

Her little skirt, and squeezed the water from her hair. As she did this she saw the blood in the bottom of the boat; she cast a quick glance at his hand, with which he piced the oar as if there was nothing the matter with it.

"There!" said she, and handed him the handkerchief which she had placed on her head when they had first set out.

He shook his head, and rowed on. At last she went up to him, and bound the handkerchief tightly round the deep wound.

The sun was still pretty high over the hills when they reached Heathermount.

The old spinning-woman who had seen them start in the morning again stood at the door.

"What's the matter wid your hand, Declan?" she called down.

"It's nothin', Granny!" he replied; "I tore myself on a nail, 'twill be all right to-morrow."

"Wait until I get some herbs to put on it," said the old woman. "Wait, I'll tell ye!"

"Don't trouble yerself, Granny! It's done, an' to-morrow 'twill be healed an' forgotten; my skin is sound an' hale's quick enough."

"Good-bye," said Joan, and turned towards the path which led up to her home. "Good-night," called Declan after her.

CHAPTER III.

JOAN'S SURRENDER.

There was no one in the back room in which Declan now paced backwards and forwards. Through the wooden shutters of the little window came a fresh breeze, which he had not felt on the sea, and the coolness and solitude did him good. He stood a long time before a picture of the Madonna, which hung up in the room, but to pray did not occur to him. For what should he ask when he had no longer anything to hope for? The day seemed to him to stand still; he longed for the night, for he was weary and exhausted with the loss of blood. His hand began to pain him violently; he seated himself and undid the bandage. The blood burst forth again, and he found that his hand was very swollen round the wound. He washed it carefully, and cooled it for a long time. Then he threw himself on the bed, and closed his eyes. The moon shining into the room, and also the pain in his hand awoke him out of a half-slumber. He was just getting up to bathe it again when he heard a rustling at the door.

"Who's there," he cried. He opened the door, and Joan stood before him.

Without a word she entered, she threw off the handkerchief from her head, and placed a little basket on the table. Then she drew a long breath.

"Ye came for ye han'kerchief," he said; "but ye might have spared yerself th' trouble, for I'd have sint id over in th' mornin'."

"It's not the handkerchief," she replied quickly; "I have been up to the hills to get herbs for you to stop the bleeding. There!" said she, taking the lid off the basket.

"Ye give yerself too much trouble," said he. "The hand is finely now, an' if id wasn't idself 'twould be only what I deserve. But ye shouldn't be here at this hour; if any wan met ye, ye know how they talk, though they don't know what they do be sayin'."

"Let them talk," said she passionately. "I don't care about anybody; I must see your hand, and put the herbs on it; you can't manage it yerself."

"I tell you that 'tis better," he said.

"Well, let me see for myself," and without another word she seized the hand and untied it. "Oh, blessed Mother of God!" she exclaimed when she saw the great swelling.

"'Tis swelled a little," said he, "but th' swellin' 'll soon go down."

"She shook her head. "In the state it is in, she said, "you won't be able to go in the boat for a week."

"I will, an' the day after to-morrow," he replied; "an' if I don't myself, what matter?"

Meanwhile she had fetched a basin, and again washed the wound; he standing and bearing it like a child. Then she put her herbs on it, which at once relieved the burning, and bound up the hand with strips from her basket.

When it was done he said, "Thank ye; an' Joan, if ye'd do me another favour ye'd forgive me for th' madness that got the best o' me; an' forget all I ever said or did. I don't know how id was; ye never gev me cause, that I'm sure of; an' I promise ye ye'll never hear anythin' from me again to pain or vex ye."

"It is I who must ask your forgiveness," she broke in, "I ought to have put everything more pleasantly to you, instead of vexing you by my stubbornness, and then, besides— This wound!"

"Id was in your own defence," he exclaimed. "Twas time that I was brought to me senses. An' now, like a good girl, go home to yer bed, an' there—there's yer han'kerchief; ye can take id with ye."

He handed it to her, but she remained, standing, as if struggling with herself. At last she said, "I made you lose your jacket, too, with I suppose, your little money; for it slipped out when I was getting into the boat. The recollection came to me afterwards; I cannot give you another for I have no money. But here is the little gold cross the stranger gave me the last time he came. Since then, I haven't looked at it, and I don't like keeping it longer in the box. It is worth a few pounds my mother said, and if you sold it, it would recompense you for your loss."

"I won't take id," said he brusquely, pushing away the little golden cross which she had taken out of her pocket.

"You must take it," she said. "It may

be a long time before you can earn anything with that hand. There it is for you, and I will never look at it again."

"Then throw it into the sea," he said. "It is not a present I am making you," she replied, coaxingly, "it is your right."

"Right!" he exclaimed. "I have no right to anything that's yours. And if ye should ever meet me again, do not look at me, so as to make me think what I owe ye. An' now good night, an' let this be all," and he put the handkerchief and cross in the basket and shut down the lid.

When he looked up and saw her face he was terrified; great tears were streaming down her cheeks, without her making any effort to check them.

"Mother o' God!" he cried, "are ye ill? Why, yer trembling all over."

"It's nothin'," she replied; "I'm going home," and she staggered to the door.

Here she could no longer control her tears, and leaning her head against the side of the door, she burst into loud and passionate sobs, but before he could reach her to detain her she had suddenly turned and thrown herself on his neck.

