The Daughter of the Sun

By Fiona Macleod

There are not many of the Gaelic folk of Lochfyneside in Argyll who could tell the story of Ethlenn Stuart; perhaps few, even, who could point out the particular rocky promontory, to this day (although upon no map) called Ard-Ethlenn, some thirty miles or less up the wild and beautiful western coast of Lochfyne, between Crarae Point and the Ceann-More. *Ard-Ethlenn, Creagaleen:* meaningless names these to the few strangers who might chance to hear them from any fisherman of Strachur or Stralachlan. But to those who know who and what Ethlenn Stuart was, and the story of her love for Ian McIan, the mountain-poet who is their tragic joy, and the last sleep of her against known as Ian Mòr of the Hills, and the end of the sun,—for such as these "Ard-Ethlenn" and "Creagaleen" "Creag-Gáusaïn" and "Maol-Láe-y-a-ghrian," are names with a haunting music.

My own knowledge of "the Daughter of the Sun," as Ethlenn was called by the imaginative people of the glens,—partly after a poem by Ian Mòr, addressed to her under that name, partly because of her passionate love of sunlight and the hill-wind and the sea, but mainly, I understand, because she herself was a poet, "a poet of the fire of love, and so a Daughter of the Sun," as one of the old Celtic folk-poems has it,—this knowledge was largely derived from Dionaid MacDiarmid, the married sister of Ian. Dionaid herself, with her little cottage, are no longer known of Strachur. Years ago the small croft by the pine-wood behind Easter Creggans was destroyed by a winter-gale, and in time even the few poor, fragmentary traces of human occupation disappeared. The summer before the accident, Dionaid had become weak and ailing; in the autumn she died.

But, also, I knew Ian Mòr. Often, as a child, I met him upon the lonely hills where I lived; later, he would speak with me when he would have word of none, when the gloom was upon him; and I was with him when he died.

We have all our dreams of impossible love. Somewhere, sometimes, the impossible happens. Then a man and a woman know that oblivious rapture of love, the *mirdhei*, the ecstasy of the life of dream paramount over the ordinary human gladness of the life of actuality. If ever there were man and woman who were these flower-crowned visionaries of love, Ian Mòr McIan and Ethlenn Stuart were they.

I cannot tell any connected story of their two lives; nor, sure, is there any need to do so. The name and repute of Ian are with his kindred and the hill-folk of his race: he has his immortality by the flame-lit ingle, in the byres of the straths, in twilight haunts of lovers, in the mountain-shealings, wherever the songs of Ian Mòr, so passing sweet and strange, are warm upon the lips of young and old. In his last years he was known among the people in Strachurmore as Ian-Aonaran, or as Ian-mòr-nà-aonar-sa-mhonadh—Ian "the strange one, the lonely one," or Ian "the lonely one of the hills," as, long ago, Ossian called a solitary hill-Druid *aonaran liath nan creag*, "the hoary hermit of the rocks." No one ever ventured to say that he was mad. All knew, however, that, years agone, he had become distraught through the passion of his love, which had nigh killed him. At most, if a stronger epithet than *aonaran* was used (which means both "lonely" and "singular"), his *dubhachas*, his gloom, was gently alluded to, or the *cianalas*, the

mountain-melancholy, or that strange shadow thrown across the mind of man by nature, the *ciar nan carn*, the gloom of the rocks, as it is called by the hill-people. Young and old held in reverence this man who dwelt on high, and communed more with the swift fires of sunrise and the slow flames of sunset than with his fellows.

