

Eighth. The view of Kunchain-Junga from Darjeeling, the second highest mountain in the world. Think of a hill five times as high as Mount Washington, blazing with snow in the sunshine.

Ninth. The Seven Pagodas, near Madras, where whole stories of the Hindu mythology are sculptured on the face of perpendicular rocks. They are queer enough.

Tenth. The Sivite Temple at Tanjore, one

mass of brilliant color and sculpture, with its great pyramid two hundred feet high.

Eleventh. The Temple at Kandy in Ceylon, where they keep Buddha's tooth. You see the strange Buddhist priests and their strange ways.

These are the greatest things in India, and there are ever so many more like them, only not quite so great or interesting. I am very glad I went, and I wish that everybody who cares about interesting things could go there too.

Affectionately,

P.

THE HEIR OF THE MCHULISHES.

By the author of "The Luck of Roaring Camp."

A STORY IN TWO PARTS.—PART I.

I.



HE consul for the United States of America at the port of St. Kentigern was sitting alone in the settled gloom of his private office. Yet it was only high noon of a "seasonable" winter's day, by the face of the

clock that hung like a pallid moon on the murky wall opposite to him. What else could be seen of the apartment by the faint light that struggled through the pall of fog outside the lusterless windows presented the ordinary aspect of a business sanctum. There were a shelf of fog-bound admiralty law, one or two colored prints of ocean steamships under full steam, bow on, tremendously foreshortened, and seeming to force themselves through shadowy partitions; there were engravings of Lincoln and Washington, as unsubstantial and shadowy as the dead themselves. Outside, against the window, which was almost level with the street, an occasional procession of black silhouetted figures of men and women, with prayer-books in their hands and gloom on their faces, seemed to be born of the fog, and prematurely to return to it. At which a conviction of sin overcame the consul. He remembered that it was the Sabbath day, and that he had no business to be at the consulate at all.

Unfortunately, with this shameful conviction came the sound of a bell ringing somewhere in the depths of the building, and the shuffling of feet on the outer steps. The light of his fire had evidently been seen, and like a beacon had attracted some wandering and possibly intoxicated mariner with American papers. The consul walked into the hall with a sudden right-

eous frigidity of manner. It was one thing to be lounging in one's own office on the Sabbath day, and quite another to be deliberately calling there on business.

He opened the front door, and a middle-aged man entered, accompanying and partly shoving forward a more diffident and younger one. Neither appeared to be a sailor, although both were dressed in that dingy respectability and remoteness of fashion affected by second and third mates when ashore. They were already well in the hall, and making their way toward the private office, when the elder man said, with an air of casual explanation, "Lookin' for the American consul; I reckon this yer 's the consulate?"

"It is the consulate," said the official, dryly, "and I am the consul; but—"

"That's all right," interrupted the stranger, pushing past him, and opening the door of the private office, into which he shoved his companion. "Thar, now!" he continued to the diffident youth, pointing to a chair, and quite ignoring the presence of the consul. "Thar's a bit of America. Sit down thar. You're under the flag now, and can do as you darn please." Nevertheless, he looked a little disappointed as he glanced around him, as if he had expected a different environment and possibly a different climate.

"I presume," said the consul, suavely, "you wish to see me on some urgent matter; for you probably know that the consulate is closed on Sunday to ordinary business. I am here myself quite accidentally."

"Then you don't live here?" said the visitor, disappointedly.

"No."

"I reckon that's the reason why we did n't see no flag a-flyin' when we was a huntin' this

place yesterday. We was directed here, but I says to Malcolm, says I, 'No; it ain't here, or you 'd see the Stars and Stripes afore you 'd see anythin' else.' But I reckon you float it over your house, eh?"

The consul here explained smilingly that he did *not* fly a flag over his lodgings, and that except on national holidays it was not customary to display the national ensign on the consulate.

"Then you can't do here — and you a *consul* — what any nigger can do in the States, eh? That's about how it pans out, don't it? But I did n't think *you'd* tumble to it quite so quick, Jack."

At this mention of his Christian name, the consul turned sharply on the speaker. A closer scrutiny of the face before him ended with a flash of reminiscence. The fog without and within seemed to melt away; he was standing once more on a Western hillside with this man; a hundred miles of sparkling sunshine and crisp, dry air stretching around him, and above a blue and arched sky that roofed the third of a continent with six months' summer. And then the fog seemed to come back heavier and thicker to his consciousness. He emotionally stretched out his hand to the stranger. But it was the fog and his personal surroundings which now seemed to be unreal.

"Why, it's Harry Custer!" he said with a laugh that, however, ended in a sigh. "I did n't recognize you in this half light." He then glanced curiously toward the diffident young man, as if to identify another possible old acquaintance.

"Well, I spotted you from the first," said Custer, "though I ain't seen you since we were in Scott's Camp together. That's ten years ago. You're lookin' at *him*," he continued, following the consul's wandering eye. "Well, it's about him that I came to see you. This yer's a McHulish — a genuine McHulish!"

He paused, as if to give effect to this statement. But the name apparently offered no thrilling suggestion to the consul, who regarded the young man closely for further explanation. He was a fair-faced youth of about twenty years, with pale reddish-brown eyes, dark hair reddish at the roots, and a singular white and pink waxiness of oval cheek, which, however, narrowed suddenly at the angle of the jaw, and fell away with the retreating chin.

"Yes," continued Custer; "I oughter say the *only* McHulish. He is the direct heir — and of royal descent! He's one of them McHulishes whose name in them old history times was enough to whoop up the boys and make 'em paint the town red. A regular campaign boomer — the old McHulish was. Stump speeches and brass-bands war n't in it with the

boys when *he* was around. They 'd go their bottom dollar and last cartridge — if they 'd had cartridges in them days — on him. That was the regular McHulish gait. And Malcolm there's the last of 'em — got the same style of features, too."

Ludicrous as the situation was, it struck the consul dimly, as through fog and darkness, that the features of the young man were not unfamiliar, and indeed had looked out upon him dimly and vaguely at various times, from various historic canvases. It was the face of complacent fatuity, incompetency, and inconstancy, which had dragged down strength, competency, and constancy to its own idiotic fate and levels — a face for whose weaknesses valor and beauty had not only sacrificed themselves, but made things equally unpleasant to a great many minor virtues. Nevertheless the consul, with an amused sense of its ridiculous incongruity to the grim Scottish Sabbath procession in the street, and the fog-bound volumes of admiralty law in the room, smiled affably.

"Of course our young friend has no desire to test the magic of his name here, in these degenerate days."

"No," said Custer, complacently; "though between you and me, old man, there's always no tellin' what might turn up over in this yer monarchy. Things of course are different over our way. But jest now Malcolm will be satisfied to take the title and property to which he's rightful heir."

The consul's face fell. Alas! it was only the old, old story. Its endless repetitions and variations had been familiar to him even in his youth and in his own land. "Ef that man had his rights," had once been pointed out to him in a wild Western camp, "he 'd be now sittin' in scarlet on the right of the Queen of England!" The gentleman who was indicated in this apocalyptic vision, it appeared, simply bore a singular likeness to a reigning Hanoverian family, which for some unexplained reason he had contented himself with bearing with fortitude and patience. But it was in his official capacity that the consul's experience had been the most trying. At times it had seemed to him that much of the real property and peerage of Great Britain was the inherited right of penniless American republicans who had hitherto refrained from presenting their legal claims, and that the habitual first duty of generations of British noblemen on coming into their estates and titles was to ship their heirs and next of kin to America, and then forget all about them. He had listened patiently to claims to positions more or less exalted — claims often presented with ingenuous sophistry or pathetic simplicity, prosecuted with

great good humor, and abandoned with invincible cheerfulness; but they seldom culminated more seriously than in the disbursement of a few dollars by the consul to enable the rightful owner of millions to procure a steerage passage back to his previous democratic retirement. There had been others, less sincere, but more pretentious in quality, to whom, however, a letter to the Herald's College in London was all sufficient, and who, on payment of various fees and emoluments, were enabled to stagger back to New York or Boston with certain unclaimed and forgotten luggage, which a more gallant ancestor had scorned to bring with him into the new life, or had thrown aside in his undue haste to make them citizens of the republic. Still, all this had grown monotonous and wearisome, and was disappointing as coming through the intervention of an old friend who ought to know better.

