



FLORA MACDONALD.

AMONGST those whose self-denying heroism, in the midst of perils and personal privations, have shed a glory over *female devotedness*, Flora Macdonald has deservedly obtained a high meed of applause. This lady was the daughter of Macdonald of Milton, in South Uist, one of the remoter of the Western Islands of Scotland. She was born about the year 1720, and received the usual limited education of the daughter of a Highland gentleman of that age. It conferred little school learning, and scarcely any accomplishments, but included good moral principles, and the feelings and manners of a lady. When Flora was a girl, her father died, leaving his estate to a son. The widowed mother, being still young and handsome, was soon afterwards wooed by Mr Macdonald of Armadale, in the Isle of Skye; but she long resisted all his solicitations. At length he resorted to an expedient which was not then uncommon in the Highlands, and was at

a later period more common in Ireland—he forcibly carried away the lady from her house, and married her. It is said that they proved a sufficiently happy couple; though this of course does not justify the act by which the marriage was brought about.

Flora, therefore, spent her youthful years in the house of her stepfather at Armadale. She grew to womanhood without ever having seen a town, or mingled in any bustling scene. The simple life which she led in the rugged and remote Isle of Skye was enlivened only by visits among neighbours, who were thought near if they were not above ten miles distant. The greatest event of her youth was her spending about a year in the house of Macdonald of LARGOE, in ARGYLESHIRE—a lonely Highland mansion like her stepfather's, but one in which there was probably more knowledge of the world, and more of the style of life which prevailed in Lowland society. This was not long before the breaking out of the rebellion of 1745.

When Prince Charles Stuart came in that year to Scotland, to endeavour to regain the throne from which his family had been expelled, he was joined by a great portion of the clan Macdonald, including nearly the whole of the Clanranald branch, to which Flora's father had belonged. Another large portion, who looked to Sir Alexander Macdonald of Sleat as their superior, was prevailed upon by that gentleman to remain at peace; for he, though a friend of the Stuarts, was prudent enough to see that the enterprise had no chance of success. Flora's stepfather, as one of Sir Alexander's friends, was among those who refrained from joining the prince's standard; and it was probably from his example that Flora's brother, young Macdonald of Milton, also kept quiet. Thus, it will be observed, Flora's immediate living relatives were not involved in this unhappy civil war; but the branch of the clan to which she belonged was fully engaged, and she and her friends all wished well to the Stuart cause.

Prince Charles Edward landed in Scotland on the 19th of August 1745. The place chosen for his disembarkation from the small vessel which had conveyed him from France, was Glenfinnin, a lonely vale at the head of Loch Shiel, in the western part of Inverness-shire, through which runs the small river Finnin.* Here having planted his standard, he was immediately attended by a band of Highlanders of different clans, with whom he forthwith proceeded towards the low country. His small irregular army, augmented by adherents from Lowland Jacobite families, passed, as is well known, through a series of extraordinary adventures. After taking possession of Edin-

* The spot is now distinguished by a monumental pillar, erected by the late Mr Macdonald of Glenaladale, a young gentleman of the district, whose grandfather, with the most of his clan, had engaged in the unfortunate enterprise which it is designed to commemorate.

burgh, it attacked and routed a fully equal army of regular troops at Prestonpans. It marched into England in the depth of winter, and boldly advanced to Derby, a hundred and twenty-seven miles from the metropolis. Then it retreated—turned upon and routed a second army at Falkirk, but at Culloden was finally broken to pieces by the Duke of Cumberland (April 16, 1746). Prince Charles, escaping from the field, withdrew into the western parts of Inverness-shire, with the design of endeavouring to get to France by sea; while parties of the king's troops proceeded to ravage the lands of all those who had been concerned in the enterprise.

