

Poetry.

THE INDIAN SUMMER.

'Tis the saddest, 'tis the sweetest,
'Tis the loveliest of the year;
The time of Summer's last sad smile
Ere she's laid upon her bier.
Methought she had departed,
With all her radiance wild,
Gone—Stranger lands to golden
With her balmy airs and mild.

But no!—ah, still she tarrieth,
She smiloth once again,
And from the forest echoeth,
A low, sad, mournful strain.
Sweet songs of rich, glad melody,
Hath she been singing long,
And now, with strangely warning tone,
She chants her own death song.

Grey hill, and bleak, wild mountain,
Woodland and glen and vale,
Resoundeth with the requiem,
The solemn, dirge-like wail.
All gorgeous is her winding-sheet,
Green, golden-hued, and red,
O'er which a shadowy dimness rains,
As o'er the features of the dead.

Her voice, like the deer's, now soundeth,
In her sorrowful, parting lay,
And methinks it loudly speaketh
Of the coming of decay;
It tells that the lovely fadeth,
That the beautiful lasts not long,
Such to me the burden seemeth,
Of the dying Summer's song.

Select Tale.

THE CAVE OF EIGG.

A LEGEND OF THE HEBRIDES.

BY MRS. CAROLINE H. BUTLER.

"A tale of the times of old! The deeds of days of other years."—Ossian.

PART I.

Eigg, forming one of the Hebrides on the western coast of Scotland, presents a rocky precipitous shore, seeming in some places to be inaccessible, except to the clanging sea-fowl, screaming and clamoring around the almost perpendicular sheets of naked rock, against which the sea rushes and roars with terrific grandeur. There are also many vast caverns opening wide their gloomy jaws as if to swallow up the heavy unbroken seas as they come sweeping on, and huge fragments of granite, bathed by the booming waves, are heaped around in wild sublimity.

This island, in feudal time, was the scene of a most fearful tragedy—of a vengeance almost too horrible to be accredited to human agency. It is perhaps a melancholy proof that, when goaded on by revenge and hatred, men sometimes lose their humanity and become demons. The precise date of this event has not come down to us, although it is supposed to have occurred as early as the thirteenth century, when these islands were under the dominion of the kings of Scotland and governed each by their own petty chieftains.

The inhabitants of Eigg were a wild, lawless race, consorting with herds of pirates infesting the neighbouring countries; and although the narrow sounds which separate these rock isles abounded with the finest salmon, and some sections in the interior presented rich tracts for cultivation, yet these rude men, preferring rapine to peaceful industry, subsisted by petty depredations upon their neighbours of the adjacent isles. True many of these neighbours were no less rapacious than the men of Eigg, and fully indemnified themselves for any grievances suffered at their hands. But there were others whose chiefs, themselves of a more noble race, maintained a higher standard of government, and however barbarous and rude their highest attainments might appear to us of the nineteenth century, they were certainly far superior to their savage neighbours of Eigg, Mull, Rum, etc.

The isle of Skye, one of the richest and most romantic of the Hebrides, was ruled at that time by the proud chieftain Alaster McLeod, who, in his sea-girt castle of Dunvegan, towering from the topmost crag of a precipitous mass of rocks which overhung the boiling sea, bid defiance alike to the power of his foes and the fury of the elements.

Between McLeod and Donald McDonald, the chieftain of Eigg, the most inveterate hatred existed. With McDonald this hatred ranged with all the fury of the ocean tempest, and was as immovable and deep-seated as the rocks which girded his dominions. Many times had the vengeance of the chief of Skye worked dreadful havoc upon the followers of McDonald for their aggressions; but so far from subduing only aroused a new spirit of malice, venting

itself in various wicked deeds upon the inhabitants of Skye, though sure of a direful return from the outraged chieftain.

The chief of Eigg had one daughter. Fair and beautiful was Ulla as the flower we sometimes see lifting its timid head within the deep fissures of the rocks, exciting our wonder how so frail a thing could there unfold its delicate portals. In an evil hour, this fair maiden of Eigg won the love of Malcolm, the only son of the haughty chieftain McLeod.