It was in his thirtieth year that Ian first spoke with Ethlenn; and that was the year when she and her widowed mother came to live at what was then the lonely clachan of Easter Creggans near Strachur. I am using the word meaningly: for though, as I say, it was then he first spoke with her, he had seen her three years earlier, though without knowledge of who she was. One day in late autumn he had gone with a friend as far as Ormidale of Loch Ridden, and having said farewell to his one intimate companion, who was on his way to a far land whence he would not come again, had walked along the steep hill-slopes to Tigh-na-bruaich in the Kyles of Bute, where he had the steamer that sailed the fifty or sixty miles' waterway to Inverary. On the boat, a small screw-steamer for cargo and local traffic, he saw a young girl whose beauty fascinated him. Well enough he knew who was the grey-haired man she was with, Robert Stuart of Fionnamar in Ardlamont; but because of the feud between this man and his own father, Ian McIan of Tighnacoille in Strachurmore, he could not break the silence. Sure, as old Dionaid said to me, it is for doubting if Ian would have spoken in any case; for he, the dreamer, had suddenly come upon his dream, had seen the face that haunted his visions by day and night; and that seeing, then and there, was enough for him. It was, indeed, characteristic of Ian Mòr that he made no inquiry concerning them, when a boat that had been hanging about in Inchmarnock Water, carried them away to the Ardlamont shore; and that from that day he made no effort to find if the beautiful girl were kith or kin to "Fionnamar," or was but a passing visitor. But already he loved her. Far away she was from him, as the white cloud from the blue hill which holds the fugitive shadow only. Dimly he recognised this. But the bill can love the cloud, as the pine the wandering wind, as the still tarn the leaping star in the heavens. She became the sungold in his life; he saw her in every fair and beautiful thing, in the wave, in the wind-white grass, in the light of morning and of gloaming; everywhere he heard her voice, or the faint rumour of her coming feet. He did not dream to meet her; it may be he would have gone up into his lonely hills if he had known of her approach. He loved, then only the beautiful phantom of his mind.

It was from that time that Ian Mar, the second son of Ian McIan the old minister in Strachurmore, became the poet. Ever since he had left the College in Glasgow he had worked lovingly and long in prose and verse, with many hopes, and a few illusory successes, content that his father left him to his own devices, and that his brother Hector took upon himself all the care of Tighnacoille. But under the new influence that had come into his life a strange thing happened. All his youthful ambitions became wild swans, and he found himself with one abiding desire: to be a singer for his own people, his own race, in their own ancient language,—a tongue old and deep and mysterious as the mountain-wind or the sighing sea.

One day, not long after his father's death, he was near a summer-shealing on the upper slope of Ben Measach when he heard a girl singing an unfamiliar Gaelic song, as she lay in the heather watching the kye close upon the hour of the milking.

> "Wave, wave, green branches, wave me far away
> To where the forest deepens and the hill-winds, sleeping, stay,—
> Where Peace doth fold her twilight wings, and through the heart of day
> There goes the rumour of passing hours grown faint and grey.

"Wave, wave, green branches, my heart like a bird doth hover
Above the nesting-place your green-gloom shadows cover:
Oh, come to my nesting-heart, come close, come dose, bend over,
Joy of my heart, my life, my prince, my lover!"

There is an incommunicable music in the long slow flow of the Gaelic song, and in its dreamy monotony. The haunting air and words passed into his brain. Something awoke there; as the sea-wind, suddenly striking a loch, will awake echoes in remote corries on the hills.

Curious, because of a new strange lilt in the lines, and of a repressed intensity in the simple Gaelic words, he asked the singer whose was the song she sang. It was then that, for the first time, he heard of Ethlenn Stuart.

That summer they met. From the first they loved. No one could gainsay the beauty of Ethlenn, with her tall, lithe, slim figure, her dark-brown dusky hair, her gloaming eyes, her delicate features, with, above all, her radiant expression of joyous life. That many heads were shaken knowingly or warningly because of her, was nothing against the fair lass; only, there were few, probably there was none, who understood her. She saw little of the strathfolk, and when not at home with her invalid mother at the cot among the pines above Creggans, or upon the loch, was a wanderer upon the hills. There, in the fresh mornings, or in the drowsy afternoons, or in the prolonged hours of sundown, often she met Ian. More and more dear they grew to each other, till at last they cared to have no other comrade than the hill-wind that whispered through the pines its message of joy, or the sunlight that came floodingly from over the mountains in the east, and ebbed in vast serenities of peace along the hill-crests beyond the narrow sea-loch. Many of her songs, many of his, were made at this time. This is the song of the "Daughter of the Sun" that he wrote to her out of his heart, and is sung to this day. In the original there is the swift flame, the consuming fire, the repressed passion which I find it impossible to convey. Whoso has heard this song of Ian Mòr, and thrilled in the heart-loud silence that follows it, sung, in the twilight or by the peats, by one who loves or has loved, only such an one can know it.—[1]