"Of course you have already had legal opinion on the subject over there," said the consul, with a sigh, "but here, you know, you ought first to get some professional advice from those acquainted with Scotch procedure. But perhaps you have that too."

"No," said Custer, cheerfully. "Why, it ain't only two months ago that I first saw Malcolm. Tumbled over him on his own farm jest out of MacCorkleville, Kentucky, where he and his fathers before him had been livin' nigh a hundred years—yes, a *hundred years*, by Jove! ever since they first emigrated to the country. Had a talk over it; saw an old Bible about as big and as used up as that," lifting the well-worn consular Bible—"with dates in it, and heard the whole story. And here we are."

"And you have consulted no lawyer?" gasped the consul.

"The McHulishes," said an unexpected voice that sounded thin and feminine, "never took any legal decision. From the craggy summits of Glen Crankie he lifted the banner of his forefathers, or raised the war-cry 'Hulish dhu, ieroe!' from the battlements of Craighedurach. And the clan gathered round him with shouts that rent the air. That was the way of it in old times. And the boys whooped him up and stood by him." It was the diffident young man who had half spoken, half recited, with an odd enthusiasm that even the culminating slang could not make conventional.

"That 's about the size of it," said Custer, leaning back in his chair easily with an approving glance at the young man. "And I don't know if that ain't the way to work the thing now."

The consul stared hopelessly from the one to the other. It had always seemed possible that this dreadful mania might develop into actual

insanity, and he had little doubt but that the younger man's brain was slightly affected. But this did not account for the delusion and expectations of the elder. Harry Custer, as the consul remembered him, was a level-headed, practical miner, whose leaning to adventure and excitement had not prevented him from being a cool speculator, and he had amassed more than a competency by reason of his judicious foresight and prompt action. Yet he was evidently under the glamour of this madman, although outwardly as lazily self-contained as ever.

"Do you mean to tell me," said the consul in a suppressed voice, "that you two have come here equipped only with a statement of facts and a family Bible, and that you expect to take advantage of a feudal enthusiasm which no longer exists—and perhaps never did exist out of the pages of romance—as a means of claiming estates whose titles have long since been settled by law, and can be claimed only under that tenure? Surely I have misunderstood you. You cannot be in earnest."

"Honest Injun," said Custer, nodding his head lazily. "We mean it, but not jest that way you 've put it. F'r instance, it ain't only us two. This yer thing, ole pard, we 're runnin' as a syndicate."

"A syndicate?" echoed the consul.

"A syndicate," repeated Custer. "Half the boys that were at Eagle Camp are in it, and two of Malcolm's neighbors from Kentucky—the regular old Scotch breed like himself; for you know that MacCorkle County was settled by them old Scotch Covenanters, and the folks are Scotch Presbyterians to this day. And for the matter of that, the Eagle boys that are in it are of Scotch descent, or a kind of blend, you know,—in fact, I 'm half Scotch myself—or Irish," he added thoughtfully. "So you see that settles your argument about any local opinion, for if them Scots don't know their own people, who does?"

"May I ask," said the consul, with a desperate attempt to preserve his composure, "what you are proposing to do?"

"Well," said Custer, settling himself comfortably back in his chair again, "that depends. Do you remember the time that we jumped them Mexican claims on the North Fork—the time them greasers wanted to take in the whole river-bank because they 'd found gold on one of the upper bars? Seems to me we jest went peaceful-like over there one moonshiny night, and took up *their* stakes and set down *ours*. Seems to me *you* were one of the party."

"That was in our own country," returned the consul, hastily, "and was an indefensible act, even in a lawless frontier civilization. But you are surely not mad enough even to conceive of such a thing *here!*"

"Keep your hair on, Jack," said Custer, lazily. "What's the matter with constitutional methods, eh? Do you remember the time when we did n't like Pueblo rules, and we laid out Eureka City on their lines, and whooped up the Mexicans and diggers to elect mayor and aldermen, and put the city front on Juanita Creek, and then corralled it for water lots? Seems to me you were county clerk then. Now who's to keep Dick Macgregor and Joe Hamilton, that are both up the Nile now, from droppin' in over here to see Malcolm in his own house? Who's goin' to object to Wallace or Baird, who are on this side, doin' the Eytalian lakes, from comin' here on their way home, or Watson and Moore and Timley, that are livin' over in Paris, from joinin' the boys in givin' Malcolm a housewarmin' in his old home? What's to keep the whole syndicate from gatherin' at Kelpie Island up here off the west coast, among the tombs of Malcolm's ancestors, and fixin' up things generally with the clan?"

"Only one thing," said the consul, with a gravity which he nevertheless felt might be a mistaken attitude. "You should n't have told *me* about it. For if, as your old friend, I cannot keep you from committing an unconceivable folly, as the American consul here it will be my first duty to give notice to our legation, and perhaps warn the authorities. And you may be sure I will do it."

To his surprise Custer leaned forward and pressed his hand with an expression of cheerful relief. "That's so, old pard; I reckoned on it. In fact, I told Malcolm that that would be about your gait. Of course you could n't do otherwise. And it would have been playin' it rather low down on you to have left you out in the cold—without even *that* show in the game. For what you will do in warnin' the other fellows, don't you see, will just waken up the clan. It's better than a campaign circular."

"Don't be too sure of that," said the consul, with a half-hysterical laugh. "But we won't consider so lamentable a contingency. Come and dine with me, both of you, and we'll discuss the only thing worth discussing,—your *legal* rights,—and you can tell me your whole story, which, by the way, I have n't heard."

"Sorry, Jack, but it can't be done," said Custer, with his first approach to seriousness of manner. "You see, we'd made up our mind not to come here again after this first call. We ain't goin' to compromise you."

"I am the best judge of that," returned the consul, dryly. Then suddenly changing his manner, he grasped Custer's hands with both his own. "Come, Harry," he said earnestly, "I will not believe that this is not a joke, but I beg

of you to promise me one thing,—do not move a step further in this matter without legal counsel. I will give you a letter to a legal friend of mine—a man of affairs, a man of the world, and a Scot as typical perhaps as any you have mentioned. State your *legal* case to him—only that; but his opinion will show you also, if I am not mistaken, the folly of your depending upon any sectional or historical sentiment in this matter."

Without waiting for a reply, he sat down and hastily wrote a few lines to a friendly local magnate. When he had handed the note to Custer, the latter looked at the address, and showed it to his young companion.

"Same name, is n't it?" he asked.

"Yes," responded Mr. McHulish.

"Do you know him?" asked the consul, evidently surprised.

"We don't; but he's a friend of one of the Eagle boys. I reckon we would have seen him anyhow; but we'll agree with you to hold on until we do. It's a go. Good-by, old pard! So long!"

They both shook the consul's hand, and departed, leaving him staring at the fog into which they had melted as if they were unreal shadows of the past.

II.

THE next morning the fog had given way to a palpable, horizontally driving rain, which wet the inside as well as the outside of umbrellas, and caused them to be presented at every conceivable angle as they drifted past the windows of the consulate. There was a tap at the door, and a clerk entered.