Cradled like a young eaglet in his rocky eyrie, the ceaseless dirge of the ocean his lullaby, and his sweetest music the wild clamour of the sea-gulls sweeping around the towers upon the wings of the tempest, Malcolm sprang from his nurse's arms a hero. Danger was to him a pastime. Among all the daring sons of the isle none could equal Malcolm. He loved to scale the giddy crag, wreathed in the spray of the wind-tossed billows, in search of the sea-mew's nest; to steer his fearless bark through perilous straits with the foam of the breakers surging around him, and to launch within the dark cavern's mouth upon the blackening waves on whose surface perhaps no other boat had dared to bend the pliant oar.

The isle of Eigg presented a bolder scope for his adventurous spirit than almost any other of these western islands; and heedless of the feud existing between his father and its chief, and as reckless of danger from pirates or revengeful islanders, Malcolm, manning his light craft with a few of his faithful clansmen, would boldly steer along the inhospitable coast, where

"All is rocks at random thrown,
Black waves, bare crags, and banks of stone."
Sometimes anchoring beneath a frowning precipice he would spring upon some jutting crag, and leaping from rock to rock and over deep chasms, plant his foot at length upon the stunted heather.

It was upon one of these hazardous expeditions that Malcolm, steering his boat within a narrow inlet or loch which suddenly presented itself, found he had unawares approached that part of Eigg which might be considered the only habitable section of the island on the eastern slope of the Scur-Eigg, a remarkable ridge of high rocks, like a camel's back, running through the centre of the island. The rocks here became less precipitous, shelving gradually down to a beach of fine white glittering sand, and down their craggy sides beautiful cascades came leaping and tumbling in snowy forms to lose themselves in the waters of the loch. A few of the rude boats of the islanders were moored at a little distance along the shore, and further in their miserable dwellings were seen scattered over the bright green holms, while propped as it were upon the camel's shoulder stood a rude stone structure called the Castle of Duntulm, the residence of the chief Donald McDonald. No living soul was to be seen; the boats were idly rocking in the surf, and but for the thin blue smoke curling from these cabins, one might have deemed the island deserted.

Malcolm now resolved to land and view the strength of an enemy who, however inferior to the proud chieftain of Skye, still had the power to annoy him as a gnat may harass the lordly lion.—Springing to the shore, therefore, and clearing with little difficulty the loose fragments of rock scattered upon the beach, he soon found himself within a little glen of surpassing beauty, through which a bright stream ran murmuring. The rocks gradually receding from the shore, opened the view into various holms, some of a deep green verdure, others covered with the purple heather, here and there diversified by small copses of underwood. Through one of these inviting openings Malcolm pursued his way, when suddenly his ear caught the sound of music, mingled with the cheerful and happy laughter of female voices. Here, then, was something to arouse the curiosity of our young adventurer—music and the voice of woman.

Pursuing the sound, he soon came in view of a party of young girls dancing on the soft heather to the music of a small *clarsach* or Scottish harp, lightly touched by another of these mirthful maidens, Malcolm was not one to turn away without reaping some advantage from a scene at once so charming and so unexpected; therefore lifting his bonnet from his dark clustering locks, the young chieftain with a smile in his eye, and a merry but courteous salutation on his lip, gracefully advanced towards the mirthful circle. The music ceased as the song of a frightened bird. Like startled fawns, the timid lassies gazed for a moment upon the youthful stranger, and then, turning, would have swiftly fled the spot. But the gallant Malcolm was not to be so defeated. What arguments he made use of to detain them it matters not, since they were irresistible. The maidens paused, blushed, laughed, and then suffered themselves to be seated upon the soft heather, where, at the feet of Ulla McDonald, and gazing up into her deep blue eyes, Malcolm related how, landing from his little galley, he had

wandered from the shore, and guided by the ravishing melody of their voices, bent his fortunate steps thither.

The chief of Eigg, with his followers, probably less than a hundred men, as the entire population of the island did not at that time exceed two hundred souls, left that morning on one of their predatory or piratical expeditions, which were often extended along the coast of England and Wales, leaving, meanwhile, upon the island a few old men, the women and children, as its sole inhabitants.