Thou art the Daughter of the Sun,
Alona!
Even as the sun in a green place,
The light that is upon thy face
When thou art gone there is dusk on my ways,
Alona!

Thy soul is of sun-fire wrought in clay,
Alona,
The white warm clay that hath for name
Alona, and for word of fame
Ethlenn, and is for me a Flame
To burn against the Eternal Day,
Alona!

The hills know thee, and the green woods,

[1] Alona signifies "most beautiful" or "exquisitely beautiful," and is at the same time equivalent to "dear to me" or "dear of my heart."

Alona,
And the wide sea, and the blue loch, and the stream:
On thy brow, Daughter of the Sun, is agleam
The mystery of Dream,—
Alona!

The fires of the sun that burn thee,
Alona,
Oh, heart of my heart, are in me!
Thy fire burns, thy flame killeth, thy sea
Of light blazeth continually,—
Is there no rest in joy, no rest, no rest for me
Whom rapture slayeth utterly,
Alona, Alona!

It was on the eve of the day he made this song to Ethlenn, that he and she met among the pines upon the lower slopes of Maol-Láe-y-a-ghrian. He came upon her while she lay full length along the bole of a fallen pine. For a time he stood looking upon her. The sunlight, flowing from above Ben Dearg and Am Buachaille on the west side of the loch, streamed upon her body as it lay dark against the red pine-bole, and lay upon her face in a glory. The voice of the wind among the trees was as the tide coming over smooth sands. The cuckoos were calling one to another; echo-like falling cadences coming back from the Wood of Claondiri on the opposite coast.

He hesitated to tell her what he had to say; above all, to break the spell. She was at one with nature, thus. The wind was her comrade, the pine-tree her brother; she herself a flower.

When he leaned forward and kissed her, he saw that her eyes were dreaming in the far depths above her. She smiled, opened her arms to him, but did not rise.

"Aluinn," she whispered, " Ian-à-ghray, Aluinn, Aluinn!"

For a long while they stayed thus in silence. They two and the wind; all the world fell away from these three.

At last Ian stirred.

"Come, Alona; come, Ethlenn-múirnean," he whispered, with his lips against her ear, under the dusky, fragrant shadow of her hair.

Hand in hand, they passed beneath the pines, and out upon the heather. As they climbed Creag'-an-Eich, in the wonderful afterglow, though it was already less than two hours short of midnight, there were no other sounds than the deep wave-murmur of the flowing air amid the pine-trees now beyond them, and the crying of the lapwings. Even the ewes and lambs were still. At long intervals the clucking of grouse, or the churr of a fern-owl, rustled like eddies across the calm of the heather-sea.

When they reached the summit of Creag'-an-Eich,—to some known as Maol-Láe-y-a-ghrian, because of Ian's songs,—they stood for a while speechless.

Beneath them the land swam circling to the loch. Save in the shadow of the west, the water was like the melted ore of the Tuatha-de-Danann, suspended so in the flaming cauldrons under the mountains over against a day that shall come again. Beyond, hill-range after hill-range lay in long curves of shadowy amethyst deepening into purple. Over the most remote, three stars seemed to drop silver fire through the faint rose-glow which underlay the straits of gold and crimson far-spreading into immeasurable lagoons of quiet light.