"Ye will be in to Sir James MacFen?"

The consul nodded, and added, "Show him in here."

It was the magnate to whom he had sent the note the previous day, a man of large yet slow and cautious nature, learned and even pedantic, yet far-sighted and practical; very human and hearty in social intercourse,—which, however, left him as it found him,—with no sentimental or unbusinesslike entanglements. The consul had known him sensible and sturdy at board meetings and executive councils; logical and convincing at political gatherings; decorous and grave in the kirk; and humorous and jovial at festivities, where perhaps later in the evening, in company with others, hands were clasped over a libation lyrically defined as a "right guid williewaught." On one of these occasions they had walked home together, not without some ostentation of steadiness; yet when MacFen's eminently respectable front door had closed upon him, the consul was perfectly satisfied that a distinctly proper and unswerving

man of business would issue from it the next morning.

"Aye, but it's a soft day," said Sir James, removing his gloves. "Ye'll not be gadding about in this weather."

"You got my note of introduction, I suppose?" said the consul, when the momentous topic of the weather was exhausted.

"Oh, aye."

"And you saw the gentleman?"

"Aye."

"And what's your opinion of—his claims?"

"He's a fine lad—that Malcolm—a fine type of a lad," said Sir James, with an almost too effusive confidence. "Ye'll be thinking so yourself—no doubt? Aye, it's wonderful to consider the preservation of type so long after its dispersal in other lands. And it's a strange and wonderful country that of yours, with its plantations—as one might say—of homogeneity unimpaired for so many years, and keeping the old faith too—and all its strange survivals. Aye, and that Kentucky, where his land is—it will be a rich State! It's very instructing and interesting to hear his account of that remarkable region they call 'the blue-grass country,' and the stock they raise there. I'm obliged to ye, my friend, for a most edifying and improving evening."

"But his claim—did he not speak of that?"

"Oh, aye. And that Mr. Custer—he's a grand man, and an amusing one. Ye'll be great comrades, you and he! Man! it was delightful to hear him tell of the rare doings and the bit fun ye two had in the old times. Eh, sir, but who'd think that of the proper American consul at St. Kentigern!" And Sir James leaned back in his chair, and bestowed an admiring smile on that official.

The consul thought he began to understand this evasion. "Then you don't think much of Mr. McHulish's claim?" he said.

"I'm not saying that."

"But do you really think a claim based upon a family Bible and a family likeness a subject for serious consideration?"

"I'm not saying *that* either, laddie."

"Perhaps he has confided to you more fully than he has to me, or possibly you yourself knew something in corroboration of his facts."

"No."

His companion had evidently no desire to be communicative. But the consul had heard enough to feel that he was justified in leaving the matter in his hands. He had given him fair warning. Yet, nevertheless, he would be even more explicit.

"I do not know," he began, "whether this young McHulish confided to you his great reliance upon some peculiar effect of his presence among the tenants, and of establishing his claim

to the property by exciting the enthusiasm of the clan. It certainly struck me that he had some rather exaggerated ideas, borrowed, perhaps, from romances he'd read, like Don Quixote his books of chivalry. He seems to believe in the existence of a clan loyalty, and the actual survival of old feudal instincts and of old feudal methods in the Highlands. He appears to look upon himself as a kind of local Prince Charlie, and, by Jove! I've an idea he's almost as crazy."

"And why should he na believe in his own kith and kin?" said Sir James, quickly, with a sudden ring in his voice, and a dialectical freedom quite distinct from his former deliberate and cautious utterance. "The McHulishes were chieftains before America was discovered, and many's the time they overran the border before they went as far as that. If there's anything in blood and loyalty, it would be strange if they did na respond. And I can tell ye, ma frien', there's more in the Hielands than any 'romancer,' as ye call them,—aye, even Scott hissel', and he was but an Edinboro' man,—ever dreamed of. Don't fash yoursel' about that. And you and me'll not agree about Prince Charlie. Some day I'll tell ye, ma frien', mair aboot that bonnie laddie than ye'll gather from your partizan historians. Until then ye'll be wise when ye'll be talking to Scotchmen not to be expressing your Southern prejudices."

Intensely surprised and amused at this sudden outbreak of enthusiasm on the part of the usually cautious lawyer, the consul could not refrain from accenting it by a marked return to practical business.

"I shall be delighted to learn more about Prince Charlie," he said, smiling, "but just now his prototype—if you'll allow me to call him so—is a nearer topic, and for the present—at least until he assume his new titles and dignities—has a right to claim my protection, and I am responsible for him as an American citizen. Now, my dear friend, is there really any property, land, or title of any importance involved in his claim, and what and where, in Heaven's name, is it? For I assure you I know nothing practical about it, and cannot make head or tail of it."

Sir James resumed his slow serenity, and gathered up his gloves. "Aye, there's a great deer-forest in Ballochbrinkie, and there's part of Loch Phillipig in Cairngormshire, and there's Kelpie Island off Moreovershire. Aye, there's enough land when the crofters are cleared off, and the small sheep-tenants evicted. It will be a grand property then."

The consul stared. "The crofters and tenants evicted!" he repeated. "Are they not part of the clan, and loyal to the McHulish?"

"The McHulish," said Sir James with great deliberation, "has n't set foot there for years. They 'd be burning him in effigy."

"But," said the astonished consul, "that 's rather bad for the expectant heir—and the magic of the McHulish presence."

"I 'm not saying that," returned Sir James, cautiously. "Ye see he can be making better arrangements with the family on account of it."

"With the family?" repeated the consul. "Then does he talk of compromising?"

"I mean they would be more likely to sell for a fair consideration, and he 'd be better paying money to them than the lawyers. The syndicate will be rich, eh? And I 'm not saying the McHulish would n't take Kentucky lands in exchange. It 's a fine country, that blue-grass district."

The consul stared at Sir James so long that a faint smile came into the latter's shrewd eyes; at which the consul smiled, too. A vague air of relief and understanding seemed to fill the apartment.

"Oh, aye," continued Sir James, drawing on his gloves with easy deliberation, "he 's a fine lad that Malcolm, and it 's a praiseworthy instinct in him to wish to return to the land of his forebears, and take his place again among them. And I 'm noticing, Mr. Consul, that a great many of your countrymen are doing the same. Eh, yours is a gran' country of progress and ceevil and religious liberty, but for a' that, as Burns says, it 's in your blood to turn to the auld home again. And it 's a fine thing to have the money to do it—and, I 'm thinking, money well spent all around. Good morning. Eh, but I 'm forgetting that I wanted to ask you to dine with me and Malcolm, and your Mr. Custer, and Mr. Watson, who will be one of your syndicate, and whom I once met abroad. But ye 'll get a bit note of invitation, with the day, from me later."

The consul remembered that Custer had said that one of the "Eagle boys" had known Sir James. This was evidently Watson. He smiled again, but this time Sir James responded only in a general sort of way, as he genially bowed himself out of the room.