McDonald was a hard, stern man, one who delighted not in innocent sports or pastimes. Those midnight orgies, when the walls of Duntulm rang with wild shouts & wilder revelry, when chieftain & vassals, alike given over to savage debauchery, hesitated not at deeds which demons might shame to own—these were the only scenes, apart from the battle and the chase, which delighted the soul of McDonald.

One feeling alone humanized the soul of the chieftain. It was love for his daughter. He knew she was very fair to look upon, and he feared that in some unlucky hour she might attract the eye of that lawless, piratical horde who had not only landed fearlessly upon his shores, but when he also feasted in his halls. Ulla was therefore seldom allowed to leave the seclusion of her apartments, which was situated in one of the highest towers of the castle, overlooking a scene of vivid sublimity, and which the chief had contrived to adorn with many rare articles from foreign lands, obtained from the spoils of pirates.

Here, then, in her lonely turret, pursuing such occupations and amusements as her limited opportunities afforded her, did the life of the beautiful Ulla glide peacefully on until the luckless hour when, released from the strict surveillance of her father, she had stolen from the gloomy walls of Duntulm to breathe the pure air of heaven and with a few of her chosen companions, wander at will through the romantic purlieus of the island—that luckless hour when the eyes of young Malcolm first rested upon her beauty.

Never had Malcolm looked upon so fair a creature as Ulla. Her loveliness was of that character which could soonest attract his noble and daring nature, for it spoke to him of helplessness, and seemed to demand protection. Her companions, with their Hebe-like forms, their bright healthy cheeks, and the mischievous glances shot from their sparkling eyes, might win his transient admiration to tempt him to a mirthful frolic, but would pass away from his thoughts with the morrow's sun.—But Ulla—Ulla with her sweet and tranquil brow, Ulla with tresses so soft and golden falling from a little cap or *smood* of pale blue velvet, and in their sunny luxuriance half shading her beautiful profile Ulla with the faintest tinge of the rose upon a complexion so purely transparent that each violet vein was clearly traced, Ulla with those large tender eyes whose liquid beauty the deep blue heavens at noon day alone could match, stirred at once the depths of his soul and bound him captive. Nor was the fair Ulla unmoved by the gallant and handsome youth at her feet; whose dark eyes flashed into her heart with electric power, while his manners and language, so much more polished than characterized the halls of Duntulm, excited her wonder and admiration.

Alas, that they ever should have met—that brave young chieftain and the fair Ulla! In that one brief interview their fate was sealed: they loved—and to love was death! The chief of Skye would sooner behold his gallant son, in all the freshness and promise of youth, stretched at his feet a lifeless corpse than see him wed the daughter of his foe, the lawless chieftain of Eigg; and, he, that stern, savage old man, with his own hand would have hurled his lovely child from the highest tower of Duntulm, and yielded up her mangled body to the birds of the air, rather than give her in marriage to the son of McLeod his bitter foe!

The sun was already flashing his golden rays athwart the summit of the Scur-Eigg, and the sea-birds wheeling to their nests amid the heeding crags, and yet Malcolm seemed incapable of breaking the enchantment which held him at the feet of Ulla. Her companions withdrawing themselves to a little distance, eyed roguishly the evident abstraction of the youthful pair, and chattered in low subdued voices upon the merits of the stranger. And still Malcolm lingered, and still the maiden listened with heightened bloom and downcast eyes, until warned too surely by the fast-gathering shades of evening, they parted; but with a promise to meet again.

PART II.

