

## PRISCILLA'S JEWELS.

"You amaze us all," said Dr. Craig, while the ladies gazed in silent consternation at the stranger, and Mary broke out into hysterical sobbing.

"Mr. Dalrymple!" began Mrs. Craig, lost in wonder.

"That is my name," said the newcomer, bowing, "though I do not know how you have learned it, madam."

"I see," said Kenneth; "he took your name, besides laying claim to your ulster;—he is a bold villain. But what has he done with the jewels?"

"I will tell you all I know," said the real Dalrymple. "My friend here can bear witness to all I say. At a terrible moment this lady appeared on deck, covered with an extraordinary quantity of jewels. I stepped forward, and assisted by my friend here, clothed her in my ulster and helped her to the front, so that she might be placed in one of the first boats that were launched. A man, that black rascal who has fled, took her by the hand, as if to lead her to a safer spot, but a minute afterward, and in the midst of such confusion as led him to imagine the eyes of no man could be upon him, we saw him strike the lady on the back of the head, so that she lost consciousness and fell. In a few moments he had possessed himself of her jewels. We both, my friend and I, made an effort to reach the spot where she lay, but before we could do so the vessel suddenly heeled over, and went down. My last recollection is the thought that death had come for all of us; and that the lady who had been stunned was spared the final horror."

Priscilla was only half listening, being occupied in soothing poor Mary's excitement.

"Then I suppose the jewels may be said to be really lost?" said Kenneth. "The man arrived here in a boat," said Mrs. Craig.

"He may have been picked up in a boat," said Kenneth; "but it is not likely he could have managed to save the jewels."

"He tied them up in a large handkerchief," said Dalrymple; "I saw him; and it is a sight I shall never forget. The chances would certainly be against his being able to save them; but it is just possible he may have managed to do so. Did nobody see him arrive?"

"No one; he was met coming across the heather, more dead than alive, and the boat was found afterward on the sands."

"Unless he is induced to confess," said Dalrymple, "we shall never know positively the fate of the jewels. It is highly probable, almost certain, that they are all at the bottom of the sea. Nothing but the most extraordinary covetousness could have suggested the idea that it was possible for him to reap any benefit from robbery done at such a moment." "If he should escape," began Kenneth;

"Oh, I hope he may!" said Priscilla. "I trust we may never hear of him again."

"Miss Emerson is singularly indifferent to the fate of her property," said the tall stranger.

"I am weary of the subject, and cannot believe there is any use in thinking further about it."

"Nevertheless, we are bound to pursue the subject," persisted Dalrymple; and all began to move in the direction taken by the coast-guards in pursuit of the fugitive.

Arriving at the little harbour, a short distance from the Lodge, they found that the nameless man, who had called himself Dalrymple, had proved a fleet runner, had outstripped his pursuers, arriving at the shore, had leaped into the first empty canoe he saw, and rapidly put himself afloat. Before the coastguards and others could get themselves in readiness to follow him, he had got a long way ahead in the direction of the mainland.

But then he was only one man in a small canoe, against a crew of skilled seamen in their own most capable boat. From the island our party watched the pursuit eagerly through glasses; all except Priscilla, who turned her back upon this man-chase, and walked away to the Lodge, in a state of the most painful excitement.

She felt morally certain that the jewels were safe somewhere and that the man who had robbed her knew when to touch them whenever it should be convenient to him to do so. His own words of a day or two ago, which had struck her at the time, came back to her now, and the suspicion which they had then excited had become a conviction in her mind. She told herself positively as she walked along the heath that Dalrymple had wanted to marry her in order to have no risk about the necessary sale of her jewels, which he already possessed.

That her property was concealed somewhere on the island she felt sure, but she resolved that she would not make known this belief to anyone. She was determined to prove penniless in Dr. Kenneth's eyes in order that he might ask her to be his wife. And once his wife—well then she could declare her opinion that the jewels might possibly be found.

Having watched the boats out of sight, Mrs. Craig, Kenneth and the two strangers returned to the Lodge, where Priscilla and Mary had breakfast waiting for them, and where Duncan was congratulated by the gentlefolks. After breakfast Priscilla disappeared, and came back with Mr. Dalrymple's ulster across her arm, and the pocketbook, which she had found in its pocket, in her hand.

"I restore you your own," she said, "and may Heaven reward you for your charity to me! I have never opened this book, which, no doubt, you will recognise."

Mr. Dalrymple took the book and looked at it with a curious smile. "Miss Emerson," he said, "if I did you a good turn, surely you have done me one. This book contains the equivalent of money to a very large amount. Had I not given you my ulster I should perhaps have worn it myself, and it might have hindered my swimming—I had a good bit of swimming to do—or I should have cast away my ulster, pocketbook and all, rather than have lost my life. You see, I gave my property into excellent keeping."

"I am so glad," said Priscilla; "I am so very glad. How well he did not get hold of it, the man who pretended to be you!"

"I wonder why he took your name, even before seeing Priscilla?" said Mrs. Craig.

