MARY JOHNSTON

FOES

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CHAPTER I

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Said Mother Binning: "Whiles I spin and whiles I dream. A bonny day like this I look."

English Strickland, tutor at Glenfernie House, looked, too, at the feathery glen, vivid in June sunshine. The ash-tree before Mother Binning's cot overhung a pool of the little river. Below, the water brawled and leaped from ledge to ledge, but here at the head of the glen it ran smooth and still. A rose-bush grew by the door and a hen and her chicks crossed in the sun. English Strickland, who had been fishing, sat on the door-stone and talked to Mother Binning, sitting within with her wheel beside her.

"What is it, Mother, to have the second sight?"

"It's to see behind the here and now. Why're ye asking?"

"I wish I could buy it or slave for it!" said Strickland. "Over and over again I really need to see behind the here and now!"

"Aye. It's needed mair really than folk think. It's no' to be had by buying nor slaving. How are the laird and the leddy?"

"Why, well. Tell me," said Strickland, "some of the things you've seen with second sight."

"It taks inner ears for inner things."

"How do you know I haven't them?"

"Maybe 'tis so. Ye're liked well enough."

Mother Binning looked at the dappling water and the June trees and the bright blue sky. It was a day to loosen tongue.

"I'll tell you ane thing I saw. It's mair than twenty years since James Stewart, that was son of him who fled, wad get

Scotland and England again intil his hand. So the laddie came frae overseas, and made stir and trouble enough, I tell ye!... Now I'll show you what I saw, I that was a young woman then, and washing my wean's claes in the water there. The month was September, and the year seventeen fifteen. Mind you, nane hereabouts knew yet of thae goings-on!... I sat back on my heels, with Jock's sark in my hand, and a lav'rock was singing, and whiles I listened the pool grew still. And first it was blue glass under blue sky, and I sat caught. And then it was curled cloud or milk, and then it was nae color at all. And then I *saw*, and 'twas as though what I saw was around me. There was a town nane like Glenfernie, and a country of mountains, and a water no' like this one. There pressed a thrang of folk, and they were Hieland men and Lowland men, but mair Hieland than Lowland, and there were chiefs and chieftains and Lowland lords, and there were pipers. I heard naught, but it was as though bright shadows were around me. There was a height like a Good People's mount, and a braw fine-clad lord speaking and reading frae a paper, and by him a surpliced man to gie a prayer, and there was a banner pole, and it went up high, and it had a gowd ball atop. The braw lord stopped speaking, and all the Hielandmen and Lowlandmen drew and held up and brandished their claymores and swords. The flash ran around like the levin. I kenned that they shouted, all thae gay shadows! I saw the pipers' cheeks fill with wind, and the bags of the pipes fill. Then ane drew on a fine silken rope, and up the pole there went a braw silken banner, and it sailed out in the wind. And there was mair shouting and brandishing. But what think ye might

next befall? That gowden ball, gowden like the sun before it drops, that topped the pole, it fell! I marked it fall, and the heads dodge, and it rolled upon the ground.... And then all went out like a candle that you blaw upon. I was kneeling by the water, and Jock's sark in my hand, and the lav'rock singing, and that was all."

"I have heard tell of that," said Strickland. "It was near Braemar."

"And that's mony a lang league frae here! Sax days, and we had news of the rising, with the gathering at Braemar. And said he wha told us, 'The gilt ball fell frae the standard pole, and there's nane to think that a good omen!' But I *saw* it," said Mother Binning. She turned her wheel, a woman not yet old and with a large, tranquil comeliness. "What I see makes fine company!"

Strickland plucked a rose and smelled it. "This country is fuller of such things than is England that I come from."

"Aye. It's a grand country." She continued to spin. The tutor looked at the sun. It was time to be going if he wished another hour with the stream. He took up his rod and book and rose from the door-step. Mother Binning glanced aside from her wheel.

"How gaes things with the lad at the House?"

"Alexander or James?"

"The one ye call Alexander."

"That is his name."

"I think that he's had ithers. That's a lad of mony lives!"

Strickland, halting by the rose-bush, looked at Mother Binning. "I suppose we call it 'wisdom' when two feel alike.