The government, sensible of the dangerous nature of the prince's claims, had set a price of thirty thousand pounds upon his head. This was a sum sufficient in those days to have purchased a large estate in the Highlands; and as the Highlanders were generally poor, it was thought that some one would, for its sake, betray the prince into his enemies' hands. Charles, aware of the danger in which he stood, very quickly assumed a mean disguise, in order to elude notice, and pursued his way almost alone. Disappointed in his first attempts to obtain a passage in a French vessel, he sailed in an open boat to the outer Hebrides, where, after some perilous adventures, he found a refuge in South Uist, under the care of the chieftain of Clanranald and his lady, who resided there at a place called Ormaclade. It has been mentioned that the Clanranald branch of the Macdonalds had been engaged in the insurrection. They had, however, been led out by the chief's eldest son, who alone, therefore, became responsible to the law, while the chieftain himself and the estate were safe. This enabled Clanranald and his lady to extend their protection to Prince Charles in his now distressed state. They placed him in a lonely hut amidst the mountains of Coradale in South Uist, and supplied all his wants for about six weeks, during which he daily hoped for an opportunity of escaping to France. At length, his enemies having formed some suspicion of his retreat, the island was suddenly beset with parties by sea and land, with the view of taking him prisoner—in which case there can be little doubt that his life would have been instantly sacrificed, for orders to that effect had been issued. Clanranald, his lady, and the two or three friends who kept the prince company, were in the greatest alarm, more particularly when they heard that the commander of the party was a Captain Scott, who had already become notorious for his cruelties towards the poor Highlanders. The first object was to remove Charles from his hut, lest exact information about it should have been obtained; the second was to get him, if possible, carried away from the island. But the state of affairs was such, that it was impossible for him to move a mile in any direction without the greatest risk of being seized by some of his enemies.

At this period the Hebridean or Western Isles, in which the prince had taken refuge, were in a rude and almost primitive condition; from which, indeed, they can scarcely now be said to have emerged. Extending in a range, with detached masses, for upwards of a hundred and fifty miles along the west coast of Argyle, Inverness, Ross, and Cromarty shires, to one or other of which they belong, they are generally difficult of access, and present the wild features of rocks, mountains, heaths, and morasses in a state of nature, with occasional patches of cultivated land, and hamlets of an exceedingly rude construction. The inhabitants, who are of the original Celtic race, remain for the most part tenants of small farms and allotments, from which they draw a miserable subsistence, chiefly by the breeding of cattle for the Lowland markets. Although poor and illiterate, and with few residents amongst them belonging to the higher classes, they are distinguished for their orderly conduct, their patience under an almost perennial adversity, and, like all the Celtic people, for their attachment to their chief—a dignity now little better than nominal. In the main range of the Hebrides, Lewis is the largest island, and is situated to the north of the others. South from it lie in succession North Uist, Benbecula, and South Uist, the whole so closely environed and nearly connected by islets, that they are spoken of collectively as the *Long Island*. Opposite South Uist, on the east, lies Skye, one of the largest and most important of the Hebrides. It extends along the coast of Ross-shire in an irregular manner, and is remarkable for the boldness of its shores, and the grandeur of some of its mountains. The indentations of the coast furnish a great variety of natural harbours, the refuge of vessels exposed to the tempests of the western ocean. The chief town in the island is Portree, and the principal mansion that of Dunvegan, the seat of the Macleods, who own the greater part of the isle. The southern district of Skye is called Sleat, or Slate. Skye is separated from the outer Hebrides by a strait or sound, from twenty to forty miles wide. Such, as will be immediately seen, was the principal scene of the wanderings and hairbreadth escapes of Charles Stuart. Fleeing from island to island, crossing straits in open boats, lurking in wilds and caves, attended by seldom more than one adherent, and assisted, when in the greatest extremity, by the heroic Flora Macdonald, did this unfortunate prince contrive to elude the grasp of his enemies.

In South Uist, in which he had taken refuge with a single follower named O'Neal, he was in continual danger from the parties on the watch for his apprehension, and for about ten days he wandered from place to place, crossing to Benbecula, and returning, sometimes making the narrowest escape, but with the faintest possible hope of finally eluding discovery. It was at this critical juncture that Flora Macdonald became accessory to his preservation. She was at the time paying a visit to her

brother at his house of Milton, in South Uist. It also happened that her stepfather, Armadale, was acting as commander of a party of Skye militia amongst the troops in pursuit of the prince. Armadale, like many others, had joined that militia corps at the wish of his superior, the laird of Sleat; but, in reality, he retained a friendly feeling towards the Stuarts, and wished anything rather than to be concerned in capturing the royal fugitive. Such associations of feeling, with an opposite mode of acting, were not uncommon in those days. O'Neal, who had formerly been slightly acquainted with Flora, seems to have suggested the idea of employing her to assist in getting Charles carried off the island.