The consul watched his solid and eminently respectable figure as it passed the window, and then returned to his desk, still smiling. First of all he was relieved. What had seemed to him a wild and reckless enterprise, with possibly some grim international complications on the part of his compatriots, had simply resolved itself into an ordinary business speculation—the ethics of which they had pretty equally divided with the local operators. If anything, it seemed that the Scotchman would get the best of the bargain, and that, for once at least, his

countrymen were deficient in foresight. But that was a matter between the parties, and Custer himself would probably be the first to resent any suggestion of the kind from the consul. The vision of the McHulish burned in effigy by his devoted tenants and retainers, and the thought that the prosaic dollars of his countrymen would be substituted for the potent presence of the heir, tickled, it is to be feared, the saturnine humor of the consul. He had taken an invincible dislike to the callow representative of the McHulish, who he felt had in some extraordinary way imposed upon Custer's credulity. But then he had apparently imposed equally upon the practical Sir James. The thought of this sham ideal of feudal and privileged incompetency being elevated to actual position by the combined efforts of American republicans and hard-headed Scotch dissenters, on whom the soft Scotch mists fell from above with equal impartiality, struck him as being very amusing, and for some time thereafter lightened the respectable gloom of his office. Other engagements prevented his attendance at Sir James's dinner, although he was informed afterward that it had passed off with great éclat, the later singing of "Auld lang Syne" and the drinking of the health of Custer and Malcolm with "Hieland honors." He learned also that Sir James had invited Custer and Malcolm to his lacustrine country-seat in the early spring. But he learned nothing more of the progress of Malcolm's claim, its details, or the manner in which it was prosecuted. No one else seemed to know anything about it; it found no echo in the gossip of the clubs, or in the newspapers of St. Kentigern. In the absence of the parties connected with it, it began to assume to him the aspect of a half-humorous romance. He often found himself wondering if there had been any other purpose in this quest or speculation than what had appeared on the surface, it seemed so inadequate in result. It would have been so perfectly easy for a wealthy syndicate to buy up a much more valuable estate. He disbelieved utterly in the sincerity of Malcolm's sentimental attitude. There must be some other reason—perhaps not known even to the syndicate.

One day he thought that he had found it. He had received a note addressed from one of the principal hotels, but bearing a large personal crest on paper and envelop. A Miss Kirkby, passing through St. Kentigern on her way to Edinburgh, desired to see the consul the next day, if he would appoint an hour at the consulate; or, as her time was limited, she would take it as a great favor if he would call at her hotel. Although a countrywoman, her name might not be so well known to him as those of her "old friends" Harry Custer, Esq.,

and Sir Malcolm McHulish. The consul was a little surprised; the use of the title — unless it referred to some other McHulish — would seem to indicate that Malcolm's claim was successful. He had, however, no previous knowledge of the title of "Sir" in connection with the estate, and it was probable that his fair correspondent — like most of her countrywomen — was more appreciative than correct in her bestowal of dignities. He determined to waive his ordinary business rules, and to call upon her at once, accepting, as became his patriotism, that charming tyranny which the American woman usually reserves exclusively for her devoted countrymen.

She received him with an affectation of patronage, as if she had lately become uneasily conscious of being in a country where there were distinctions of class. She was young, pretty, and tastefully dressed; the national feminine adaptability had not, however, extended to her voice and accent. Both were strongly Southwestern, and as she began to speak she seemed to lose her momentary affectation.

"It was mighty good of you to come and see me, for the fact is, I did n't admire going to your consulate — not one bit. You see, I'm a Southern girl, and never was 'reconstructed' either. I don't hanker after your Gov'ment. I have n't recognized it, and don't want to. I reckon I ain't been under the flag since the wah. So you see, I have n't any papers to get authenticated, nor any certificates to ask for, and ain't wanting any advice or protection. I thought I'd be fair and square with you from the word 'go.'"

Nothing could be more fascinating and infectious than the mirthful ingenuousness which accompanied and seemed to mitigate this ungracious speech, and the consul was greatly amused, albeit conscious that it was only an attitude, and perhaps somewhat worn in sentiment. He knew that during the war of the rebellion, and directly after it, Great Britain was the resort of certain Americans from the West as well as from the South who sought social distinction by the affectation of dissatisfaction with their own Government or the ostentatious simulation of enforced exile; but he was quite unprepared for this senseless protraction of dead-and-gone issues. He ventured to point out with good-humored practicality that several years had elapsed since the war, that the South and North were honorably reconciled, and that he was legally supposed to represent Kentucky as well as New York. "Your friends," he added smilingly, "Mr. Custer and Mr. McHulish, seemed to accept the fact without any posthumous sentiment."

"I don't go much on that," she said with

a laugh. "I've been living in Paris till maw — who's lying down up-stairs — came over and brought me across to England for a look around. And I reckon Malcolm's got to keep touch with you on account of his property."

The consul smiled. "Ah, then, I hope you can tell me something about *that*, for I really don't know whether he has established his claim or not."

"Why," returned the girl with naïve astonishment, "that was just what I was going to ask *you*. He reckoned you'd know all about it."

"I have n't heard anything of the claim for two months," said the consul; "but from your reference to him as 'Sir Malcolm,' I presumed you considered it settled. Though, of course, even then he would n't be 'Sir Malcolm,' and you might have meant somebody else."

"Well, then, Lord Malcolm — I can't get the hang of those titles yet."

"Neither 'Lord' nor 'Sir'; you know the estate carries no title whatever with it," said the consul, smilingly.

"But would n't he be the laird of something or other, you know?"

"Yes; but that is only a Scotch description, not a title. It's not the same as Lord."

The young girl looked at him with undisguised astonishment. A half laugh twitched the corners of her mouth. "Are you sure?" she said.

"Perfectly," returned the consul, a little impatiently; "but do I understand that you really know nothing more of the progress of the claim?"

Miss Kirkby, still abstracted by some humorous astonishment, said quickly: "Wait a minute. I'll just run up and see if maw's coming down. She'd admire to see you." Then she stopped, hesitated, and as she rose added, "Then a laird's wife would n't be Lady anything, anyway, would she?"

"She certainly would acquire no title merely through her marriage."

The young girl laughed again, nodded, and disappeared. The consul, amused yet somewhat perplexed over the naïve brusqueness of the interview, waited patiently. Presently she returned, a little out of breath, but apparently still enjoying some facetious retrospect, and said, "Maw will be down soon." After a pause, fixing her bright eyes mischievously on the consul, she continued:

"Did you see much of Malcolm?"

"I saw him only once."

"What did you think of him?"

The consul in so brief a period had been unable to judge.

"You would n't think I was half engaged to him, would you?"

The consul was obliged again to protest that in so short an interview he had been unable to conceive of Malcolm's good fortune.

"I know what you mean," said the girl, lightly. "You think he 's a crank. But it 's all over now; the engagement 's off."

"I trust that this does not mean that you doubt his success?"

The lady shrugged her shoulders disdainfully. "That 's all right enough, I reckon. There 's a hundred thousand dollars in the syndicate. Maw put in twenty thousand, and Custer 's bound to make it go—particularly as there 's some talk of a compromise. But Malcolm 's a crank, and I reckon if it was n't for the compromise the syndicate would n't have much show. Why, he did n't even know that the McHulishes had no title."

"Do you think he has been suffering under a delusion in regard to his relationship?"

"No; he was only a fool in the way he wanted to prove it. He actually got these boys to think it could be filibustered into his possession. Had a sort of idea of 'a rising in the Highlands,' you know, like that poem or picture—which is it? And those fool boys, and Custer among them, thought it would be great fun and a great spree. Luckily, maw had the gumption to get Watson to write over about it to one of his friends, a Mr—Mr—MacFen, a very prominent man."

"Perhaps you mean Sir James MacFen," suggested the consul. "He 's a knight. And what did *he* say?" he added eagerly.

"Oh, he wrote a most sensible letter," returned the lady, apparently mollified by the title of Watson's adviser, "saying that there was little doubt, if any, that if the American McHulishes wanted the old estate they could get it by the expenditure of a little capital. He offered to make the trial; that was the compromise they 're talking about. But he did n't say anything about there being no 'Lord' McHulish."

"Perhaps he thought, as you were Americans, you did n't care for *that*," said the consul, dryly.

"That 's no reason why we should n't have it if it belonged to us, or we chose to pay for it," said the lady, pertly.

"Then your changed personal relations with Mr. McHulish is the reason why you hear so little of his progress or his expectations?"