"I cannot bear it," she screamed, clinging to him. "I cannot listen when you say kind words to me, and let me go away with all the blame on my conscience. Beat me—kick me—curse me—or, if you still love me take me and keep me—and do what you like with me—only do not send me away from you."

He held her for a moment sobbing in his arms.

"Do I still love ye?" he cried at last. "Mother o' God! d'ye believe that all th' blood in me heart has been drawn by that little wound? Don't ye feel id batin', as if it must burst me breast to get to ye? If ye only say this to please me, or in pity for me, thin go—go, in the name of God! an' I'll forget id all; ye are not to think that ye owe id to me, because I'm suffering through ye."

"No, No!" said she, firmly, looking up from his shoulder, and fixing her streaming eyes passionately on his face. "I love you, and why should I hide id from you? I have long feared and struggled against it, but now I will be different, for I cannot bear not to look at you when I meet you. Now, I will kiss you," said she, "so that if you were ever again to feel doubtful you can say to yourself, Joan kissed me, and she would not kiss anyone but the man she has chosen for her husband."

She kissed him once, twice, thrice, and then tore herself away, crying:

"Goodnight, my love, my darling! Go to rest, and don't come with me, for I am not afraid, not of anybody, but you."

With that she glided out through the door and disappeared.

Long after Declan remained at the window gazing out on the dark sea, above which the stars seemed to float.

"Who would have thought it?" said Father Michael to himself as he strolled round his little garden one afternoon a week later. "Who would have thought that God would so soon take pity on that wayward girl? and I blamed myself that I had not attacked that demon of obstinacy more strongly! But our eyes are short-sighted for the ways of heaven. Declan is a good boy, and will make her a good husband! and doubtless it was on account of Declan she refused the stranger, though he was a gentleman in ways and means."

Length of Naval Commissions.

The Admiralty is now considering the desirability of extending the term of warships' commissions to three years. The two years' arrangement has presented various unforeseen difficulties, and in point of fact it is very seldom carried out to the letter. Several battle-ships and cruisers are now due for relief which have exceeded their paying-off dates by several months.

The objection to three years' commissions is that the men are apt to grow "stale" from the protracted monotony of life on board one ship. But now that the great bulk of our naval strength is concentrated in the narrow seas, this, of course, applies in much lessened degree, since officers and men can get home during their regular spells of leave.

ALWAYS AN ARMY.

Father: "Well!"  
Tommy: "Why isn't there ever a navy of the unemployed!"

The Auckland Treasure House.

STEWART DAWSON AND COMPANY'S, NEW PREMISES.

Continued from page 4:

to whom, by the way, his shop-are not merely his business, but his hobby. From the very beginning, he has put a substantial proportion of his profits back into his various premises, ever improving, embellishing, and beautifying the same, and proud indeed when, as is constantly occurring, he has evolved some new idea to add to their attractiveness.

It is very satisfactory to find that work of so elaborate a kind as that necessitated in the fitting of the Stewart Dawson premises has been done in the Dominion. The glass counters were made by Mr. Mead, of Auckland, and Hill and Plummer, of the same city, were responsible for the silvering, rounding, shaping, and polishing of the innumerable glass shelves and mirrors, for which they had to import special machinery. The glass embossing, by Taylor Bros., is a fine specimen of this art, the panel of the entrance door being specially worthy of notice. The fibrous plaster ceiling, which at once attracts attention, and gives a nobility to the entire interior, is the work of Messrs. Wardrop and Scurry, who both designed and fixed the same in position.

As for the treasures contained in this gigantic storehouse of valuables, the space at our disposal entirely precludes our attempting to do it justice. Watches from £70, or even a hundred guineas, down to the reliable little fellow in a serviceable oxidised case, costing but a few shillings, are stored in endless profusion, and there are more in the strong-rooms and safes than are shown in the windows and counter-cases. And this applies to everything in stock; it is necessary to have duplicate and triplicates of every single article catalogued for sale. It never does to tell a customer you have run out of an article, and it is never certain on which "line" there may be a run. This means that a shop such as that now under notice has to carry twice the stock a similar establishment in England would have to. There the manufacturers can be applied to by wire, and the article supplied in a few hours. Here months would have to elapse before the article could be replaced if only one of the kind were kept in stock. The floating capital value of the stock is therefore high in the colonies, and the Auckland shop alone carries some £50,000 to £60,000 of goods. Buying as they do from dozens of manufacturers, as well as what they make themselves, the firm is able to afford its customers an enormous choice of goods of every class and variety, while the vastness of the turnover permits of prices being cut to a scale impossible to jewellers doing only a limited business. The town business, large as it is, is, it must be understood, altogether apart from that transacted through the post by means of the exhaustively illustrated catalogues of which the firm sends out thousands upon thousands during the year. Of precious stones the firm is large buyers, and fortunate purchases before the recent sharp rise in the best stones enable the firm to give colonial buyers exceptionally advantageous terms. The display of gems of every description—including the beautiful and fashionable new jewels, the Evidof, etc.—is very fine, and the shop, especially when lighted up at night with brilliant electric light, realises one's imagination of an Aladdin's cave.

In conclusion, the firm is always pleased for visitors to look round, and, while every attention is promptly paid to those who intimate a desire to purchase, no one is pressed to buy.

BILIOUS ?

Inactivity of the liver is probably the cause. Bonnington's Pills will quickly and gently correct the trouble. They are mild, effective, and contain no harmful constituents. For women's ailments especially there is no remedy so good and efficacious as

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