One night near the end of June, he came by appointment to meet the young lady in a cottage upon her brother's land in Benbecula: the prince remained outside. After a little conversation, O'Neal told her he had brought a friend to see her. She asked with emotion if it was the prince, and O'Neal answered in the affirmative, and instantly brought him in. She was asked by Charles himself if she could undertake to convey him to Skye, and it was pointed out to her that she might do this the more easily, as her stepfather would be able to give her a pass for her journey. The first idea of Flora was, not her own peril, but the danger into which she might bring Sir Alexander and Lady Margaret Macdonald, by carrying the fugitive to their neighbourhood. She therefore answered the prince with the greatest respect, but added, that she could not think of being the ruin of her friend Sir Alexander. To this it was replied, that that gentleman was from home; but, supposing it were otherwise, she could convey Prince Charles to her mother's house, which was conveniently situated on the sea-side, and the Sleat family was not necessarily to have any concern in the transaction. O'Neal then demonstrated to her the honour and glory of saving the life of her lawful prince: it has been said that, to allay scruples of another kind, this light-hearted Irishman offered instantly to marry her. If such a proposal was really made, Flora did not choose to accept of it; but, without farther hesitation, she agreed to undertake the prince's rescue.

Pleased with the prospect which this frank and single-hearted offer presented, Charles and his friend O'Neal again betook themselves to the fastnesses of Coradale, while Miss Macdonald repaired to Ormaclade, to make preparations in concert with Lady Clanranald. The journey was not accomplished without encountering a difficulty arising from the strictly-guarded state of the passes. While on her way, crossing the sea-ford between Benbecula and South Uist, she and her servant were seized and detained by a militia party, which, on inquiry, she found to be that commanded by her stepfather. When Armadale came to the spot next morning, he was greatly surprised to find Flora in

custody, and quickly ordered her liberation. Of what passed between him and his stepdaughter, we have no distinct account; but there seems no reason to doubt that he became a confidant in the scheme, and entered cordially into it. At her request he granted her a passport, to enable her to proceed on her return to her mother's house in Skye, accompanied by her man-servant, Neil Mackechan, and a young Irishwoman named Betty Burke. This last person was understood to be a servant out of place, whom she thought likely to answer her mother as a spinner: in reality, she contemplated making Prince Charles pass as Betty Burke. She now pursued her way to Ormaclade, where all the proper arrangements were made in the course of a few days.

On Friday the 27th, everything being ready, Lady Clanranald, Flora, and her servant Mackechan, went to a wretched hut near the seaside, where he had taken up his abode. The elegant youth who had lately shone at the head of an army—the descendant of a line of kings which stretched back into ages when there was no history—was found roasting the liver of a sheep for his dinner. The sight moved some of the party to tears; but he was always cheerful under such circumstances, and on this occasion only made the remark, that it might be well for other royal personages to go through the ordeal which he was now enduring. Lady Clanranald was soon after called home by intelligence of the arrival of a military party at her house, and Flora and her servant were left with the prince and O'Neal. Next morning O'Neal was compelled, much against his will, to take his leave: he had not long parted from the prince when he was made prisoner.

Next forenoon Charles assumed the printed linen gown, apron, and coif, which were to transform him from a prince into an Irish servant girl. He would have added a charged pistol under his clothes, but Flora's good sense overruled that project, as she concluded that, in the event of his being searched, it would be a strong proof against him. He was compelled to content himself with a stout walking-stick, with which he thought he should be able to defend himself against any single enemy. The boat, meanwhile, was ready for them at the shore. Arriving there wet and weary, they were alarmed by seeing several wherries pass with parties of soldiers, and were obliged to skulk till the approach of night. They then embarked for Skye—Charles, Flora, Mackechan, and the boatmen. A night voyage of thirty or forty miles across a sound in the Hebrides, with the risk of being seized by some of the numerous government vessels constantly prowling about, was what they had to encounter. It appears that the anxiety of Flora for the life of the prince was much greater than his own, and he was the only person on board who could do anything to keep up the spirits of the party. For that purpose he sang a number of lively songs, and related a few

anecdotes. The night became rainy, and, distressed with the wet and her former fatigues, the young lady fell asleep in the bottom of the boat. To favour her slumbers, Charles continued to sing. When she awoke, she found him leaning over her, with his hands spread above her face, to protect her from any injury that might arise from a rower who was obliged at that moment to re-adjust the sail. In the same spirit he insisted upon reserving for her exclusive use a small quantity of wine which Lady Clanranald had given them. These circumstances are not related as reflecting any positive honour on the prince, but simply as facts which occurred on that remarkable night, and as at least showing that he was not deficient in a gentlemanlike tenderness towards the amiable woman who was risking so much in his behalf. It may here be mentioned that Mackechan, whose presence on the occasion was fully as good a protection to Flora's good fame as the name of O'Neal would have been, was a Macdonald of humble extraction, who had received a foreign education as a priest. He served the prince afterwards for some years, and became the father of the celebrated Marshal Macdonald, Duke of Tarentum, who, more than eighty years afterwards, visited the scenes of all these events.