"I imagine he grasped at the first name of a respectable pas-

senger which he could recall," said Mr. Dalrymple, "little dreaming I should ever confront him here. I am only surprised that he did not sooner escape out of this island and out of the country, having lost his booty, as we must suppose he did, and being conscious, as he must have been, of the possibility of a witness rising up against him from somewhere."

Mrs. Craig looked at Priscilla, thinking how inexplicable it was that the man should have wanted to marry a woman whom he had so brutally robbed.

"The storm would not admit of any one leaving the island until this morning," said Priscilla.

"'Tis most strange altogether," said Mrs. Craig. "He had the manners of a gentleman, and claimed to be well-born and the owner of wealth."

"He is an adventurer, no doubt," said Mr. Dalrymple, "one who perhaps ought to be a gentleman. But this is not his first crime, I am sure. We shall probably know more about him by-and-by, after the police have captured him." "I hope they will not get him," said Priscilla. Dr. Craig glanced at her uneasily.

"Miss Emerson is certainly the most forgiving young lady I have ever met with," said Mr. Dalrymple. "I cannot join in her wish. It would be a real satisfaction to me to see that ruffian punished."

That evening the two strangers from Gannet Island took a boat to convey them to the mainland, being anxious to report themselves to their friends, but promising to return at some future day to renew their acquaintance with Orra.

Dr. Craig and Priscilla saw them off, and, as they stood above the beach, the early moon rose high, touching the sombre cliffs with silver, and making a quivering trail of light along the still rolling sea. Cheerful voices rang up from the beach; men, women, and children were out of doors, all busy and gay in their new freedom from the tyranny of the storm, and all loath to return to their dwellings for the night.

"Priscilla," said Dr. Craig, "why are you so anxious that the man we have known as Dalrymple should not be caught?"

"Because," said Priscilla, smiling, "chiefly because I do not want to hear any more of my jewels. Let them lie at the bottom of the sea."

"Why are you so anxious that they should be lost?"

"I have learned that there are things in life more precious than they; and I am of so ambitious a nature that the most precious thing always attracts me most." "What have you found that is so precious?"

"I am not bound to answer all your questions, Dr. Craig."

"I do not know what Orra can offer you in exchange for so much wealth—except it be one rough diamond, Priscilla. Oh, my dear, do not play with me; do not keep me in suspense! Can you love an honest man who has nothing but his love for you to recommend him?"

"Yes," said Priscilla, putting her hands in his outstretched hands; "even though, being an honest man, I find he can speak an untruth. Nothing to recommend him, indeed! Oh, Kenneth Craig, you hypocrite!"

The news that came from the mainland next day was a terrible shock to Priscilla, who, though she had wished the escape of the man who had robbed her, was not glad to learn that death had been his deliverer from the hands of justice. Nevertheless, this was the startling truth. The fugitive, ignorant of the management of a canoe, had, on seeing the coastguards gain on him, lost his presence of mind, and made some movements which had upset the boat and flung him suddenly into the sea. Clinging to the canoe, he seemed to have got under it and entangled with it; and, when he rose at last to the surface, he was drowned. And so died with him the secret of the fate of Priscilla's jewels.

When Kenneth and Priscilla had been married about a year, and Priscilla's opinion had often been freely and fearlessly stated as to the existence of the jewels upon the island somewhere, after many ineffectual searches had been made, and the subject had been almost forgotten, an accident occurred which altered the whole course of the fortunes of the doctor and his wife.

A golden eagle sometimes visits Orra from the opposite Scotch mountains, and when it is known that he has been seen hovering over the island, the inhabitants are careful not to leave their movable possessions out of doors, as the winged robber is apt to fly away with articles that do not belong to him. On one occasion a very large, fine eagle had been spending a few days about the cliffs of Orra, and much interest was excited by his movements. Dr. Craig and his wife often walked across the island to those very sands on which Priscilla had been found, and near where the eagle had taken up his lodging for the time in a tall cliff; and here they would wander about, watching to see the eagle soar. One evening they met Duncan MacElrath hastening to meet them, and saying that he had seen the eagle rise from the cliffs with something of a bundle in his beak. Going with Duncan to the spot, Kenneth and Priscilla soon saw the creature descending slowly towards the sands, with something undoubtedly held in his beak. A stone flung upward by Duncan just touched him on the breast, and, startled and indignant, the eagle uttered acry, and at the same moment dropped the thing which he had held.

The brey proved to be Priscilla's jewels, tied up in a handkerchief, as Mr. Dalrymple had seen them. They had evidently been hidden in a hole of the rocks, to await the convenient moment when the clever thief might be able to regain possession of his wrey.

The jewels proved quite as valuable as Priscilla had believed them to be, and she had the deep satisfaction of making the fortune of the husband whom she loved. In their palmy days which have followed, Orra is not quite forgotten by the Craigs; and Duncan and Mary have received a share of their prosperity. But good old Mrs. Craig, no longer an exile from her friends, has abandoned the island, and feels no wish to revisit its stormy shores. With Kenneth's children round her knees, she loves to dwell on the strange days of that three weeks' storm, when Priscilla first sat at her hearth as a guest, a precious waif from the sea, bringing all happiness and good fortune to Kenneth in her delicate hands.

THE END.