Now that's just what I feel about Alexander Jardine! It's just feeling without rationality."

"Eh?"

"There isn't any reason in it."

"I dinna know about 'reason.' There's *being* in it."

The tutor made as if to speak further, then, with a shake of his head, thought better of it. Thirty-five years old, he had been a tutor since he was twenty, dwelling, in all, in four or five more or less considerable houses and families. Experience, adding itself to innate good sense, had made him slow to discuss idiosyncrasies of patrons or pupils. Strong perplexity or strong feeling might sometimes drive him, but ordinarily he kept a rein on speech. Now he looked around him.

"What high summer, lovely weather!"

"Oh aye! It's bonny. Will ye be gaeing, since ye have na mair to say?"

English Strickland laughed and said good-by to Mother Binning and went. The ash-tree, the hazels that fringed the water, a point of mossy rock, hid the cot. The drone of the wheel no longer reached his ears. It was as though all that had sunk into the earth. Here was only the deep, the green, and lonely glen. He found a pool that invited, cast, and awaited the speckled victim. In the morning he had had fair luck, but now nothing.... The water showed no more diamonds, the lower slopes of the converging hills grew a deep and slumbrous green. Above was the gold, shoulder and crest powdered with it, unearthly, uplifted. Strickland ceased his fishing. The light moved slowly upward; the trees, the crag-heads, melted into heaven; while the lower

glen lay in lengths of shadow, in jade and amethyst. A whispering breeze sprang up, cool as the water sliding by. Strickland put up his fisherman's gear and moved homeward, down the stream.

He had a very considerable way to go. The glen path, narrow and rough, went up and down, still following the water. Hazel and birch, oak and pine, overhung and darkened it. Bosses of rock thrust themselves forward, patched with lichen and moss, seamed and fringed with fern and heath. Roots of trees, huge and twisted, spread and clutched like guardian serpents. In places where rock had fallen the earth seemed to gape. In the shadow it looked a gnome world—a gnome or a dragon world. Then upon ledge or bank showed bells or disks or petaled suns of June flowers, rose and golden, white and azure, while overhead was heard the evening song of birds alike calm and merry, and through a cleft in the hills poured the ruddy, comfortable sun.

The walls declined in height, sloped farther back. The path grew broader; the water no longer fell roaring, but ran sedately between pebbled beaches. The scene grew wider, the mouth of the glen was reached. He came out into a sunset world of dale and moor and mountain-heads afar. There were fields of grain, and blue waving feathers from chimneys of cottage and farm-house. In the distance showed a village, one street climbing a hill, and atop a church with a spire piercing the clear east. The stream widened, flowing thin over a pebbly bed. The sun was not yet down. It painted a glory in the west and set lanes and streets of gold over the hills and made the little river like

Pactolus. Strickland approached a farm-house, prosperous and venerable, mended and neat. Thatched, long, white, and low, behind it barns and outbuildings, it stood tree-guarded, amid fields of young corn. Beyond it swelled a long moorside; in front slipped the still stream.

There were stepping-stones across the stream. Two young girls, coming toward the house, had set foot upon these. Strickland, halting in the shadow of hazels and young aspens, watched them as they crossed. Their step was free and light; they came with a kind of hardy grace, elastic, poised, and very young, homeward from some visit on this holiday. The tutor knew them to be Elspeth and Gilian Barrow, granddaughters of Jarvis Barrow of White Farm. The elder might have been fifteen, the younger thirteen years. They wore their holiday dresses. Elspeth had a green silken snood, and Gilian a blue. Elspeth sang as she stepped from stone to stone:

> "But I will get a bonny boat,
> And I will sail the sea,
> For I maun gang to Love Gregor,
> Since he canna come hame to me—"

They did not see Strickland where he stood by the hazels. He let them go by, watching them with a quiet pleasure. They took the upward-running lane. Hawthorns in bloom hid them; they were gone like young deer. Strickland, crossing the stream, went his own way.