When day dawned, they found themselves out of sight of land, without any means of determining in what part of the Hebrides they were. They sailed, however, but a little way farther, when they perceived the lofty mountains and dark bold headlands of Skye. Making with all speed towards that coast, they soon approached Waternish, one of the western points of the island. They had no sooner drawn near to the shore, than they perceived a body of militia stationed at the place. These men had a boat, but no oars. The men in Miss Macdonald's boat no sooner perceived them, than they began to pull heartily in the contrary direction. The soldiers called upon them to land, upon peril of being shot at; but it was resolved to escape at all risks, and they exerted their utmost energies in pulling off their little vessel. The soldiers then put their threat in execution by firing, but fortunately without hitting the boat or any of its crew. Charles called upon the boatmen "not to mind the villains;" and they assured him that, if they cared at all, it was only for him; to which he replied, with undaunted lightness of demeanour, "Oh, no fear of me!" He then intreated Miss Macdonald to lie down at the bottom of the boat, in order to avoid the bullets, as nothing, he said, would give him at that moment greater pain than if any accident were to befall her. She declared, however, that she would not do as he desired, unless he also took the same measure for his safety, which, she told him, was of much more importance than hers. It was not till after some altercation that they agreed to ensconce themselves together in the bottom of the boat. The rowers soon pulled them out of all farther danger.

In the eagerness of Duke William's emissaries to take Charles in South Uist, or the adjoining islands in the range, where they had certain information he was, Skye, lying close on the mainland, in which the prince was now about to arrive, was left comparatively unwatched. The island was, however, chiefly possessed by two clans, the Sleat Macdonalds and Macleods, whose superiors had deserted the Stuart cause, and even raised men on the opposite side. Parties of their militia were posted throughout the island, one of which had nearly taken the boat with its important charge when it was off Waternish.

Proceeding on their voyage a few miles to the northward, the little party in the boat put into a creek, or cleft, to rest and refresh the fatigued rowers; but the alarm which their appearance occasioned in a neighbouring village quickly obliged them to put off again. At length they landed safely at a place within the parish of Kilmuir, about twelve miles from Waternish, and very near Sir Alexander Macdonald's seat of Mugstat.

Sir Alexander was at this time at Fort Augustus, in attendance on the Duke of Cumberland; but his wife, Lady Margaret Macdonald—one of the beautiful daughters of Alexander and Susanna, Earl and Countess of Eglintoune—a lady in the bloom of life, of elegant manners, and one who was accustomed to figure in the fashionable scenes of the metropolis—now resided at Mugstat. A Jacobite at heart, Lady Margaret had corresponded with the prince when he was skulking in South Uist, and she had been made aware by a Mrs Macdonald of Kirkibost that it was likely he would soon make his appearance in Skye. When the boat containing the fugitive had landed, Flora, attended by Mackechan, proceeded to the house, leaving Charles, in his female dress, sitting on her trunk upon the beach. On arriving at the house, she desired a servant to inform Lady Margaret that she had called on her way home from Uist. She was immediately introduced to the family apartment, where she found, besides Mrs Macdonald of Kirkibost, a Lieutenant Macleod, the commander of a band of militia stationed near by, three or four of whom were also in the house. There were also present Mr Alexander Macdonald of Kingsburgh, an elderly gentleman of the neighbourhood, who acted as chamberlain or factor to Sir Alexander, and who was, she knew, a sound Jacobite. Flora entered easily into conversation with the officer, who asked her a number of questions, as where she had come from, where she was going, and so forth, all of which she answered without manifesting the least trace of that confusion which might have been expected from a young lady under such circumstances. The same man had been in the custom of examining every boat which landed from the Long Island; that, for instance, in which Mrs Macdonald of Kirkibost arrived, had been so examined; and we can only account for his allowing that of Miss Flora to pass, by the circumstance of his meeting her under the imposing courtesies