"Yes; but he don't know that they are changed, for we have n't seen him since we 've been here, although they say he 's here, and hiding somewhere about."

"Why should he be hiding?"

The young girl lifted her pretty brows. "Maybe he thinks it 's mysterious. Didn't I tell you he was a crank?" Yet she laughed so

naïvely, and with such sublime unconsciousness of any reflection on herself, that the consul was obliged to smile too.

"You certainly do not seem to be breaking your heart as well as your engagement," he said.

"Not much—but here comes maw. Look here," she said, turning suddenly and coaxingly upon him, "if she asks you to come along with us up north, you 'll come, won't you? Do! It will be such fun!"

"Up north?" repeated the consul, interrogatively.

"Yes; to see the property. Here 's maw."

A more languid but equally well-appointed woman had entered the room. When the ceremony of introduction was over, she turned to her daughter, and said, "Run away, dear, while I talk business with—er—this gentleman," and, as the girl withdrew laughingly, she half stifled a reminiscent yawn, and raised her heavy lids to the consul.

"You 've had a talk with my Elsie?"

The consul confessed to having had that pleasure.

"She speaks her mind," said Mrs. Kirkby, wearily, "but she means well, and for all her flightiness her head 's level. And since her father died she runs me," she continued with a slight laugh. After a pause, she added abstractedly, "I suppose she told you of her engagement to young McHulish?"

"Yes; but she said she had broken it."

Mrs. Kirkby lifted her eyebrows with an expression of relief. "It was a piece of girl-and-boy foolishness, anyway," she said. "Elsie and he were children together at MacCorkleville,—second cousins, in fact,—and I reckon he got her fancy excited over his nobility, and his being the chief of the McHulishes. Of course Custer will manage to get something for the shareholders out of it,—I never knew him to fail in a money speculation yet,—but I think that 's about all. I had an idea of going up with Elsie to take a look at the property, and I thought of asking you to join us. Did Elsie tell you? I know she 'd like it—and so would I."

For all her indolent, purposeless manner, there was enough latent sincerity and earnestness in her request to interest the consul. Besides, his own curiosity in regard to this singularly supported claim was excited, and here seemed to be an opportunity of satisfying it. He was not quite sure either that his previous antagonism to his fair countrywoman's apparent selfishness and snobbery was entirely just. He had been absent from America a long time; perhaps it was he himself who had changed, and lost touch with his compatriots. And yet the demonstrative independence and recklessness of men like Custer were less objectionable to, and less inconsistent with, his American ideas

than the snobbishness and almost servile adaptability of the women. Or was it possible that it was only a weakness of the sex, which no republican nativity or education could eliminate? Nevertheless he looked up smilingly.

"But the property is, I understand, scattered about in various places," he said.

"Oh, but we mean to go only to Kelpie Island, where there is the ruin of an old castle. Elsie must see that."

The consul thought it might be amusing. "By all means let us see that. I shall be delighted to go with you."

His ready and unqualified assent appeared to relieve and dissipate the lady's abstraction. She became more natural and confiding; spoke freely of Malcolm's mania, which she seemed to accept as a hallucination or a conviction with equal cheerfulness, and, in brief, convinced the consul that her connection with the scheme was only the caprice of inexperienced and unaccustomed idleness. He left her, promising to return the next day and arrange for their early departure.

His way home lay through one of the public squares of St. Kentigern, at an hour of the afternoon when it was crossed by working men and women returning to their quarters from the docks and factories. Never in any light a picturesque or even cheery procession, there were days when its unwholesome, monotonous poverty and dull hopelessness of prospect impressed him more forcibly. He remembered how at first the spectacle of barefooted girls and women slipping through fog and mist across the greasy pavement had offended his fresh New World conception of a more tenderly nurtured sex, until his susceptibilities seemed

to have grown as callous and hardened as the flesh he looked upon, and he had begun to regard them from the easy local standpoint of a distinct and differently equipped class.

It chanced, also, that this afternoon some of the male workers had added to their usual solidity a singular trance-like intoxication. It had often struck him before as a form of drunkenness peculiar to the St. Kentigern laborers. Men passed him singly and silently, as if following some vague alcoholic dream, or moving through some Scotch mist of whisky and water. Others clung unsteadily but as silently together, with no trace of convivial fellowship or hilarity in their dull fixed features and mechanically moving limbs. There was something weird in this mirthless companionship, and the appalling loneliness of those fixed or abstracted eyes. Suddenly he was aware of two men who were reeling toward him under the influence of this drug-like intoxication, and he was startled by a likeness which one of them bore to some one he had seen; but where, and under what circumstances, he could not determine. The fatuous eye, the features of complacent vanity and self-satisfied reverie were there, either intensified by drink, or perhaps suggesting it through some other equally hopeless form of hallucination. He turned and followed the man, trying to identify him through his companion, who appeared to be a petty tradesman of a shrewder, more material type. But in vain, and as the pair turned into a side street the consul slowly retraced his steps. But he had not proceeded far before the recollection that had escaped him returned, and he knew that the likeness suggested by the face he had seen was that of Malcolm McHulish.

(To be concluded in the next number.)

Bret Harte.

THE TEST.

"**T**HY love," he cried, "is like a fragrant flower
Whose stainless beauty cannot fade or die."
"And thine," she, blushing, said, "is like some high,
Still tide, that knows no ebb to check its power."
But when life's changes brought a darkened hour,
In secret each heart feared love's doom was nigh.
The tide goes down; storms kill the blossoms shy;
Then, clasping hands, they turned to meet the shower.
Courage and hope were nursed for many a day.
At last the mists rolled off; their dream was true.
Beneath no restless tide the anchor lay
That held her safe; his deathless blossom grew
More fair. Love's test fulfilled, along their way
Sang blithe content, 'neath clouds or skies of blue.

Mary Thacher Higginson.

THE HEIR OF THE M^CHULISHES.

By the author of "The Luck of Roaring Camp."

A STORY IN TWO PARTS.—PART II.



JOURNEY to Kelpie Island consisted of a series of consecutive episodes by rail, by coach, and by steamboat. The consul was already familiar with them, as indeed were most of the civilized world, for it seemed that all roads at certain seasons led out of and returned to St. Kentigern as a point in a vast circle wherein travelers were sure to meet one another again, coming or going, at certain depots and caravansaries with more or less superiority or envy. Tourists on the road to the historic crags of Wateffa came sharply upon other tourists returning from them, and glared suspiciously at them, as if to wrest the dread secret from their souls—a scrutiny which the others returned with half-humorous pity or superior calm.

The consul knew also that the service by boat and rail was admirable and skilful; for were not the righteous St. Kentigerners of the tribe of Tubal Cain, great artificers in steel and iron, and a mighty race of engineers before the Lord, who had carried their calling and accent beyond the seas? He knew, too, that the land of these delightful caravansaries overflowed with marmalade and honey, and that the manna of delicious scones and cakes fell even upon deserted waters of crag and heather. He knew that their way would lie through much scenery whose rude barrenness, and grim economy of vegetation, had been usually accepted by cockney tourists for sublimity and grandeur; but he knew also that its severity was mitigated by lowland glimpses of sylvan luxuriance and tangled delicacy utterly unlike the complacent snugness of an English pastoral landscape, with which it was often confounded and misunderstood, as being tame and civilized.