Behind them, where they stood hand in hand facing the light, were the mountains, purple-grey and grey-blue: vast buttressed heights rising sheer and isolate. Mass after mass, peak after peak, the mountain sanctuaries stood in their dim, mysterious majesty.

"Ethlenn-Alona," said Ian at last, but in a voice so low that the girl by his side just caught the words; "Ethlenn, we have already given all to each other, and have vowed the troth upon us through life. But now let us vow the troth of death also, for who is it that will be knowing when the dark hour is leaping through the noon or stealing through the night."

So it was there and thus they vowed their solemn troth that neither life nor death should come between them. The prayer that was in each heart rose, an invisible bird, and flew towards the slow-receding seas of light. The hill-wind carried their vows far and wide upon the mountains they loved.

Nor did they know, as with clasped hands they wandered down towards the pine-wood, that a shadow walked behind them,—one who was like Ethlenn, tall and beautiful, but with her eyes wild and full of a despairing pain.

Now that I have gone thus far I should tell their story fully; but I cannot.

Here is what is for knowledge throughout the glens.

That night Ian told Ethlenn how he had received a mysterious letter from the distant southland city, London. It purported to be from his brother Hector, whose word was that he had departed suddenly into the south country, from Edinburgh, whither, as Ian knew, he bad lately gone. The writing was in an unfamiliar hand. The message was to the effect that Hector was ill, dying; that he begged Ian to come to him at once; and that, on his arrival, he would be met by a friend, a Stralachlan man at that, who would take him straightway to the death-bed.

Well, it was the long way to London that Ian Mar went. Was there never a hill, he wondered, after the Cumberland fells were left far behind,—was there never a hill in the poor land?

But all thoughts of this foreign England and of the great city he was so eager to see, and yet was already weary of, went from him, when, at the station, he was met by Roderick Stuart, the cousin of Ethlenn.

What did it mean? What was the meaning of this thing? Why was Roderick Stuart in London,—he who was a small laird high up in Stralachlan of Lochfyne; he that was the lover of Ethlenn; he that had sworn to the undoing of Ian Mòr, and to the winning of his cousin Ethlenn after all?

The man came forward, with what smile upon his false lips could rise above a heart so black.

"No," said Ian simply;—"no, we will not be shaking hands, Roderick Mhic Aonghas. There is that between us of which there is no need to speak. Where will my brother be? If you will be so good as to tell me the way I will go to him alone."

Stuart laughed. "London is n't Inverary, Ian Mhic Ian; no, nor yet Greenock; no, nor yet even Glasgow. The place where your brother is, why it will be miles and miles from here. There is a cab here waiting for us. If you wish to see Hector McIan alive you must not be waiting here, talking of this and that."

In the long drive through the streets, so unspeakably sordid and dreary that Ian's heart bled for the wretched folk who had to live away from the quiet hills and the clean waters, he asked his companion many questions, but without any answer that gave him ease. Again, what was the meaning of Roderick Stuart being dressed as though he were a minister? True, be was a man with much money, so it was said; but why was he clad as though he were a minister? Was it a southland way?

So sure at last was he that he was being deceived, that he would have then and there parted with the man Stuart, had it not been that, at that moment, the cab swerved, passed through a gateway into a short narrow avenue, and came to a stop abruptly.

Almost immediately after they had entered the house, Stuart was called by a servant out of the room where they waited. When he came back, a minute or two later, it was with a tall, heavy-browed, sullen-eyed man.

"Ian," began Roderick Stuart familiarly, and with a smile as he noticed the angry look in Ian Mòr's eyes; "Ian, this is Dr. MacManus, of whom I have told you."

Ian made no answer, but looked from one to the other. The tall man turned to his companion

"Did you say he was an older or a younger brother of yours, Mr. Stuart?"

"Younger."

But here Ian Mòr spoke, frowning darkly.