The country became more open, with, at this hour, a dreamlike depth and hush. Down went the sun, but a glow held and wrapped the earth in hues of faery. When he had

walked a mile and more he saw before him Glenfernie House. In the modern and used moiety seventy years old, in the ancient keep and ruin of a tower three hundred, it crowned—the ancient and the latter-day—a craggy hill set with dark woods, and behind it came up like a wonder lantern, like a bubble of pearl, the full moon.

CHAPTER II

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The tutor, in his own room, put down his fisherman's rod and bag. The chamber was a small one, set high up, with two deep windows tying the interior to the yet rosy west and the clearer, paler south. Strickland stood a moment, then went out at door and down three steps and along a passageway to two doors, one closed, the other open. He tapped upon the latter.

"James!"

A boy of fourteen, tall and fair, with a flushed, merry face, crossed the room and opened the door more widely. "Oh, aye, Mr. Strickland, I'm in!"

"Is Alexander?"

"Not yet. I haven't seen him. I was at the village with Dandie Saunderson."

"Do you know what he did with himself?"

"Not precisely."

"I see. Well, it's nearly supper-time."

Back in his own quarters, the tutor made such changes as were needed, and finally stood forth in a comely suit of brown, with silver-buckled shoes, stock and cravat of fine cambric, and a tie-wig. Midway in his toilet he stopped to light two candles. These showed, in the smallest of mirrors, set of wig and cravat, and between the two a thoughtful, cheerful, rather handsome countenance.

He had left the door ajar so that he might hear, if he presently returned, his eldest pupil. But he heard only James go clattering down the passage and the stair. Strickland,

blowing out his candles, left his room to the prolonged June twilight and the climbing moon.

The stairway down, from landing to landing, lay in shadow, but as he approached the hall he caught the firelight. The laird had a London guest who might find a chill in June nights so near the north. The blazing wood showed forth the chief Glenfernie gathering-place, wide and deep, with a great chimneypiece and walls of black oak, and hung thereon some old pieces of armor and old weapons. There was a table spread for supper, and a servant went about with a long candle-lighter, lighting candles. A collie and a hound lay upon the hearth. Between them stood Mrs. Jardine, a tall, fair woman of forty and more, with gray eyes, strong nose, and humorous mouth.

"Light them all, Davie! It'll be dark then by London houses."

Davie showed an old servant's familiarity. "He wasna sae grand when he left auld Scotland thirty years since! I'm thinking he might remember when he had nae candles ava in his auld hoose."

"Well, he'll have candles enough in his new hall."

Davie lit the last candle. "They say that he is sinfu' rich!"

"Rich enough to buy Black Hill," said Mrs. Jardine, and turned to the fire. The tutor joined her there. He had for her liking and admiration, and she for him almost a motherly affection. Now she smiled as he came up.

"Did you have good fishing?"

"Only fair."

"Mr. Jardine and Mr. Touris have just returned. They rode to Black Hill. Have you seen Alexander?"

"No. I asked Jamie—"

"So did I. But he could not tell."

"He may have gone over the moor and been belated. Bran is with him."

"Yes.... He's a solitary one, with a thousand in himself!"

"You're the second woman," remarked Strickland, "who's said that to-day," and told her of Mother Binning.

Mrs. Jardine pushed back a fallen ember with the toe of her shoe. "I don't know whether she sees or only thinks she sees. Some do the tane and some do the tither. Here's the laird."

Two men entered together—a large man and a small man. The first, great of height and girth, was plainly dressed; the last, seeming slighter by contrast than he actually was, wore fine cloth, silken hose, gold buckles to his shoes, and a full wig. The first had a massive, somewhat saturnine countenance, the last a shrewd, narrow one. The first had a long stride and a wide reach from thumb to little finger, the last a short step and a cupped hand. William Jardine, laird of Glenfernie, led the way to the fire.

"The ford was swollen. Mr. Touris got a little wet and chilled."

"Ah, the fire is good!" said Mr. Touris. "They do not burn wood like this in London!"

"You will burn it at Black Hill. I hope that you like it better and better?"