It rained the day they left St. Kentigern, and the next, and the day after that, spasmodically, as regarded local effort, sporadically, as seen through the filmed windows of railway carriages or from the shining decks of steamboats. There was always a shower being sown somewhere along the valley, or reluctantly tearing itself from a mountain-top, or being pulled into long threads from the leaden bosom of a lake; the coach swept in and out of them

to the folding and unfolding of umbrellas and mackintoshes, accompanied by flying beams of sunlight that raced with the vehicle on long hillsides, and vanished at the turn of the road. There were hat-lifting scurries of wind down the mountain-side, small tumults in little lakes below, hysteric ebullitions on mild, melancholy inland seas, boisterous passages of nearly half an hour with landings on tempestuous miniature quays. All this seen through wonderful aqueous vapor, against a background of sky darkened at times to the depths of an india-ink-washed sketch, but more usually blurred and confused on the surface like the gray silhouette of a child's slate-pencil drawing, half rubbed from the slate by soft palms. Occasionally a rare glinting of real sunshine on a distant fringe of dripping larches made some frowning crest appear to smile as through wet lashes.

Miss Elsie tucked her little feet under the mackintosh. "I know," she said sadly, "I should get web-footed if I stayed here long. Why, it 's like coming down from Ararat just after the deluge cleared up."

Mrs. Kirkby suggested that if the sun would only shine squarely and decently, like a Christian, for a few moments, they could see the prospect better.

The consul here pointed out that the admirers of Scotch scenery thought that this was its greatest charm. It was this misty effect which made it so superior to what they called the vulgar chromos and sun-pictures of less favored lands.

"You mean because it prevents folks from seeing how poor the view really is."

The consul remarked that perhaps distance was lacking. As to the sun shining in a Christian way, this might depend upon the local idea of Christianity.

"Well, I don't call the scenery giddy or frivolous, certainly. And I reckon I begin to understand the kind of sermons Malcolm's folks brought over to McCorkleville. I guess they did n't know much of the heaven they only saw once a year. Why, even the highest hills—which they call mountains here—ain't big enough to get above the fogs of their own creating."

Feminine wit is not apt to be abstract. It

struck the consul that in Miss Elsie's sprightliness there was the usual ulterior and personal object, and he glanced around at his fellow-passengers. The object evidently was sitting at the end of the opposite seat, an amused but well-behaved listener. For the rest, he was still young and reserved, but in face, figure, and dress utterly unlike his companions—an Englishman of a pronounced and distinct type, the man of society and clubs. While there was more or less hinting of local influence in the apparel of the others,—there was a kilt, and bare, unweather-beaten knees from Birmingham, and even the American Elsie wore a bewitching tam-o'-shanter,—the stranger carried easy distinction, from his tweed traveling-cap to his well-made shoes and gaiters, as an unmistakable Southerner. His deep and pleasantly level voice had been heard only once or twice, and then only in answering questions, and his quiet, composed eyes alone had responded to the young girl's provocation.

They were passing a brown glen, in the cheerless depths of which a brown watercourse, a shade lighter, was running, and occasionally foaming like brown beer. Beyond it heaved an arid bulk of hillside, the scant vegetation of which, scattered like patches of hair, made it look like the decaying hide of some huge antediluvian ruminant. On the dreariest part of the dreary slope rose the ruins of a tower, and crumbling walls and battlements.

"Whatever possessed folks to build there?" said Miss Elsie. "If they were poor, it might be some excuse; but that those old swells, or chiefs, should put up a castle in such a God-forsaken place gets *me*."

"But, don't you know, they *were* poor, according to our modern ideas, and I fancy they built these things more for defense than show, and really more to gather in cattle—like one of your Texan ranches—after a raid. That is, I have heard so; I rather fancy that was the idea, was n't it?" It was the Englishman who had spoken, and was now looking around at the other passengers as if in easy deference to local opinion.

"What raid?" said Miss Elsie, animatedly. "Oh, yes; I see—one of their old border raids—moss-troopers. I used to like to read about them."

"I fancy, don't you know," said the Englishman, slowly, "that it was n't exactly *that* sort of thing, you know, for it's a good way from the border; but it was one of their raids upon their neighbors, to lift their cattle—steal 'em, in fact. That's the way those chaps had. But of course you've read all about that. You Americans, don't you know, are all up in these historical matters."

"Eh, but they were often reprisals," said a Scotch passenger.

"I don't suppose they took much trouble to inquire if the beasts belonged to an enemy," said the Englishman.

But here Miss Elsie spoke of castles generally, and averred that the dearest wish of her life was to see *Macbeth's* castle at Glamis, where *Duncan* was murdered. At which the Englishman, still deferentially, mistrusted the fact that the murder had been committed there, and thought that the castle to which Shakspeare probably referred, if he had n't invented the murder, too, was further north, at Cawdor. "You know," he added playfully, "over there in America you've discovered that Shakspeare himself was an invention."

This led to some retaliating brilliancy from the young lady, and when the coach stopped at the next station their conversation had presumably become interesting enough to justify him in securing a seat nearer to her. The talk returning to ruins, Miss Elsie informed him that they were going to see some on Kelpie Island. The consul, from some instinctive impulse,—perhaps a recollection of Custer's peculiar methods,—gave her a sign of warning. But the Englishman only lifted his eyebrows in a kind of half-humorous concern.

"I don't think you'd like it, you know. It's a beastly place,—rocks and sea,—worse than this, and half the time you can't see the mainland, only a mile away. Really, you know, they ought n't to have induced you to take tickets there—those excursion-ticket chaps. They're jolly frauds. It's no place for a stranger to go to."

"But there are the ruins of an old castle, the old seat of—" began the astonished Miss Elsie; but she was again stopped by a significant glance from the consul.

"I believe there was something of the kind there once—something like your friends the cattle-stealers' castle over on that hillside," returned the Englishman; "but the stones were taken by the fishermen for their cabins, and the walls were quite pulled down."

"How dared they do that?" said the young lady, indignantly. "I call it not only sacrilege, but stealing."

"It was defrauding the owner of the property; they might as well take his money," said Mrs. Kirkby, in languid protest.

The smile which this outburst of proprietorial indignation brought to the face of the consul lingered with the Englishman's reply.

"But it was only robbing the old robbers, don't you know, and they put their spoils to better use than their old masters did; certainly to more practical use than the owners do now, for the ruins are good for nothing."

"But the hallowed associations—the picturesqueness!" continued Mrs. Kirkby, with languid interest.

"The associations would n't be anything except to the family, you know; and I should fancy they would n't be either hallowed or pleasant. As for picturesqueness, the ruins are beastly ugly; weather-beaten instead of being mellowed by time, you know, and bare where they ought to be hidden by vines and moss. I can't make out why anybody sent you there, for you Americans are rather particular about your sight-seeing."

"We heard of them through a friend," said the consul, with assumed carelessness. "Perhaps it's as good an excuse as any for a pleasant journey."

"And very likely your friend mistook it for something else, or was himself imposed upon," said the Englishman, politely. "But you might not think it so, and, after all," he added thoughtfully, "it's years since I've seen it. I only meant that I could show you something better a few miles from my place in Gloucestershire, and not quite so far from a railway as this. If," he added with a pleasant deliberation which was the real courtesy of his conventionally worded speech, "you ever happened at any time to be anywhere near Audrey Edge, and would look me up, I should be glad to show it to you and your friends." An hour later, when he left them at a railway-station where their paths diverged, Miss Elsie recovered a fluency that she had lately checked. "Well, I like that! He never told us his name, or offered a card. I wonder if they call that an invitation over here. Does he suppose anybody's going to look up his old Audrey Edge—perhaps it's named after his wife—to find out who *he* is? He might have been civil enough to have left his name, if he—meant anything."

"But I assure you he was perfectly sincere, and meant an invitation," returned the consul, smilingly. "Audrey Edge is evidently a well-known place, and he a man of some position. That is why he did n't specify either."

"Well, you won't catch me going there," said Miss Elsie.

"You would be quite right in either going or staying away," said the consul, simply.