of the drawing-room of a lady of rank. Miss Macdonald, with the same self-possession, dined in Lieutenant Macleod's company. Seizing a proper opportunity, she apprised Kingsburgh of the circumstances of the prince, and he immediately proceeded to another room, and sent for Lady Margaret, that he might break the intelligence to her in private. Notwithstanding the previous warning, she was much alarmed at the idea of the wanderer being so near her house, and immediately sent for a certain Donald Roy Macdonald, to consult as to what should be done. Donald had been wounded in the prince's army at Culloden, and was as obnoxious to the government as he could be. He came and joined the lady and her friends in the garden, when it was arranged that Kingsburgh should take the prince along with him to his own house, some miles distant, and thence pass him through the island to Portree, where Donald Roy should take him up, and provide for his further safety.

The old gentleman accordingly joined Charles on the shore, and conducted him, as had been arranged, on the way to Kingsburgh. Meanwhile, Flora sat in company with Lady Margaret and the young government officer till she thought the two travellers would be a good way advanced, and then rose to take her leave. Lady Margaret affected great concern at her short stay, and intreated that she would prolong it at least till next day; reminding her that, when last at Mugstat, she had promised a much longer visit. Flora, on the other hand, pleaded the necessity of getting immediately home to attend her mother, who was unwell, and entirely alone in these troublesome times. After a proper reciprocation of intreaties and refusals, Lady Margaret, with great apparent reluctance, permitted her young friend to depart.

Miss Macdonald and Mackechan were accompanied in their journey by Mrs Macdonald of Kirkibost, and by that lady's male and female servants, all the five riding on horseback. They quickly came up with Kingsburgh and the prince, who had walked thus far on the public road, but were soon after to turn off upon an unfrequented path across the wild country. Flora, anxious that her fellow-traveller's servants, who were uninitiated in the secret, should not see the route which Kingsburgh and the prince were about to take, called upon the party to ride faster; and they passed the two pedestrians at a trot. Mrs Macdonald's girl, however, could not help observing the extraordinary appearance of the female with whom Kingsburgh was walking, and exclaimed, that she "had never seen such a tall impudent-looking woman in her life! See!" she continued, addressing Flora, "what long strides the jade takes! I daresay she's an Irishwoman, or else a man in woman's clothes." Flora confirmed her in the former supposition, and soon after parted with her fellow-travellers in order to rejoin Kingsburgh and the prince.

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These individuals, in walking along the road, were at first considerably annoyed by the number of country people whom they met returning from church, and who all expressed wonder at the uncommon height and awkwardness of the apparent female. The opportunity of talking to their landlord's factotum being too precious to be despised, these people fastened themselves on Kingsburgh, who, under the particular circumstances, felt a good deal annoyed by them, but at last bethought himself of saying, "Oh, sirs, cannot you let alone talking of your worldly affairs on Sabbath, and have patience till another day." They took the hint, and moved off. The whole party—Charles, Kingsburgh, and Miss Macdonald—arrived in safety at Kingsburgh House about eleven o'clock at night.

Mrs Macdonald, or, as she was usually called, Lady Kingsburgh, lost no time in preparing supper, at which Charles, still wearing the female disguise, placed Flora on his right hand, and his hostess on his left. Afterwards, the two ladies left the other two over a bowl of punch, and went to have a little conversation by themselves. When Flora had related her adventures, Lady Kingsburgh asked what had been done with the boatmen who brought them to Skye. Miss Macdonald said they had been sent back to South Uist. Lady Kingsburgh observed that they ought not to have been permitted to return immediately, lest, falling into the hands of the prince's enemies in that island, they might divulge the secret of his route. Her conjecture, which turned out to have been correct, though happily without being attended with evil consequences to the prince, determined Flora to change the prince's clothes next day.

The pretended Betty Burke was that night laid in the best bed which the house contained, and next morning all the ladies assisted at her toilet. A lock of her hair was cut off as a keepsake, and divided between Lady Kingsburgh and Flora. Late in the day, the prince set out for Portree, attended by Flora and Mackechan as before, Kingsburgh accompanying them with a suit of male Highland attire under his arm. At a convenient place in a wood, Charles exchanged his female dress for this suit; it being thought best that this should be done after he had left Kingsburgh House, so that the servants there might have nothing to say, either of their own accord or upon compulsion, but that they had seen a female servant come and go in company with Miss Flora. The party now separated, Kingsburgh returning home, while the prince and Mackechan set out for Portree (a walk of fourteen miles), and Flora proceeded thither by a different route.