"It has possibilities, ma'am. Undoubtedly," said Mr. Touris, the Scots adventurer for fortune, set up as merchant-trader in London, making his fortune by "interloping" voyages to India, but now shareholder and part and lot of the East India

Company—"undoubtedly the place has possibilities." He warmed his hands. "Well, it would taste good to come back to Scotland—!" His words might have been finished out, "and laird it, rich and influential, where once I went forth, cadet of a good family, but poorer than a church mouse!"

Mrs. Jardine made a murmur of hope that he *would* come back to Scotland. But the laird looked with a kind of large gloom at the reflection of fire and candle in battered breastplate and morion and crossed pikes.

Supper was brought in by two maids, Eppie and Phemie, and with them came old Lauchlinson, the butler. Mrs. Jardine placed herself behind the silver urn, and Mr. Touris was given the seat nearest the fire. The boy James appeared, and with him the daughter of the house, Alice, a girl of twelve, bonny and merry.

"Where is Alexander?" asked the laird.

Strickland answered. "He is not in yet, sir. I fancy that he walked to the far moor. Bran is with him."

"He's a wanderer!" said the laird. "But he ought to keep hours."

"That's a fine youth!" quoth Mr. Touris, drinking tea. "I marked him yesterday, casting the bar. Very strong—a powerful frame like yours, Glenfernie! When is he going to college?"

"This coming year. I have kept him by me late," said the laird, broodingly. "I like my bairns at home."

"Aye, but the young will not stay as they used to! They will be voyaging," said the guest. "They build outlandish craft and forthfare, no matter what you cry to them!" His voice had a mordant note. "I know. I've got one myself—a

nephew, not a son. But I am his guardian and he's in my house, and it is the same. If I buy Black Hill, Glenfernie, I hope that your son and my nephew may be friends. They're about of an age."

The listening Jamie spoke from beyond Strickland. "What's your nephew's name, sir?"

"Ian. Ian Rullock. His father's mother was a Highland lady, near kinswoman to Gordon of Huntley." Mr. Touris was again speaking to his host. "As a laddie, before his father's death (his mother, my sister, died at his birth), he was much with those troublous northern kin. His father took him, too, in England, here and there among the Tory crowd. But I've had him since he was twelve and am carrying him on in the straight Whig path."

"And in the true Presbyterian religion?"

"Why, as to that," said Mr. Touris, "his father was of the Church Episcopal in Scotland. I trust that we are all Christians, Glenfernie!"

The laird made a dissenting sound. "I kenned," he said, and his voice held a grating gibe, "that you had left the Kirk."

Mr. Archibald Touris sipped his tea. "I did not leave it so far, Glenfernie, that I cannot return! In England, for business reasons, I found it wiser to live as lived the most that I served. Naaman was permitted to bow himself in the house of Rimmon."

"You are not Naaman," answered the laird. "Moreover, I hold that Naaman sinned!"

Mrs. Jardine would make a diversion. "Mr. Jardine, will you have sugar to your tea? Mr. Strickland says the great pine is

blown down, this side the glen. The *Mercury* brings us news of the great world, Mr. Touris, but I dare say you can give us more?"

"The chief news, ma'am, is that we want war with Spain and Walpole won't give it to us. But we'll have it—British trade must have it or lower her colors to the Dons! France, too—"

Supper went on, with abundant and good food and drink. The laird sat silent. Strickland gave Mrs. Jardine yeoman aid. Jamie and Alice now listened to the elders, now in an undertone discoursed their own affairs. Mr. Touris talked, large trader talk, sprinkled with terms of commerce and Indian policy. Supper over, all rose. The table was cleared, wine and glasses brought and set upon it, between the candles. The young folk vanished. Bright as was the night, the air carried an edge. Mr. Touris, standing by the fire, warmed himself and took snuff. Strickland, who had left the hall, returned and placed her embroidery frame for Mrs. Jardine.

"Is Alexander in yet?"

"Not yet."

She began to work in cross-stitch upon a wreath of tulips and roses. The tutor took his book and withdrew to the table and the candles thereon. The laird came and dropped his great form upon the settle. He held silence a few moments, then began to speak.