Miss Elsie tossed her head slightly. Nevertheless, before they left the station, she informed him that she had been told that the station-master had addressed the stranger as "my lord," and that another passenger had said he was "Lord Duncaster."

"And that proves—"

"That I'm right," said the young lady, decisively, "and that his invitation was a mere form."

It was after sundown when they reached

the picturesque and well-appointed hotel that lifted itself above the little fishing-village which fronted Kelpie Island. The hotel was in as strong contrast to the narrow, curving street of dull, comfortless-looking stone cottages below it, as were the smart tourists who had just landed from the steamer to the hard-visaged, roughly clad villagers who watched them with a certain mingling of critical independence and superior self-righteousness. As the new arrivals walked down the main street, half beach, half thoroughfare, their baggage following them in low trollies drawn by porters at their heels, like a decorous funeral, the joyless faces of the lookers-on added to the resemblance. Beyond them, in the prolonged northern twilight, the waters of the bay took on a peculiar pewtery brightness, but with the usual mourning-edged border of Scotch sea-coast scenery. Low banks of cloud lay on the chill sea; the outlines of Kelpie Island were hidden.

But the interior of the hotel, bright with the latest fastidiousness in modern decoration and art-furniture, and gay with pictured canvases and color, seemed to mock the sullen landscape, and the sterile crags amid which the building was set. An attempt to make a pleasure in this barren waste had resulted only in empty vases, bleak statuary, and iron settees, as cold and slippery to the touch as the sides of their steamer.

"It'll be a fine morning to-morra, and ther'll be a boat going away to Kelpie for a peek-neek in the ruins," said the porter, as the consul and his fair companions looked doubtfully from the windows of the cheerful hall.

A picnic in the sacred ruins of Kelpie! The consul saw the ladies stiffening with indignation at this trespass upon their possible rights and probable privileges, and glanced at them warningly.

"Do you mean to say that it is common property, and *anybody* can go there?" demanded Miss Elsie, scornfully.

"No; it's only the hotel that owns the boat and gives the tickets—a half-crown the passage."

"And do the owners, the McHulishes, permit this?"

The porter looked at them with a puzzled, half-pitying politeness. He was a handsome, tall, broad-shouldered young fellow, with a certain naive and gentle courtesy of manner that relieved his strong accent. "Oh, aye," he said, with a reassuring smile; "ye'll no be troubled by *them*. I'll just gang away noo, and see if I can secure the teekets."

An elderly guest, who was examining a timetable on the wall, turned to them as the porter disappeared.

"Ye'll be strangers noo, and not knowing

that Tonalt the porter is a McHulish hissel'?" he said deliberately.

"A what?" said the astonished Miss Elsie.

"A McHulish. Aye, one of the family. The McHulishes of Kelpie were his own forebears. Eh, but he's a fine lad, and doin' well for the hotel."

Miss Elsie extinguished a sudden smile with her handkerchief as her mother anxiously inquired, "And are the family as poor as that?"

"But I am not saying he's *poor*, ma'am, no," replied the stranger, with native caution. "What wi' tips and gratooties and percentages on the teekets, it's a bit of money he'll be having in the bank noo."

The prophecy of Donald McHulish as to the weather came true. The next morning was bright and sunny, and the boat to Kelpie Island—a large yawl—duly received its complement of passengers and provision-hampers. The ladies had apparently become more tolerant of their fellow pleasure-seekers, and it appeared that Miss Elsie had even overcome her hilarity at the discovery of what "might have been" a relative in the person of the porter Donald. "I had a long talk with him before breakfast this morning," she said gaily, "and I know all about him. It appears that there are hundreds of him—all McHulishes—all along the coast and elsewhere—only none of them ever lived *on* the island, and don't want to. But he looks more like a 'laird' and a chief than Malcolm, and if it comes to choosing a head of the family, remember, maw, I shall vote solid for him."

"How can you go on so, Elsie?" said Mrs. Kirkby, with languid protest. "Only I trust you did n't say anything to him of the syndicate. And, thank Heaven! the property is n't here."

"No; the waiter tells me all the lovely things we had for breakfast came from miles away. And they don't seem to have ever raised anything on the island, from its looks. Think of having to row three miles for the morning's milk!"

There was certainly very little appearance of vegetation on the sterile crags that soon began to lift themselves above the steely waves ahead. A few scraggy trees and bushes, which twisted and writhed like vines around the square tower and crumbling walls of an irregular but angular building, looked in their brown shadows like part of the debris.

"It's just like a burnt-down bone-boiling factory," said Miss Elsie, critically; "and I should n't wonder if that really was old McHulish's business. They could n't have it on the mainland for its being a nuisance."

Nevertheless, she was one of the first to leap ashore when the yawl's bow grated in a peb-

bly cove, and carried her pretty but incongruous little slippers through the seaweed, wet sand, and slimy cobbles, with a heroism that redeemed her vanity. A scrambling ascent of a few moments brought them to a wall with a gap in it, which gave easy ingress to the interior of the ruins. This was merely a little curving hollow from which the outlines of the plan had long since faded. It was kept green by the brown walls, which, like the crags of the mainland valleys, sheltered it from the incessant strife of the Atlantic gales. A few pale flowers that might have grown in a damp cellar shivered against the stones. Scraps of newspapers, soda-water- and beer-bottles, highly decorated old provision-tins, and spent cartridge-cases,—the remains of chilly picnics and damp shooting-luncheons,—had at first sight lent color to the foreground by mere contrast, but the corrosion of time and weather had blackened rather than mellowed the walls in a way which forcibly reminded the consul of Miss Elsie's simile of the "burnt-down factory." The view from the square tower—a mere roost for unclean sea-fowl, from the sides of which rags of peeling moss and vine hung like tattered clothing—was equally depressing. The few fishermen's huts along the shore were built of stones taken from the ruin, and roofed in with sodden beams and timbers in the last stages of deliquescence. The thick smoke of smoldering peat-fires came from the low chimneys, and drifted across the ruins with the odors of drying fish.

"I've just seen a sort of ground-plan of the castle," said Miss Elsie, cheerfully. "It never had a room in it as big as our bedroom in the hotel, and there were n't windows enough to go round. A slit in the wall, about two inches wide by two feet long, was considered dazzling extravagance to Malcolm's ancestors. I don't wonder some of 'em broke out and swam over to America. That reminds me. Who do you suppose is here—came over from the hotel in a boat of his own, just to see maw!"

"Not Malcolm, surely."

"Not much," replied Miss Elsie, setting her small lips together. "It's Mr. Custer. He's talking business with her now down on the beach. They'll be here when lunch is ready."

The consul remembered the romantic plan which the enthusiastic Custer had imparted to him in the foggy consulate at St. Kentigern, and then thought of the matter-of-fact tourists, the few stolid fishermen, and the prosaic ruins around them, and smiled. He looked up, and saw that Miss Elsie was watching him.

"You know Mr. Custer, don't you?"

"We are old Californian friends."

"I thought so; but I think he looked a little upset when he heard you were here, too."

He certainly was a little awkward, as if

struggling with some half-humorous embarrassment, as he came forward a few moments later with Mrs. Kirkby. But the stimulation of the keen sea air triumphed over the infelicities of the situation and surroundings, and the little party were presently enjoying their well-selected luncheon with the wholesome appetite of travel and change. The chill damp made limp the napkins and tablecloth, and invaded the victuals; the wind, which was rising, whistled round the walls, and made miniature cyclones of the torn paper and dried twigs around them: but they ate, drank, and were merry. At the end of the repast the two gentlemen rose to light their cigars in the lee of the wall.

"I suppose you know all about Malcolm?" said Custer, after an awkward pause.

