mair sauce than A cud stan' frae a fireman, so A hit him a tap wi' a bit lead pipe A had in ma han', an' he chased me a' ower the ship wi' a spanner in his fist. A'm no sure he wudna hae killed me if the cook hadna drapped him wi' a clout on the lug wi' a leg o' mutton as he wis rushin' past the cook's galley."

"What did he do to the cook?" queried Esau.

"Not much," was the laconic answer. "He jist kicked him in the wammale, an' then sat on his chest and said, 'Mon, ye hit me wi' the shank o' a sheep, an' by the Lord A'll mak' ye eat it raw,' and he did. The cook didna mind the meat sae muckle, because he wis a great eater, but when M'Glusky started to ram the bone doon his throat on top of it the cook screeched for mercy. 'Wud ye mak' me eat bone?' he yelled. 'A wud that,' cried M'Glusky, 'an' A wud mak' ye eat the wool tae, if it wis handy.'

"We turned the hose on him," continued the "chief," "an' drooned him off the cook. He had the deil's ain temper, but he wis a gran' mon tae work."

"Is he dead?" queried Esau.

"A'm no' sure," replied the "chief," "but if he isna A'm thinkin' a lot of Portuguese are by noo. He wis jist the mon tae get intae sair trouble wi' the dirty little yellow buckies wi'

their slave-drivin' games an' their tricks of poisonin' men. Ye ken the Portuguese gunboat, Esau, the ane that patrols the Congo coast, wi' a' the officers dressed in gold lace an' frills?"

Esau nodded.

"Well, wan nicht the gunboat was lyin' alongside the quay, an' the officers were holding a gran' palaver on deck wi' the military governor. Ye ken fine hoo fond they are o' swads an' gold lace an' spur, an' pistols, an' cocked hats, an' a' the ither dom tom-foolery o' what they ca' their 'service.' An' ye ken weel there's no' a real fechter amang them a', jist looking-glass soldiers an' sailor men—a' show an' nae siller, an' nae fecht, as puir in pocket as they are in spirit. Weel, M'Glusky wis drinkin' wi' an American sailor mon ashore, and the mon had a year's pay in a wee bit canvas bag. He took it oot tae pay for a drink, an' he was sae drunk he drapped it on the floor o' the drinkin' shanty, an' a Portuguese mon-o'-war's mon made a grab at it an' scooted towards the gun-boat. M'Glusky started in pursuit o' the loon, an' wis sae close ahint him when he dashed ower the gangway that he cud almost grab haud o' him. The mon fell, an' a' the siller went flying aboot the decks o' the gunboat, an' in a minute the whole gang of officers, sailors, firemen an' a' were strugglin' an' kickin', yellin' an' bitin' ane anither for the siller.

"The commander o' the gunboat got maist. He went for the gold pieces an' stuffed a' he got intae his mooth, as ye hae seen a monkey stuff his lug wi' nuts. M'Glusky went up to him an' said, 'Señor, A'll thank ye tae gie me that siller; it's ma mate's.' The Commander drew himself up to his full height an' ordered M'Glusky frae the quarter-deck. 'Am A

tae unnerstan' by that, ma buckie, that ye'll no' gie me ma mate's bit siller?' whispered M'Glusky.

"The Commander drew his sword, an' a' the ither officers drew their bit bodkins an' made passes at Mac. 'A'm no' feared o' ye,' cried he. 'A'll hae that siller or A'll swat ye a', burn ma gran'mither if A dinna!'

"Then turning his whole attention tae the commander, who was richt in front o' him, wi' his cheeks puffed oot wi' stolen siller, M'Glusky shouted, 'Ye stan' glarin' at me, ye robber o' the helpless an' the weak. Dinna look at me like that, ye ugly wee deil. Ye hivna gotten a face at a'; it's as expressionless as the back door o' a puirhoose, an' if ye' dinna pay oot every bawbee ye an' yer thievin' crew hae pooched A'll knock yer face intae shape, if A hae tae knock it roon the back o' yer heid tae dae it.'