"I am fifty years old. I was a bairn just talking and toddling about the year the Stewart fled and King William came to England. My father had Campbell blood in him and was a friend of Argyle's. The estate of Glenfernie was not to

him then, but his uncle held it and had an heir of his body. My father was poor save in stanchness to the liberties of Kirk and kingdom. My mother was a minister's daughter, and she and her father and mother were among the persecuted for the sake of the true Reformed and Covenanted Church of Scotland. My mother had a burn in her cheek. It was put there, when she was a young lass, by order of Grierson of Lagg. She was set among those to be sold into the plantations in America. A kinsman who had power lifted her from that bog, but much she suffered before she was freed.... When I was little and sat upon her knee I would put my forefinger in that mark. 'It's a seal, laddie,' she would say. 'Sealed to Christ and His true Kirk!' But when I was bigger I only wanted to meet Grierson of Lagg, and grieved that he was dead and gone and that Satan, not I, had the handling of him. My grandfather and mother.... My grandfather was among the outed ministers in Galloway. Thrust from his church and his parish, he preached upon the moors—yea, to juniper and whin-bush and the whaups that flew and nested! Then the persecuted men, women and bairns, gathered there, and he preached to them. Aye, and he was at Bothwell Bridge. Claverhouse's men took him, and he lay for some months in the Edinburgh tolbooth, and then by Council and justiciary was condemned to be hanged. And so he was hanged at the cross of Edinburgh. And what he said before he died was '*With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you*' ... My grandmother, for hearing preaching in the fields and for sheltering the distressed for the Covenant's sake, was sent with other godly women to the Bass Rock. There in cold and

heat, in hunger and sickness, she bided for two years. When at last they let her body forth her mind was found to be broken.... My father and mother married and lived, until Glenfernie came to him, at Windygarth. I was born at Windygarth. My grandmother lived with us. I was twelve years old before she went from earth. It was all her pleasure to be forth from the house—any house, for she called them all prisons. So I was sent to ramble with her. Out of doors, with the harmless things of earth, she was wise enough—and good company. The old of this countryside remember us, going here and there.... I used to think, 'If I had been living then, I would not have let those things happen!' And I dreamed of taking coin, and of dropping the same coin into the hands that gave.... And so, the other having served your turn, Touris, you will change back to the true Kirk?"

Mr. Touris handled his snuff-box, considered the chasing upon the gold lid. "Those were sore happenings, Glenfernie, but they're past! I make no wonder that, being you, you feel as you do. But the world's in a mood, if I may say it, not to take so hardly religious differences. I trust that I am as religious as another—but my family was always moderate there. In matters political the world's as hot as ever—but there, too, it is my instinct to ca' canny. But if you talk of trade"—he tapped his snuff-box—"I will match you, Glenfernie! If there's wrong, pay it back! Hold to your principles! But do it cannily. Smile when there's smart, and get your own again by being supple. In the end you'll demand—and get—a higher interest. Prosper at your enemy's cost, and take repayment for your hurt sugared and spiced!"

"I'll not do it so!" said Glenfernie. "But I would take my stand at the crag's edge and cry to Grierson of Lagg, 'You or I go down!'"

Mr. Touris brushed the snuff from his ruffles. "It's a great century! We're growing enlightened."

With a movement of her fingers Mrs. Jardine helped to roll from her lap a ball of rosy wool. "Mr. Jardine, will you give me that? Had you heard that Abercrombie's cows were lifted?"

"Aye, I heard. What is it, Holdfast?"

Both dogs had raised their heads.

"Bran is outside," said Strickland.

As he spoke the door opened and there came in a youth of seventeen, tall and well-built, with clothing that testified to an encounter alike with brier and bog. The hound Bran followed him. He blinked at the lights and the fire, then with a gesture of deprecation crossed the hall to the stairway. His mother spoke after him.

"Davie will set you something to eat."

He answered, "I do not want anything," then, five steps up, paused and turned his head. "I stopped at White Farm, and they gave me supper." He was gone, running up the stairs, and Bran with him.

The laird of Glenfernie shaded his eyes and looked at the fire. Mrs. Jardine, working upon the gold streak in a tulip, held her needle suspended and sat for a moment with unseeing gaze, then resumed the bright wreath. The tutor began to think again of Mother Binning, and, following this, of the stepping-stones at White Farm, and Elspeth and Gilian

Barrow balanced above the stream of gold. Mr. Touris put up his snuff-box.