At this village, the only one in Skye, Donald Roy had meanwhile made arrangements for carrying the prince to the neighbouring island of Raasay, which was judged a safe place for him, as its apparent and legal proprietor, Mr Macleod, had not

been concerned in the insurrection; although his father, the actual proprietor, and all his followers, had been engaged in it, and he himself was strongly attached to the cause. In the evening, Donald and some friends whom he had called to his aid, received the adventurer at a mean public-house in the village, where he partook of a coarse meal, and slaked his thirst from a broken brown potsherd, which was usually employed in baling water out of a boat. Here Flora joined the party, but only to take a final farewell of the prince, as she was no longer able to be of any service to him. Having paid her a small sum of money which he had borrowed from her in their journey, he gave her his warm thanks for her heroic efforts to preserve his life, and tenderly saluted her, adding, in a cheerful manner, "For all that has happened, I hope, madam, we shall meet in St James's yet!" He then set sail for Raasay with his new friends, while Flora proceeded to her mother's house in Sleat. Respecting the further adventures of the prince, it is only necessary to say that they were of a nature not less extraordinary than those which have been related, and that they terminated, three months after, in his happily escaping to France.

Our heroine Flora had gone through all these adventures with a quiet energy peculiar to her, but with little conception that she was doing anything beyond what the common voice of humanity called for, and what good people were doing every day. Reaching home, she said nothing to her mother, or any one else, of what she had been about, probably judging that the possession of such knowledge was in itself dangerous. Meanwhile the boatmen, returning to Uist, were there seized by the military, and obliged to give an account of their late voyage. This was what Lady Kingsburgh dreaded, and it seems to have been the only point in which the prudence of our heroine had failed. Having obtained an exact description of the dress of the tall female accompanying Miss Macdonald, a merciless emissary of the government, styled Captain Ferguson, lost no time in sailing for Skye, where he arrived about a week after the prince. Inquiring at Mugstat, he learned that Miss Macdonald had been there; but no tall female had been seen. He then followed on Flora's track to Kingsburgh, where he readily learned that the tall female had been entertained for a night. He asked Kingsburgh where Miss Macdonald and the person who was with her in woman's clothes had slept. The old gentleman answered that he knew where Miss Flora had lain, but as for the servants, he never asked any questions about them. The officer nevertheless discovered that the apparent servant had been placed in the best bed, which he held as tolerably good proof of the real character of that person, and he acted accordingly. Kingsburgh was sent prisoner to Fort Augustus, and treated with great severity: thence he was removed to Edinburgh castle, where he suffered a whole year's confinement. Macleod of Talisker, captain of a militia company,

caused a message to be sent, desiring the presence of Flora Macdonald. She consulted with her friends, who recommended her not attending to it; but she herself determined to go. On her way she met her stepfather returning home, and had not gone much farther, when she was seized by an officer and a party of soldiers, and hurried on board Captain Ferguson's vessel. General Campbell, who was on board, ordered that she should be well treated; and finding her story had been blabbed by the boatmen, she confessed all to that officer.

She was soon after transferred from the ship commanded by Ferguson to one commanded by Commodore Smith, a humane person, capable of appreciating her noble conduct. By the permission of General Campbell she was now allowed to land at Armadale, and take leave of her mother: her stepfather was by this time in hiding, from fear lest his concern in the prince's escape should bring him into trouble. Flora, who had hitherto been without a change of clothes, here obtained all she required, and engaged as her attendant an honest good girl named Kate Macdowall, who could not speak a word of any language but Gaelic. She then returned on board the vessel, and was in time carried to the south. It chanced that she here had for one of her fellow-prisoners Captain O'Neal, who had engaged her to undertake the charge of the prince. When she first met him on board, she went playfully up, and slapping him gently on the cheek with the palm of her hand, said, "To that black face do I owe all my misfortune!" O'Neal told her that, instead of being her misfortune, it was her brightest honour, and that if she continued to act up to the character she had already shown, not pretending to repent of what she had done, or to be ashamed of it, it would yet redound greatly to her advantage.