"Then he swung his fist on tae the lug o' the commander wi' sae muckle force that he made him swallow hauf the gold pieces an' mair than hauf his teeth.

"Then he let himself loose among the rest like a bull terrier in a rat-pit, an' the Portuguese ran in a' directions, a' that could rin. He went doon below after them that were hidin' in the engine-room an' hunted them intae corners an' took the siller frae them, an' he had naething tae help him but a twa-foot spanner wi' a screw nut on the end o't.

"The second lieutenant hid himsel' in the funnel an' M'Glusky cudna get at him.

" 'Come oot o' it, ye cooard!' he shouted. 'Come oot o' it, or A'll smoke ye oot o' it if A hae tae burn the gunboat tae dae it. A ken ye hae ten shillin's o' ma mate's siller.'

"When a squad o' infantry cam' on the scene M'Glusky had the commander by the heels an' wis bumpin' him heid

doonwards on the deck tae get the gold oot o' him, which he swallowed when the Scot gied him a tap on the lug.

"Oh, ay, they ken Maister M'Glusky on the Congo. Ye'll no' hae ony difficulty in hearin' o' him there, Esau. He's no the sort that hides his licht unner a bushel. He's no' what ye micht ca' o' a retirin' disposition, drunk or sober!"

It was as the "chief" predicted. Esau did hear of M'Glusky on the Congo, and he had nothing good to tell bonny Elise when he returned from that voyage, though he minimised the wild doings of the Scot as much as he possibly could, because he did not want to bruise her heart; but to Jean he said nothing, because he could not lie to her, and he would not tell her the truth.

After a few voyages he heard that M'Glusky was dead. He had disappeared, no European knew where, though the Portuguese could have told a different story, for the Scot was in the slave pen.

Esau conveyed this news to his owner, and so glad was that ancient pilgrim that he gave Esau the command of the vessel, the captain having been taken ill on the home voyage.

When Elise heard the fateful news she was overcome with sorrow, mourning for the man with all her heart.

But Jean would not believe it. "I do not think Ian M'Glusky is dead," she said. "When he dies I shall know it."

Esau pondered over these words in his own heart, not knowing quite what to make of it. But Jean was not speaking at random, for her father was with her in the spirit very often, and his presence comforted her almost as much as when he was in the flesh. She felt confident that if M'Glusky died her father would communicate that fact to her, because there had always been such perfect love, such communion of spirit,

such simple trust between the maid and her parent that what men call death could not destroy or undo. To her the dear old man was not dead. He had simply passed into a world where in due season she would rejoin him.

Esau, being of a grosser and more material nature, did not grasp this great truth. He went to her upon his promotion and told her again of his love, and offered her his heart and home.

"No, Esau, not yet," she answered. Then, putting both her hands in his and looking at him steadily in the eyes, she said, "Esau, I will tell you this. If I had never met Ian M'Glusky I could have loved you with a wife's love, for you are a noble-hearted man, but I gave my love to poor Ian, and—"

In his sudden pain Esau ground out an oath from between his clenched teeth, "Damn Ian M'Glusky."

She put one little hand over his savage mouth.

"No, Esau, no! he did you no wrong, for I loved him before I met you. Perhaps in time, Esau, if Ian M'Glusky dies, as it is only too possible he may, and you still want me, I will try and love you with a wife's love, but until I am sure of his death I will not think of any other man. But you are foolish to worry over me. There is another whom you might woo. Have you not noticed, Esau, how Elise is always waiting upon the quay when your ship comes in? She is very bonny and very sweet. She has been a sister to me since my father died. She would make you a loving wife, Esau."

Esau turned from Jean and fled, lest in his rage he should tell her that Elise sought him only to glean news of M'Glusky.

Things went on in the same groove after this. Esau sailed, and returned again and again, and though he honestly sought for the reformer he heard not a word. For a man buried alive

in the fever swamps of the Congo might as well have been dead as far as his friends were concerned.