"That's a fine youth! I should say that he took after you, Glenfernie. But it's hard to tell whom the young take after!"

CHAPTER III

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The school-room at Glenfernie gave upon the hill's steepest, most craglike face. A door opened on a hand's-breadth of level turf across from which rose the broken and ruined wall that once had surrounded the keep. Ivy overgrew this; below a wide and ragged breach a pine had set its roots in the hillside. Its top rose bushy above the stones. Beyond the opening, one saw from the school-room, as through a window, field and stream and moor, hill and dale. The school-room had been some old storehouse or office. It was stone walled and floored, with three small windows and a fireplace. Now it contained a long table with a bench and three or four chairs, a desk and shelves for books. One door opened upon the little green and the wall; a second gave access to a courtyard and the rear of the new house.

Here on a sunny, still August forenoon Strickland and the three Jardines went through the educational routine. The ages of the pupils were not sufficiently near together to allow of a massed instruction. The three made three classes. Jamie and Alice worked in the school-room, under Strickland's eye. But Alexander had or took a wider freedom. It was his wont to prepare his task much where he pleased, coming to the room for recitation or for colloquy upon this or that aspect of knowledge and the attainment thereof. The irregularity mattered the less as the eldest Jardine combined with a passion for personal liberty and out of doors a passion for knowledge. Moreover, he liked and

trusted Strickland. He would go far, but not far enough to strain the tutor's patience. His father and mother and all about Glenfernie knew his way and in a measure acquiesced. He had managed to obtain for himself range. Young as he was, his indrawing, outpushing force was considerable, and was on the way, Strickland thought, to increase in power. The tutor had for this pupil a mixed feeling. The one constant in it was interest. He was to him like a deep lake, clear enough to see that there was something at the bottom that cast conflicting lights and hints of shape. It might be a lump of gold, or a coil of roots which would send up a water-lily, or it might be something different. He had a feeling that the depths themselves hardly knew. Or there might be two things of two natures down there in the lake....

Strickland set Alice to translating a French fable, and Jamie to reconsidering a neglected page of ancient history. Looking through the west window, he saw that Alexander had taken his geometry out through the great rent in the wall. Book and student perched beneath the pine-tree, in a crook made by rock and brown root, overhanging the autumn world. Strickland at his own desk dipped quill into ink-well and continued a letter to a friend in England. The minutes went by. From the courtyard came a subdued, cheerful household clack and murmur, voices of men and maids, with once Mrs. Jardine's genial, vigorous tones, and once the laird's deep bell note, calling to his dogs. On the western side fell only the sough of the breeze in the pine.

Jamie ceased the clocklike motion of his body to and fro over the difficult lesson. "I never understood just what were

the Erinnys, sir?"

"The Erinnys?" Strickland laid down the pen and turned in his chair. "I'll have to think a moment, to get it straight for you, Jamie.... The Erinnys are the Fates as avengers. They are the vengeance-demanding part of ourselves objectified, supernaturalized, and named. Of old, where injury was done, the Erinnys were at hand to pull the roof down upon the head of the injurer. Their office was to provide unerringly sword for sword, bitter cup for bitter cup. They never forgot, they always avenged, though sometimes they took years to do it. They esteemed themselves, and were esteemed, essential to the moral order. They are the dark and bitter extreme of justice, given power by the imagination.... Do you think that you know the chapter now?"

Jamie achieved his recitation, and then was set to mathematics. The tutor's quill drove on across the page. He looked up.

"Mr. Touris has come to Black Hill?"

Jamie and Alice worshiped interruptions.

"He has twenty carriers bringing fine things all the time —"

"Mother is going to take me when she goes to see Mrs. Alison, his sister—"

"He is going to spend money and make friends—"

"Mother says Mrs. Alison was most bonny when she was young, but England may have spoiled her—"

"The minister told the laird that Mr. Touris put fifty pounds in the plate—"

Strickland held up his hand, and the scholars, sighing, returned to work. *Buzz, buzz!* went the bees outside the

window. The sun climbed high. Alexander shut his geometry and came through the break in the wall and across the span of green to the school-room.