"I do not know you, sir, and I do not know why I am in this house, if my brother Hector is not here. If he is, I am wishing to go to him at once. As for this man here, Roderick Stuart, he is no kith or kin to me. My name is Ian McIan, and I am of Tigh-na-coille in Strachurmore of Lochfyne."

But why should I delay in telling that which will already be guessed?

The man Stuart had prevailed with this Dr. MacManus, whether by craft or by bribery, or both; and there is no need to say more than that Ian Mòr found, too late, that he had been trapped into a private asylum.[2]

In the months that followed no word was had of him. His brother Hector, who had not been ill at all, and had never gone south from Edinburgh, did all that he could; not only by inquiries in London, because of what Ethlenn had told him, but also of the steamship-companies, for Roderick Stuart of Dubh Chnoc in Stralachlan told him how he had met Ian in Glasgow, and how he, Ian, had informed him of his intent to sail to America and take to a new life there, under a new name. Hector believed so far, and indeed this story grew and was received. Only Ethlenn knew that the man lied. She waited, with her heart in leash.

In the sixth month of silence Ethlenn's child was born. With joy and pain she spent long hours looking into its blue eyes, seeking there the clue to the strange and terrible mystery.

Ah, it is God only knows what she learned there; but one day she put the child hurriedly back to her breast, and strode swift through the pines to her home. Neither sorrow nor suffering had dimmed her beauty. She moved now as a Bandià, a mountain-goddess.

The child she left with a kinswoman, Mary MacNair, a young widow, who took the little one to her heart with sobbing joy, because of her own womb that had not borne and of the dead man whom she had loved.

Having done this, Ethlenn put off from Creggan shore in a boat. The breeze came down the loch, and she sailed swift southward. When opposite the Glen of Dubh Chnoc she landed. In less

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[2] I am not telling here the story of Ian Mòr. All who knew him, and many of those who love his songs, are familiar with the piteous record of the bitter wrong that was done to him and to Ethlenn Stuart. By a strange coincidence, the day of his abrupt release was the day before Ethlenn's death,—the day he left London for his return to the mountain-land for which, as for her, his heart was sick unto death. The death of Roderick Stuart had brought about his freedom; but here it is needless to go into details of all that happened before and after.

It was Ian Mòr himself who found her body, on the eve that followed the sunrise into which her life had lapsed, as a flower might give up its perfume. Nevertheless, I should add, the passion of his love while she lived, the passion of his love for her in death, had more to do with the strange dream-madness, or "ecstasy," of his after-years, than even the excruciating mental suffering which he endured through the villany of Roderick Stuart.

than an hour she was upon the high upland where Roderick Stuart had his home. The man was not there. He was up on the hill, she was told,—at the shealing of Farlan Macfarlane the shepherd.

When, at last, they met, it was by the Lochan-na-Mona, the deep, black tarn in the moorland.

They looked at each other in silence. Then a cruel smile came upon the man's face.

"It is too late that you are coming *now,* Ethlenn Stuart,—or is it Ethlenn McIan I should be saying?"

She took no notice of the sneer.

"I am Ethlenn McIan. Do you know why I have come?"

"Well, as for that, my lass—"

"I have come to kill you."

"You—you! Ah, by the black stone in Iona, is that so? Sure, it is terrified I ought to be!"

But suddenly all the surface courage of the man sank. He saw somewhat in Ethlenn's eyes which put the fear upon him.

She drew closer. The eyes in her death-pale face were like dark water-lilies afloat on wan water.

"I did not know in what way God would give you over into my hands, but now I know, Roderick Mhic Aonghas."

"I am innocent, Ethlenn Co-ogha—I did not do it—besides, he—he—he is not dead—and—"

But with a spring she was upon him. He stumbled, fell, half-rose; with a swift whirl she swung him off his balance. The next moment he felt headlong, backward, into the deep pool.

Ethlenn stood for a moment, watching. Then she snatched the iron-shod staff he had dropped. If he rose, it must be to his death. But whether caught in the trailing weeds, or for some other reason not to be known, Roderick Stuart never rose. There, in time, his body was found; and the strathfolk said that he had fallen there, heavy with the drink that was always upon him of late, and had been drowned there in the dark and the silence.

