

In Memory of Maggie M. Gray.

(Died November 4th, 1877.) Gently close those patient eyelids, Fold the waxen hands so white;

THE MAID OF KILLEENA.

BY WILLIAM BLACK. CHAPTER V.—Continued.

Seven nights before, as has been duly chronicled, a great merry-making had taken place at Hector Lewis's farm, but it was as nothing compared to this

Then Alister Lewis said the same thing, and he, too, drank a glass; and there was a great noise of cheering and congratulation, with only one dissentient voice.

Now amidst all the dancing and revelry that was going on, and that had arranged that Ailasa and her husband, along with a few friends, should quietly slip away, and get down to the boat,

"What is the matter with you, Ailasa?" he said. "Are you afraid to go with Duncan for the few minutes, after he was fair enough to come to your wedding?"

"Yes I am," she said. "I do not know why he will look at me in a strange way—I am afraid of him."

"But that is a foolish fancy of yours, Ailasa," her husband said; "and it would be very bad if you put a slight upon Duncan, when that he wishes to be friendly with you."

"Oh, yes," she said, "I have been very kind, that is true," Ailasa said; and then, after a pause, she seemed to pull herself together.

"It is a small boat to tek so many people over. They will hef to go over two or three at a time. And it is good work with the oars there will be, for the tide will be going out."

trouble there will be whateffer." The small rowing-boat had been hauled up on the bank, where a sandy cove ran into the long grass and the weeds; but it cost Duncan Lewis little labor to drag it out, and get it afloat.

"It is a proud woman you are this day, that you are married, Ailasa Macdonald," he said.

"There was others would hef made you as good a husband as Alister Lewis," And again she did not answer; but there was something in the sound of his voice that struck a great chill to her heart.

"Ay, ay," said he more fiercely, "you will laugh at me—you you a foolish man to think of marrying a young lass. It is a ferry good laugh for you to huf together; and when the people will come to your house for a dram, it is a ferry good laugh you will get them about Duncan Lewis over at Darroch—"

"Duncan Lewis," she cried, "what are you doing?" "What am I doing?" said he, with a loud and harsh laugh; and she dimly saw that he was groping about the bottom of the boat; "it is the two oars that hef gone into the sea; but this is what I am doing—that some one has taken the cork out of the bottom of the boat—yes, when it was on the bank—and by Kott, the water is coming in fast, and you will hef to swim ashore, Ailasa Macdonald!"

"For a second or two she was too stupefied to utter even a scream. She knew, in a speechless horror, that what hef said was true; for she heard the gurgling of the water; and at the same moment she saw his dark figure rise in the boat, and then disappear. He had jumped into the sea.

"Alister Lewis! Alister Lewis!" he cried, "it is a bad night for you this night!"

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Macdonald she should haf a bigger boat." "She was a bad boat, tann her!" said another, fiercely. "And there was stones in her, too, for old Tomlad Maclean hef her try a sail w' her—tann her, that taffe of a boat! The poor lass—the poor lass! And where is Alister Lewis?"

"Ay, ay," said one of his companions, "he is out at the point. He is fair mad about it, and he says that he will hef her cry to him, and that she is gone out to the sea. But it is no possible—for the boat would go down—ay, the poor lass! the poor lass! And it was a bad thing to hef the other boats away at the other side of the island—and the Lewis's fishing boat, she is up on the sand, and hef been working at her for three or two days or more, and she canna be put in the water, what was the use of that?"

"Then it began to rain; and when at last most of the people had wandered down to the point they tried to persuade Alister Lewis to go back to the farm; but he would not go. Duncan Lewis had gone to get dry clothes on; and two or three of the young fellows had started off to walk to the other side of Darroch, to bring round the boats as soon as the daylight began to lighten the sky. Meanwhile this melancholy company stood out at the edge of the rain, in the slow and soaking rain; and a great silence had fallen over them all.

Then they began to see each other more clearly. A strange light began to gleam visible all around; and they could make out something of the coast and of the dark island lying out there in the sea. Slowly a pale gray rose up in the east—slow and mournful—and they could see the pale-gray rocks, and the low-lying white mists that hung about the shores. So different was this morning to the morning that had ushered in Alister Lewis's marriage-day!

By-and-by, and far in the distance, they heard the measured sound of oars; and here were some of the best oarsmen about the island bringing round two of the boats. What news did they bring? On their way they had found one of the oars belonging to Mrs. Macdonald's boat, which had been caught in a long and trailing mass of sea-weed, and got drifted up to a small island of rock.

There was another burst of waving when this news was told; for now it was clear that the boat had gone down, with the hapless girl who had so lately been made a bride. What was the use of putting out to sea? Nevertheless, in a hopeless fashion, Alister Lewis would get into one of the boats; and the young fellows pulled him out into the open waters.

A cold gray mist lay over the sea, beaten down by the constant rain, and hung about the islands, too, so that the shores were scarcely visible. In all this wide picture of desolation there was no sign of life; as far as they could see, with eyes well-trained to pick out the smallest objects on the waves, there was nothing floating there.

"No, no, Alister Lewis," said one of the young men, "the poor lass couldna hef drifted out to the sea, even if the boat was adrift. For the tide would hef driven her on the Skirmore rocks, and there was nothing there when we passed."

He did not ask them to go further; and indeed, they had hard work to pull back against the wind, though the tide was on the turn. When they got back to Darroch again, the people had dispersed along the shores, seeking for some trace of the sunken boat, but nothing belonging to it, except the oar, had been recovered. Then they all went back to the farm, and sat down in silence; until Mrs. Macdonald suddenly threw up her hands again, and called loud: "My good lass! my good lass!" whereupon all the people joined in her grief, the women rocking themselves to and fro, and saying with many sobs that there was no lass in all the islands so good as hers in Ailasa Macdonald.

And this was noticed—that while the men, old men and young men, asked questions of Duncan Lewis about what had happened, he answered them with his eyes fixed on the ground, and never once lifted them to any one's face; and of all the people there, Alister Lewis was the only one who would not ask any questions, but sometimes he stared in silence at his brother and at his youngest face.

What satisfaction could be gained from any questions or answers? It had wakened the lad out of his bed who had had pulled across the small boat, and had examined him about the cork in the bottom of that frail craft. He admitted that, during the day, finding the boat had been leaking, he and two others had pulled her up on the beach, and taken out the cork as the handiest method of baling her; but that the cork was properly put in again was proved by his having subsequently pulled the boat over to Killeena and back.

"Ay, ay," said Duncan Lewis, eagerly, when he heard this, "the cork was loose—and I, say, the cork was maybe loose, and I may hef kicked it out with my feet."

but not in expectation; for there seemed to be no doubt about the fate that had overtaken Ailasa on the very night of her wedding. Alister Lewis was a changed man. In these few days he had grown haggard and silent—he would speak to no one. He only walked round the shores, or pulled out in a boat by himself, as if he still expected to hear his name called; and when, by chance he came into the house, he saw Duncan there, he immediately went out again. The two brothers had not exchanged a word.

TO BE CONTINUED.

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SHERIFF'S SALE. To be sold at Public Auction, on FRIDAY, the 12th day of March next, in front of the Registry Office, Newcastle, between the hours of 12 noon, and 5 p. m.

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