The vessel in which she was (the *Bridgewater*) arrived at Leith in September, and remained there for about two months. She was not allowed to land; but ladies and others of her own way of thinking were freely permitted to visit her, and she began to find that her deliverance of Prince Charles had rendered her a famous person. Many presents of value were given to her; but those which most pleased her were a Bible and prayer-book, and the materials for sewing, as she had had neither books nor work hitherto. Even the naval officers in whose charge she was were much affected in her behalf. Commodore Smith presented her with a handsome suit of riding clothes, with plain mounting, and some fine linen for riding shifts, as also some linen for shifts to her attendant Kate, whose generosity in offering to accompany her when no one else would, had excited general admiration. Captain Knowler treated her with the deference due to her heroic character, and allowed her to call for anything in the vessel to treat her friends when they came on board, and even to invite some of them to dine with her. On one occasion, when Lady Mary Cochrane was on board, a

breeze beginning to blow, the lady requested leave to stay all night, which was granted. This, she confessed, she chiefly was prompted to do by a wish to have it to say that she had slept in the same bed with Miss Flora Macdonald. At this time the prince was not yet known to have escaped, though such was actually the fact. One day a false rumour was brought to the vessel that he had been at length taken prisoner. This greatly distressed Flora, who said to one of her friends with tears in her eyes, "Alas, I fear that now all is in vain that I have done!" She could not be consoled till the falsity of the rumour was ascertained. Her behaviour during the whole time the vessel stayed in Leith Road was admired by all who saw her. The episcopal minister of Leith, who was among her visitors, wrote about her as follows:—"Some that went on board to pay their respects to her, used to take a dance in the cabin, and to press her much to share with them in the diversion; but with all their importunity, they could not prevail with her to take a trip. She told them that at present her dancing days were done, and she would not readily entertain a thought of that diversion till she should be assured of her prince's safety, and perhaps not till she should be blessed with the happiness of seeing him again. Although she was easy and cheerful, yet she had a certain mixture of gravity in all her behaviour, which became her situation exceedingly well, and set her off to great advantage. She is of a low stature, of a fair complexion, and well enough shaped. One would not discern by her conversation that she had spent all her former days in the Highlands; for she talks English (or rather Scots) easily, and not at all through the Earse tone. She has a sweet voice, and sings well; and no lady, Edinburgh-bred, can acquit herself better at the tea-table than what she did when in Leith Road. Her wise conduct in one of the most perplexing scenes that can happen in life, her fortitude and good sense, are memorable instances of the strength of a female mind, even in those years that are tender and inexperienced."

The Bridgewater left Leith Road on the 7th of November, and carried her straightway to London, where she was kept in a not less honourable captivity in the house of a private family till the passing of the act of indemnity in July 1747, when she was discharged without being asked a single question. The ministers, we may well believe, had found that to carry further the prosecution of a woman whose guilt consisted only in the performance of one of the most generous of actions, would not conduce to their popularity.* Her story had by this time

* It has been stated that Frederick Prince of Wales, father of George III., did not scruple to avow his admiration of Flora's conduct. His consort having one day expressed some disapprobation of her interference in behalf of "the pretender," the prince, whose heart was better than his head, said, "Let me not hear you speak thus again, madam. If you had been in the same circumstances, I hope in God you would have acted as she did!"

excited not less interest in the metropolis than it had done in Scotland. Being received after her liberation into the house of the dowager Lady Primrose of Dunnipace, she was there visited by crowds of the fashionable world, who paid her such homage as would have turned the heads of ninety-nine of a hundred women of any age, country, or condition. It is said that the street in which Lady Primrose lived was sometimes completely filled with the carriages of ladies and gentlemen visiting the person called the Pretender's Deliverer. On the mind of Flora these flatteries produced no effect but that of surprise: she had only, she said, performed an act of common humanity, and she had never thought of it in any other light till she found the world making so much ado about it. It has been stated that a subscription to the amount of £1500 was raised for her in London.

Soon after returning to her own country, she was married (November 6, 1750) to Mr Alexander Macdonald, son of the worthy Kingsburgh, and who in time succeeded to that property. Thus Flora became the lady of the mansion in which the prince had been entertained; and there she bore a large family of sons and daughters. As memorials of her singular adventure, she preserved a half of the sheet in which the prince had slept in that house, intending that it should be her shroud; and also a portrait of Charles, which he had sent to her after his safe arrival in France. When Dr Samuel Johnson, accompanied by his friend Boswell, visited Skye in 1773, he was hospitably entertained at Kingsburgh, and had the pleasure (for so it was to him) of sleeping in the bed which had accommodated the last of the Stuarts: he remarked that he had had no ambitious thoughts in it. In his well-known book respecting this journey, he introduces the maiden name of his hostess, which he says is one "that will be mentioned in history, and, if courage and fidelity be virtues, mentioned with honour." He adds, "she is a woman of middle stature, soft features, gentle manners, and elegant presence"—a picture the more remarkable, when it is recollected that she was now fifty-three years of age.