"My dear fellow," said the consul, somewhat impatiently, "I know nothing about him, and you ought to know that by this time."

"I thought *your friend*, Sir James, might have told you," continued Custer, with significant emphasis.

"I have not seen Sir James for two months."

"Well, Malcolm 's a crank—always was one, I reckon, and is reg'larly off his head now. Yes, sir; Scotch whisky and your friend Sir James finished him. After that dinner at MacFen's he was done for—went wild. Danced a sword-dance, or a strathspey, or some other blamed thing, on the table, and yelled louder than the pipes. So they all did. Jack, I 've painted the town red once myself; I thought I knew what a first-class jamboree was: but they were prayer-meetings to that show. Everybody was blind drunk—but they all got over it except *him*. *They* were a different lot of men the next day, as cool and cautious as you please, but *he* was shut up for a week, and came out crazy."

"But what 's that to do with his claim?"

"Well, there ain't much use ' whooping up the boys' when only the whooper gets wild."

"Still, that does not affect any right he may have in the property."

"But it affects the syndicate," said Custer, gloomily; "and when we found that he was whooping up some shopkeepers and factory-hands who claimed to belong to the clan,—and you can't heave a stone at a dog around here without hitting a McHulish,—we concluded we had n't much use for him ornamentally. So we shipped him home last steamer."

"And the property?"

"Oh, that 's all right," said Custer, still gloomily. "We 've effected an amicable compromise, as Sir James calls it. That means we 've taken a lot of land somewhere north, that you can shoot over—that is, you need n't

be afraid of hitting a house, or a tree, or a man anywhere; and we 've got a strip more of the same sort on the sea-shore somewhere off here, occupied only by some gay galoots called crofters, and you can raise a lawsuit and an imprecation on every acre. Then there 's this soul-subduing, sequestered spot, and what 's left of the old bone-boiling establishment, and the rights of fishing and peat-burning, and otherwise creating a nuisance off the mainland. It cost the syndicate only a hundred thousand dollars, half cash and half in Texan and Kentucky grass lands. But we 've carried the thing through."

"I congratulate you," said the consul.

"Thanks." Custer puffed at his cigar for a few moments. "That Sir James MacFen is a fine man."

"He is."

"A large, broad, all-round man. Knows everything and everybody, don't he?"

"I think so."

"Big man in the church, I should say? No slouch at a party canvass, or ward politics, eh? As a board director, or president, just takes the cake, don't he?"

"I believe so."

"Nothing mean about Jimmy as an advocate or an arbitrator, either, is there? Rings the bell every time, don't he? Financiers take a back seat when he 's around? Owns half of Scotland by this time, I reckon."

The consul believed that Sir James had the reputation of being exceedingly sagacious in financial and mercantile matters, and that he was a man of some wealth.

"Naturally. I wonder what he 'd take to come over to America, and give the boys points," continued Custer, in meditative admiration. "There were two or three men on Scott's River, and one Chinaman, that we used to think smart, but they were doddering ijuts to *him*. And as for me—I say, Jack, you did n't see any hayseed in my hair that day I walked inter your consulate, did you?"

The consul smilingly admitted that he had not noticed these signs of rustic innocence in his friend.

"Nor any flies? Well, for all that, when I get home I 'm going to resign. No more foreign investments for *me*. When anybody calls at the consulate and asks for H. J. Custer, say you don't know me. And you don't. And I say, Jack, try to smooth things over for me with *her*."

"With Miss Elsie?"

Custer cast a glance of profound pity upon the consul. "No; with Mrs. Kirkby, of course. See?"

The consul thought he did see, and that he had at last found a clue to Custer's extraordi-

nary speculation. But, like most theorists who argue from a single fact, a few months later he might have doubted his deduction.

He was staying at a large country-house many miles distant from the scene of his late experiences. Already they had faded from his memory with the departure of his compatriots from St. Kentigern. He was smoking by the fire in the billiard-room late one night when a fellow-guest approached him.

"Saw you did n't remember me at dinner."

The voice was hesitating, pleasant, and not quite unfamiliar. The consul looked up, and identified the figure before him as one of the new arrivals that day, whom, in the informal and easy courtesy of the house, he had met with no further introduction than a vague smile. He remembered, too, that the stranger had glanced at him once or twice at dinner, with shy but engaging reserve.

"You must see such a lot of people, and the way things are arranged and settled here everybody expects to look and act like everybody else, don't you know, so you can't tell one chap from another. Deuced annoying, eh? That 's where you Americans are different, and that 's why those countrywomen of yours were so charming, don't you know, so original. We were all together on the top of a coach in Scotland, don't you remember? Had such a jolly time in the beastly rain. You did n't catch my name. It 's Duncaster."

The consul at once recalled his former fellow-traveler. The two men shook hands. The Englishman took a pipe from his smoking-jacket, and drew a chair beside the consul.

"Yes," he continued, comfortably filling his pipe, "the daughter, Miss Kirkby, was awfully good fun, so fresh, so perfectly natural and innocent, don't you know, and yet so extraordinarily sharp and clever. She had some awfully good chaff over that Scotch scenery before those Scotch tourists, do you remember? And it was all so beautifully true, too. Perhaps she 's with you here?"

There was so much unexpected and unaffected interest in the young Englishman's eyes that the consul was quite serious in his regrets that the ladies had gone back to Paris.

"I 'd like to have taken them over to Audrey Edge from here. It 's no distance by train. I did ask them in Scotland, but I suppose they had something better to do. But you might tell them I 've got some sisters there, and that it is an old place and not half bad, don't you know, when you write to them. You might give me their address."

The consul did so, and added a few pleasant words regarding their position,—barring the

syndicate,—which he had gathered from Custer. Lord Duncaster's look of interest, far from abating, became gently confidential.

"I suppose you must see a good deal of your countrymen in your business, and I suppose, just like Englishmen, they differ, by Jove! Some of them, don't you know, are rather pushing and anxious for position, and all that sort of thing, and some of 'em, like your friends, are quite independent and natural."

He stopped, and puffed slowly at his pipe. Presently he took it from his mouth, with a little laugh. "I 've a mind to tell you a rather queer experience of mine. It 's nothing against your people generally, you know, nor do I fancy it 's even an American type; so you won't mind my speaking of it. I 've got some property in Scotland,—rather poor stuff you 'd call it,—but, by Jove! some Americans have been laying claim to it under some obscure plea of relationship. There might have been something in it, although not all they claim, but my business man, a clever chap up in your place,—perhaps you may have heard of him: Sir James MacFen,—wrote to me that what they really wanted were some ancestral lands with the right to use the family name and privileges. The oddest part of the affair was that the claimant was an impossible sort of lunatic, and the whole thing was run by a syndicate of shrewd Western men. As I don't care for the property, which has only been dropping a lot of money every year for upkeep and litigation, Sir James, who is an awfully far-sighted chap at managing, thought he could effect a compromise, and get rid of the property at a fair valuation. And, by Jove! he did. But what your countrymen can get out of it,—for the shooting is n't half as good as what they can get in their own country,—or what use the privileges are to them, I can't fancy."

"I think I know the story," said the consul, eyeing his fellow-guest attentively; "but if I remember rightly, the young man claimed to be the rightful and only surviving heir."

The Englishman rose, and, bending over the hearth, slowly knocked the ashes from his pipe. "That 's quite impossible, don't you know. For," he added, as he stood up in front of the fire, in face, figure, and careless repose more decidedly English than ever, "you see my title of Duncaster only came to me through an uncle, but I am the direct and sole heir of the old family, and the Scotch property. I don't perhaps look like a Scot,—we 've been settled in England some time,—but," he continued with an invincible English drawling deliberation, "I—am—really—you—know—what they call The McHulish."

Bret Harte.