At last, in spite of herself, the thought grew upon Jean that the man she loved must be dead. She tried to get a communication from her father, but somehow he seemed to have drifted away from her. Possibly it was the voice of the youth in her blood that was calling her further away from the aged dead. So when Esau came again pleading his love and his longing, and refusing to be driven into the arms of any other woman, she gave him a reluctant promise that she would try and think of him as a lover.

Perhaps it was pity for Esau that drew her to him in those troubled days. Her own heart was sore, and she knew that he was not happy, and she was drifting towards the border-line where pity changes to affection.

Poor Esau had hoped, when he started on that last voyage, that upon his return Jean would crown his life with happiness by becoming his wife. Yet scarcely had he set foot in the Congo ere he received news which was to bring him face to face with the man whom he had so long considered dead and buried. His business had taken him a little way inland, not far, yet far enough to be out of the beaten track, and on that journey he met the black Hebe whose father had been the chief of the tribe M‘Glusky had joined. She told him that a white man lay in the swamp, a prisoner and a slave, adding that unless he was rescued at once he would surely die.

Esau knew that corner of the Dark Continent far too well to hope that anything could be done for the stranded derelict unless he took the responsibility and did it himself. His men carried M‘Glusky on board and made him comfortable. The ship’s doctor had had much experience, both in regard to the

African coast and also in the matter of such men as the reformer.

"Will he live?" demanded Esau, curtly.

The doctor, who was a Scot, smiled grimly.

"If A didna ken the mon A wudna gie him a week tae dee in; but A ken him weel. It's the wild Hielanmon we had aboard aince as a fireman, an' A dinna think ye cud kill him wi' an axe. The open sea wull put new life intae him in nae time. He'll no' be the same mon again that he was aince, but he'll no' dee if he is weel lookit after."

"Do your best for him and pull him round if you can," snapped the skipper. "I am going ashore with the men."

"May A ask the meanin' o' the picnic ye're providin' for the fowk ashore, Captain Esau?"

"We are going to try and convert a few yellow men between now and daylight. We are going to point out to them the sinfulness of marooning British sailors, even if the men they capture are dead-beats and drunkards," was the reply. "Good-night. I'm not Captain Esau Bent until to-morrow morning. I'm just plain Smith, a fireman or deck hand."

The doctor looked at the terrible wreck of humanity in the bunk.

"Losh," he growled, "A maun stay an' watch ower ye, ma buckie, or ye'll slip yer cable, but A wud like tae gang ashore the nicht wi' the boys. A feel the spirit promptin' me tae dae a wee bit o' missionary wark. A used tae play footer masel' aince, an' A wud like tae see hoo far A cud kick a mon without bucklin' his spine."

He slipped on deck and saw all hands stealing shorewards silently, and when he saw the chief engineer toying lovingly

with a spanner with a screw nut on the end of it, as he tip-toed across the gangway with the men, the doctor murmured:

"Well, well, A'm thinkin' A'll no' be wantit ashore, for what the men miss wi' their buits the skipper will atten' tae wi' his han'-spike, an' a' that gets past the skipper wull no' be owerlooked by the 'chief.' The Portuguese wull no' forget the nicht. It'll be a gran' revival. A shouldna be surprised if there's mair widows than wives in this toon the morn."

. . . . . .

"There," said Captain Esau Bent, as he threw his hand-spike down on the deck after his return, "I feel better now, but I have a feeling that Ian M'Glusky is going to come pretty near breaking my heart if he lives."

The reformer did live. His splendid constitution pulled him out of the grave, and he was able to stand alone by the time the vessel reached home. When the vessel lay alongside the quay, both Jean and Elise came aboard, walking together like sisters. M'Glusky was on deck at the time, his snow-white hair falling loosely on to the collar of his rough seaman's coat.

The owner crossed the gangway with the two lasses and made his way straight to Captain Esau Bent. Holding out his hand he sniffled a text, mixing it with words of welcome. Esau gripped the proffered hand in a grip like granite and did not let the hand go.