"That's done, Mr. Strickland."

Strickland looked at the paper that his eldest pupil put before him. "Yes, that is correct. Do you want, this morning, to take up the reading?"

"I had as well, I suppose."

"If you go to Edinburgh—if you do as your father wishes and apply yourself to the law—you will need to read well and to speak well. You do not do badly, but not well enough. So, let's begin!" He put out his hand and drew from the bookshelf a volume bearing the title, *The Treasury of Orators*. "Try what you please."

Alexander took the book and moved to the unoccupied window. Here he half sat, half stood, the morning light flowing in upon him. He opened the volume and read, with a questioning inflection, the title beneath his eyes, "'The Cranes of Ibycus'?"

"Yes," assented Strickland. "That is a short, graphic thing."

Alexander read:

"Ibycus, who sang of love, material and divine, in Rhegium and in Samos, would wander forth in the world and make his lyre sound now by the sea and now in the mountain. Wheresoever he went he was clad in the favor of all who loved song. He became a wandering minstrel-poet. The shepherd loved him, and the fisher; the trader and the mechanic sighed when he sang; the soldier and the king felt him at their hearts. The old returned in their thoughts to

youth, young men and maidens trembled in heavenly sound and light. You would think that all the world loved Ibycus.

"Corinth, the jeweled city, planned her chariot-races and her festival of song. The strong, the star-eyed young men, traveled to Corinth from mainland and from island, and those inner athletes and starry ones, the poets, traveled. Great feasting was to be in Corinth, and contests of strength and flights of song, and in the theater, representation of gods and men. Ibycus, the wandering poet, would go to Corinth, there perhaps to receive a crown.

"Ibycus, loved of all who love song, traveled alone, but not alone. Yet shepherds, or women with their pitchers at the spring, saw but a poet with a staff and a lyre. Now he was found upon the highroad, and now the country paths drew him, and the solemn woods where men most easily find God. And so he approached Corinth.

"The day was calm and bright, with a lofty, blue, and stainless sky. The heart of Ibycus grew warm, and there seemed a brighter light within the light cast by the sun. Flower and plant and tree and all living things seemed to him to be glistening and singing, and to have for him, as he for them, a loving friendship. And, looking up to the sky, he saw, drawn out stringwise, a flight of cranes, addressed to Egypt. And between his heart and them ran, like a rippling path that the sun sends across the sea, a stream of good-will and understanding. They seemed a part of himself, winged in the blue heaven, and aware of the part of him that trod earth, that was entering the grave and shadowy wood that neighbored Corinth.

"The cranes vanished from overhead, the sky arched without stain. Ibycus, the sacred poet, with his staff and his lyre, went on into the wood. Now the light faded and there was green gloom, like the depths of Father Sea.

"Now robbers lay masked in the wood—"

Jamie and Alice sat very still, listening. Strickland kept his eyes on the reading youth.

"Now robbers lay masked in the wood—violent men and treacherous, watching for the unwary, to take from them goods and, if they resisted, life. In a dark place they lay in wait, and from thence they sprang upon Ibycus. 'What hast thou? Part it from thyself and leave it with us!'

"Ibycus, who could sing of the wars of the Greeks and the Trojans no less well than of the joys of young love, made stand, held close to him his lyre, but raised on high his staff of oak. Then from behind one struck him with a keen knife, and he sank, and lay in his blood. The place was the edge of a glade, where the trees thinned away and the sky might be seen overhead. And now, across the blue heaven, came a second line of the south-ward-going cranes. They flew low, they flapped their wings, and the wood heard their crying. Then Ibycus the poet raised his arms to his brothers the birds. 'Ye cranes, flying between earth and heaven, avenge shed blood, as is right!'

"Hoarse screamed the cranes flying overhead. Ibycus the poet closed his eyes, pressed his lips to Mother Earth, and died. The cranes screamed again, circling the wood, then in a long line sailed southward through the blue air until they might neither be heard nor seen. The robbers stared after

them. They laughed, but without mirth. Then, stooping to the body of Ibycus, they would have rifled it when, hearing a sudden sound of men's voices entering the wood, they took violent fright and fled."