And now rocking upon the waters of the loch was the light boat of Malcolm, daily seen, while the young chieftain roamed with Ulla over the green holms, or, seated upon some tall cliff overlooking this wild scene of ocean and of rock, of high barren mountains and fertile vales resting be-

tween, would point to the distant towers of Dunvegan, and with a lover's eloquence, dwell upon the time when he might hail her as their beautiful mistress; for with all the confidence of youth whose past no chilling disappointment has clouded, whose future is gilded with the bright beams of hope, did Malcolm believe that all which might now seem to bar his union with the lovely Ulla would soon be removed, even as a brilliant sun and an unclouded heaven succeed the most violent tempest. What though the storm of hatred warred within the breast of Skye's haughty chieftain and the wild lord of Eigg, was there not power in love and beauty to calm its fury? How could his father resist the beautiful Ulla? And would not McDonald gladly claim alliance with the powerful chieftain McLeod? Thus reasoned the ardent Malcolm—thus believed the confiding Ulla.

But one day, afar off against the blue sky, a few dark specks were seen upon the heaving ocean.—Ulla turned pale as she pointed them out to her lover. Her heart for the first time owned a presentiment of evil.

Nearer and nearer over the foam-crested billows came the boats, and rounding the rocky point of Rum, stood direct for Eigg, the banner of its chief floating from the foremost galley, while echoing from cliff to cliff and across the quiet waters of the little loch, sounded the wild strain of the "McDonald-Gathering."

Ulla held out her hand to Malcolm—

"Fly, Malcolm, fly! In his wrath my father is terrible! Should he find thee here—thou, the son of his enemy, though alone and defenceless—no mercy would stir his bosom or change thy doom of death. Fly, then, ere it be too late!"

"But for thee, sweet Ulla," cried Malcolm, his eyes kindling as he spoke, "I would dare the chief of Eigg to mortal combat—but for thee defy alike his power and his malice; for Malcolm never yet turned his back upon a foe." Yet for thy sake, dear one, I go, soon I trust, to proffer that alliance which thy father dare not spurn. Meanwhile, dear Ulla, let me not be denied the sight of thy beauty, fair as the sunbeam, let me hear sometimes thy voice, sweet as the morning wind among the branches. Every night my little bark shall lie at the foot of yon high cliff, which even the boldest of thy father's vassals deem inaccessible. If from thy chamber thou canst safely steal away, place a light within the window of thy turret, and I will meet thee here—here, dearest Ulla, in this spot where first we met."

The maid gave a hurried assent, for the boats came on with the speed of race-horses. Then, for the first time folding her to his heart and imprinting a kiss upon her snow-white brow, Malcolm was gone. Fleet as the wind were the footsteps of Ulla as she fled towards her gloomy prison of Duntulm. She crossed its rude portals and ascending to her turreted chamber, with throbbing bosom and tearful eye, sought to descry the boat of her lover.

It is there; yes, she sees it skimming lightly as the wing of the sea-fowl across the waters of the sound, to where arose the glittering cliffs of Skye like vast columns, their summits resting in the clouds. Malcolm is safe; but the heart of Ulla is heavy with grief.

She sees her father's galleys swiftly approach; they reach the shore. The women and children with glad shouts receive the returning islanders, and the shrill bagpipe proclaims their welcome.—The chief, amid the shouts of his people, now springs to the shore, and Ulla trembles and turns still paler as she sees him approach the castle.—Then bidding one of her maidens bear on her harp, she too hastens to meet her father, so stern even in his kindest moods.

True to their trust the lovers meet within that little glen, heaven's canopy radiant with the burning stars above them, and their sighs mingling with the midnight moan of the surging billows.

And when were these stolen interviews of mingled joy and sorrow to have an end? When might Malcolm boldly claim the hand of the lovely Ulla?

Alas! that might never be; for his father, that proud chieftain, listened scornfully and in anger to the petition of his son. What, the noble race of McLeod seeking alliance with caterans and robbers both by sea and land! No; rather would he see his son struck down at his feet by the battle-axe of Eigg's savage chieftain than to hurl Ulla, though the fairest daughter of the isles, as the bride of Malcolm, the future mistress of Dunvegan's lordly towers! Not more immoveable were the rocks on which his towers were based than the heart of McLeod; and the waves which ceaselessly swept around them had no more power to stir them from their ocean depths than had the entreaties of Malcolm to stir the iron will of their chief.

The meetings of the lovers, therefore, now became less frequent; for the young chieftain was closely watched, and spies set over his footsteps that he might no more approach the dangerous pre-