Soon after this period, under the influence of the passion for emigration which was then raging in the Highlands, Kingsburgh and his amiable partner went to North Carolina, where they purchased and settled upon an estate. She carried with her the sheet in which the prince had slept, determined that it should serve the purpose which she contemplated, wherever it might please Providence to end her days. But this event was not to take place in America. Her husband had scarcely settled there when the war of independence broke out. On that occasion the Highlanders showed the same faithful attachment to the government (being now reconciled to it by mild treatment) which they had formerly manifested for the house of Stuart.

Mr Macdonald, being loyally disposed, was imprisoned by the discontented colonists as a dangerous person; but he was soon after liberated. He then became an officer in a loyal corps called the North Carolina Highlanders, and he and his lady passed through many strange adventures. Towards the conclusion of the contest, abandoning all hopes of a comfortable settlement in America, they determined to return to the land of their fathers. In crossing the Atlantic, Flora met with the last of her adventures. The vessel being attacked by a French ship of war, nothing could induce her to leave her husband on deck, and in the course of the bustle she was thrown down and had her arm broken. She only remarked, that she had now suffered a little for both the house of Stuart and the house of Hanover.

She spent the remainder of her life in Skye, and at her death, which took place March 5, 1790, when she had attained the age of seventy, was actually buried in the shroud which she had so strangely selected for that purpose in her youth, and carried with her through so many adventures and migrations. Her grave may be seen in the Kingsburgh mausoleum, in the parish churchyard of Kilmuir; but a stone which was laid by her youngest son upon her grave, being accidentally broken, has been carried off in pieces by wandering tourists. Flora Macdonald retained to the last that vivacity and vigour of character which has procured her so much historical distinction. Her husband, who survived her a few years, died on the half-pay list as a British officer; and no fewer than five of her sons served their king in a military capacity. Charles, the eldest son, was a captain in the Queen's Rangers. He was a most accomplished man. The late Lord Macdonald, on seeing him lowered into the grave, said, "There lies the most finished gentleman of my family and name." Alexander, the second son, was also an officer: he was lost at sea. The third son, Ranald, was a captain of marines, of high professional character, and remarkable for the elegance of his appearance. James, the fourth son, served in Tarlton's British Legion, and was a brave and experienced officer. The last surviving son was Lieutenant-Colonel John Macdonald, who long resided at Exeter, and was the father of a numerous family. The engraving prefixed to this sketch is taken from a portrait of Flora, which was originally in his possession, and which he approved of as a likeness. There were, moreover, two daughters, one of whom, Mrs Major Macleod of Lochbay, in the Isle of Skye, died within the last few years.

Such is an authentic history of the heroic and amiable Flora Macdonald. Like all incidents equally romantic, the aid she

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extended to the prince, which unquestionably saved him from captivity and a violent death, has given rise to various poetical effusions. One of the most pleasing of these pieces, from the pen of James Hogg, narrating, however, the incident as well as sentiments purely imaginary, and entitled "Flora Macdonald's Lament," may here be appended:—

Far over yon hills of the heather so green,
And down by the Corrie that sings to the sea,
The bonnie young Flora sat sighing her lane,
The dew on her plaid and the tear in her e'e.
She looked at a boat with the breezes that swung
Away on the wave like a bird of the main ;
And aye as it lessened, she sighed and she sung,
Fareweel to the lad I shall ne'er see again !
Fareweel to my hero, the gallant and young !
Fareweel to the lad I shall ne'er see again !

The moorcock that craws on the brow of Ben Connal,
He kens o' his bed in a sweet mossy hame ;
The eagle that soars on the cliffs of Clanronald,
Unawed and unhunted his eyrie can claim :
The solan can sleep on his shelve of the shore,
The cormorant roost on his rock of the sea,
But oh ! there is one whose hard fate I deplore,
Nor house, ha', nor hame, in his country has he.
The conflict is past, and our name is no more ;
There's nought left but sorrow for Scotland and me !