Strickland looked still at the reader. Alexander had straightened himself. He was speaking rather than reading. His voice had intensities and shadows. His brows had drawn together, his eyes glowed, and he stood with nostrils somewhat distended. The emotion that he plainly showed seemed to gather about the injury done and the appeal of Ibycus. The earlier Ibycus had not seemed greatly to interest him. Strickland was used to stormy youth, to its passional moments, sudden glows, burnings, sympathies, defiances, lurid shows of effects with the causes largely unapparent. It was his trade to know youth, and he had a psychologist's interest. He said now to himself, "There is something in his character that connects itself with, that responds to, the idea of vengeance." There came into his memory the laird's talk, the evening of Mr. Touris's visit, in June. Glenfernie, who would have wrestled with Grierson of Lagg at the edge of the pit; Glenfernie's mother and father, who might have had much the same feeling; their forebears beyond them with like sensations toward the Griersons of their day.... The long line of them—the long line of mankind—injured and injurers....

"Travelers through the wood, whose voices the robbers heard, found Ibycus the poet lying upon the ground, ravished of life. It chanced that he had been known of them, known and loved. Great mourning arose, and vain search for

them who had done this wrong. But those strong, wicked ones were gone, fled from their haunts, fled from the wood afar to Corinth, for the god Pan had thrown against them a pine cone. So the travelers took the body of Ibycus and bore it with them to Corinth.

"A poet had been slain upon the threshold of the house of song. Sacred blood had spattered the white robes of a queen dressed for jubilee. Evil unreturned to its doers must darken the sunshine of the famous days. Corinth uttered a cry of lamentation and wrath. 'Where are the ill-doers, the spillers of blood, that we may spill their blood and avenge Ibycus, showing the gods that we are their helpers?' But those robbers and murderers might not be found. And the body of Ibycus was consumed upon a funeral pyre.

"The festival hours went by in Corinth. And now began to fill the amphitheater where might find room a host for number like the acorns of Dodona. The throng was huge, the sound that it made like the shock of ocean. Around, tier above tier, swept the rows, and for roof there was the blue and sunny air. Then the voice of the sea hushed, for now entered the many-numbered chorus. Slow-circling, it sang of mighty Fate: '*For every word shall have its echo, and every deed shall see its face. The word shall say, "Is it my echo?" and the deed shall say, "Is it my face?"*'—

"The chorus passes, singing. The voices die, there falls a silence, sent as it were from inner space. The open sky is above the amphitheater. And now there comes, from north to south, sailing that sea above, high, but not so high that their shape is indistinguishable, a long flight of cranes. Heads move, eyes are raised, but none know why that

interest is so keen, so still. Then from out the throng rises, struck with forgetfulness of gathered Corinth and of its own reasons for being dumb as is the stone, a man's voice, and the fear that Pan gives ran yet around in that voice. 'See, brother, see! The cranes of Ibycus!'

"'Ibycus!' The crowd about those men pressed in upon them. 'What do you know of Ibycus?' And great Pan drove them to show in their faces what they knew. So Corinth took —"

Alexander Jardine shut the book and, leaving the window, dropped it upon the table. His hand shook, his face was convulsed. "I've read as far as needs be. Those things strike me like hammers!" With suddenness he turned and was gone.

Strickland was aware that he might not return that day to the school-room, perhaps not to the house. He went out of the west door and across the grassy space to the gap in the wall, through which he disappeared. Beyond was the rough descent to wood and stream.

Jamie spoke: "He's a queer body! He says he thinks that he lived a long time ago, and then a shorter time ago, and then now. He says that some days he sees it all come up in a kind of dark desert."

Alice put in her word, "Mother says he's many in one, and that the many and one don't yet recognize each other."

"Your mother is a wise woman," said the tutor. "Let me see how the work goes."

The pine-tree, outside the wall, overhung a rude natural stairway of stony ledge and outcropping root with patches of moss and heath. Down this went Alexander into a cool