Ethlenn waited by the tarn till, from its unrevealing depths, bubble after bubble ascended; waited till not the smallest air-bubble quivered upon the smooth blackness of the water; waited till the lapwings of the gloaming flew overhead, crying mournfully. Then, at last, she turned, and went down through the shadowy woods to the place where her boat was.

It was moonlight when, three hours later, she opened the door of the cottage. Her mother was awake, and called to her.

"Have you had good news, Ethlenn, my bonnie?" she whispered, as she drew the beautiful face down to her own.

The girl stared at her questioningly.

"I am asking it, dear, because of the glad light that is in your eyes. Perhaps it is only a good deed that you have done?"

"Ay, mother dear, that is it. It is because of a good deed that I have done. But do not speak to me about it, now or later. I am glad, who can never be glad again till I see Ian face to face."

And from that day forth Ethlenn went to and fro as one in a dream. Some thought that her sorrow had crazed her; others that a lifelong melancholy had come to her out of her grief. Once only she was heard to laugh: when a farmer from Stralachlan urged her to write a monody on Roderick Stuart, whose untimely death had shocked the people of the strath.

More than ever she haunted the pinewood, the hills, or the loch. Often she was seen, singing low to her baby, or raising it on high to catch the wind or the sun, calling the boy her Ian, her poet, her blossom of joy.

In the late heats she crossed often to the steep woodlands at the Ceann-More, on the opposite side of the loch. At one rocky headland, crowned with a solitary pine, she dreamed through long hours. It was here that she and Ian had spent one memorable golden day. Lying here, she could still feel his breath warm against her face, could almost feel his lips upon her own. Nearly all her last songs were made at this spot, Creagaleen.

So it was that, after many weeks, the steep, rocky, and densely wooded shore which ran between two promontories became known to the fisherfolk of Kenmore and Strachur as Ard-Ethlenn.

Only once did she take the child with her when she went to Creagaleen. It was on that day she made this song to Ian bàn, her little boy, her Ian who was of Ian. It is called, in the Gaelic, *The Two Ians*.

Are these your eyes, Ian,
  That look into mine
Is this smile, this laugh
  Thine?

Heart of me, dear,
  O pulse of my heart,
This is our child, our child—
  And—we apart!

Wrought of thy life, Ian,
  Wrought in my womb,
Never to feel thy kiss!—
  Ah, bitter doom!

Live, live, thou laughing boy,
  We meet again!
Here do we part, we twain;
I to my death-sweet pain,
  Thou to thy span of joy.

Hush, hush; within thine eyes
  His eyes I see.
Sure, death is Paradise
If so my soul can be,
  Ian, with thee!

Here, too, were made some of those songs of passionate love which have never been collected, but linger only in the hearts of those who learned them long years ago. Two of these I have in the writing of Ian Mòr, who copied them for me from the original in “The Book of My Heart,” as the small MS. volume was called which was found among Ethlenn’s papers.

I.

His face was glad as dawn to me,
His breath was sweet as dusk to me,
His eyes were burning flames to me,
Shule, Shule, Shule, agràh!

The broad noon-day was night to me,
The full-moon night was dark to me,
The stars whirled and the poles span
The hour God took him far from me.

Perhaps he dreams in heaven now,
Perhaps he doth in worship bow,
A white flame round his foam-white brow
Shule, Shule, Shule, agràh!

I laugh to think of him like this,
Who once found all his joy and bliss
Against my heart, against my kiss,
Shule, Shule, Shule, agràh!

Star of my joy, art still the same
Now thou hast gotten a new name,
Pulse of my heart, my Blood, my Flame,
Shule, Shule, Shule, agràh!

II.

He laid his dear face next to mine,
His eyes aflame burned close to mine,
His heart to mine, his lips to mine,
Oh, he was mine, all mine, all mine.