"Come with me," was all he said, and he drew the owner across the deck to where the white-haired figure stood. "Do you know that man?"

The owner looked into the sunken face, he ran his eyes over the emaciated figure, but no light of recognition came into his eyes.

“No, I do not know him.”

“Look again.”

“I tell you I do not know him. You have been drinking. I will discharge you for this conduct.”

Captain Esau Bent laughed a laugh that was not good to hear.

“Discharge me! No, you will not, for I will leave your vessel now. That is Ian M‘Glusky, who has been a prisoner and a slave on your plantation in the swamps of the cursed Congo, a white slave amongst hundreds of black slaves. I have brought him back from the grave to bring you face to face, as some day you will have to stand face to face with the many black men done to death in order to fill your purse.”

The owner shrank back, his eyes fixed on the face of the reformer in deadly terror. He remembered that other time when this man, for small cause, had sought his life in a drunken frenzy. He quivered all over with fear.

M‘Glusky moved slowly to him and put his hand upon the old hypocrite’s head, saying gently:

“Dinna fash yersel’, mon. A bear ye nae malice, though yer weys are no’ the weys o’ a gude mon. A’ll no’ sit in judgment upon ye, for A’m a sinner amang sinners, an’ A forgie ye as A hope tae be forgi’en, freely and fully. Dinna tremble wi’ fear. A wudna hurt ye. A’m no’ sure ye’re worth hurtin’. Ye are a puir, false-hearted buckie. If A felt ony wrath in ma he’rt A wudna lift ma han’ tae ye. A wud just send a nigger tae catch ye wi’ a sma’-tooth comb, but A’ll no’ use harsh words tae ye. Gang yer weys in peace, but if ye dinna repent an’ change yer weys ye’ll be sittin’ on hot embers through a’ eternity.”

He turned away, not wrathfully, but sorrowfully, and as he turned he found himself face to face with two lassies who had loved him in the pride of his manhood. He looked at Elise and a glad light leaped into his eyes.

"Ian!" she cried, and took a step forward. Jean fell back a pace, all the colour fading from her dear, lovable face. M'Glusky saw her, he paused half a moment, then, as if the scales had just fallen from his eyes, he went to her with quick, eager movements. A glad, wild cry burst from his lips:

"Jean, ma winsome Jean!" He took her in his arms, and crushed her close up against his heart, and held her there. He did not tell her that he loved her, did not ask her if she loved him. He just took possession of her and held her close to his heart, and she clung to him with all her strength.

For a moment something of the old warlike look came over his face, as if he would have defied the world to take her from him, but it died as swiftly as it came, and the new expression of peace and humility came back, crowning him with dignity.

"A ken it a' the noo, lassie. A ken it a'. A hae sinned, an' A hae suffered, an' the Lord has gied me the richest reward that can come tae a mon in this warl'," and the winsome Jean nestled closer, smiling up into his worn and scarred face.

Elise moved quickly and quietly away, and as she crossed the gangway Esau Bent caught up to her and would have brushed rudely past, for his blood was hot in him. She touched his arm. He paused.

"Where are you going, Esau?"

"To the devil," he returned savagely; "good-bye."

She held his sleeve between her finger and thumb, and then laughed, a strange little laugh. “I know just how you feel, Esau. If I were a man I would go there too.”

He looked at the handsome, bonny face and read the misery in her eyes.

“You are nearly good enough to eat,” he cried, “and yet you are as wretched as I am.”

“Nearly good enough to eat, and no one to eat me,” she laughed.

“Curse M‘Glusky!” cried the sailor. “Why should he be the only happy man in the world? Will you come with me, Elise?”

“To the devil?” she whispered, half laughing, half crying.

“No, to church, Elise.”

She gave a long, searching look.

“Why not, Esau?”

THE END


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**Typographical errors corrected by the etext transcriber:**

his back hair=> his black hair {pg 46}
haled before a magistrate=> hauled before a magistrate {pg 92}

[The end of *McGlusky the Reformer* by Alfred Greenwood Hales]