Drunk with old wine of love I was,
Drunk as the wild-bee in the grass
Singing his honey-mad sweet bass,
Drunk, drunk with wine of love I was!

His lips of life to me were fief,
Before him I was but a leaf
Blown by the wind, a shaken leaf
Yea, as the sickle reaps the sheaf,
My Grief!
He reaped me as a gathered sheaf!

His to be gathered, his the bliss,
But not a greater bliss than *this!*
All of the empty world to miss
For wild redemption of his kiss!
My Grief!

For hell was lost, though heaven was brief
Sphered in the universe of thy kiss,—
So cries to thee thy fallen leaf,
Thy gathered sheaf,
Lord of my life, my Pride, my Chief,
My Grief

It was midway in the heat-wave of a rainless September that, in Ian's words, the Daughter of the Sun "went away with the hill-wind through the green silences."

One evening she sailed across the loch, and drifted slow with the tide through the green depths beneath Ard-Ethlenn. At Creagaleen she moored the boat, and climbed the bracken-covered boulders. Under the pine where she and Ian had first known the passion of their love, she lay down: strangely weary now. The moon rose over the Cowal, transmuting the velvety shadows on the hills into a fluid light. The lingering gloaming, the moonshine, pale stars to north and south, deep calms of shadow, one and all wrought the loch to the beauty of dream. Thus might the bride of Manànnan, she who was a lovely sea-loch, have seemed to him, when he came in from the ocean upon his chariot, the flowing tide.

To have loved supremely! After all, the green, sweet world had been good to her, its daughter. She had loved and been loved, with the passion of passion. Nothing in the world could take away that joy; not the death of Ian Mòr,—of which now there could be no longer any doubt; not sorrow by day and grief by night; not the mysterious powers themselves that men called God, and that moved and lived and had their blind will behind the blowing wind and the rising sap, behind the drifting leaf and the granite hills, behind the womb of woman and the mind of man, behind the miracle of day and night, behind life, behind death.

It was hers,—all hers. To have known this wonderful happiness was in truth to be, as Ian had often called her, a Princess of the World. How gladly she would have lived through the long years with him, she thought; but, since that was not to be, how gladly she forfeited all else!

All that night she lay there, under the pine tree, listening to the lapping of the tide in the hollows and crevices beneath.

It was for peace, too, to know that she had killed Roderick Stuart. Perhaps Ian knew that his murderer lay in that black hill-tarn. That were well. She would have killed him, of course, whatever had happened; but it was better that he was delivered over to her, then, there, in that way. It was a good law: a life for a life. The minister said "No"; and the people echoed "No"; but in the human heart it was always "Yes." Ian was the tenderest human being—man, woman, or child—she had ever known; but, sure, he too would have slain Roderick Mhic Aonghas; ay, sure, that was for the knowing. He would love her the better when they met again in the shadow of the grave, because of the deed she had done. Of old, no man or woman of heroic soul suffered the death-wrong to pass without the death-eric. And who are the blind sheep of to-day that follow new shepherds? Do they know any whit more than did the mountain-folk and the seafarers in the days of old?

Towards dawn the tide was on the ebb. Ethlenn knew that it was ebb-tide also in her life.

At sunrise she rose, stretched out her arms, and called *Ian* thrice. She heard the gulls and skuas crying upon the weedy promontories; on the loch the mackerel-shoals made a rustling noise; the hill-wind sang a far-off song: but no answer came from him whom she called.

The sunlight was about her like a garment: as a consuming flame, rather, it was within her and around her.

Her eyes filled with light; her body thrilled. Slowly she turned. A smile came upon her face. She stooped, kneeled, and lay down in the green-gold gloom beneath the pine.

"Ian!" she whispered; "Ian, Aluinn, my Poet, my Mountain-Lover, Ian, Ian!" For it was Death that lay there, waiting comradely; but he had come in the guise of Ian Mòr.