

a thick snow shower, that had just begun to descend, circling round and round in the eddy.

The place was occupied by three men, who were sitting beside the fire on blocks of stone which had been rolled from the beach. Two of them were young, and comparatively commonplace-looking persons; the third was a gray-headed old man, apparently of great muscular strength, though long past his prime, and of a peculiarly sinister cast of countenance. A keg of spirits, which was placed end up in front of them, served as a table; there were little drinking measures of tin on it; and the mask-like, stolid expressions of the two younger men showed that they had been indulging freely. The elder was apparently sober. They all started to their feet on the entrance of the fisherman, and one of the younger, laying hold of the little cask, pitched it hurriedly into a dark corner of the cave.

“His peace be here!” was the simple greeting of the elder fisherman as he came forward. “Eachen Macinla,” he continued, addressing the old man, “we have not met for years before,—not, I believe, since the death o’ my puir sister, when we parted such ill friends; but we are short-lived creatures oursels, Eachen; surely our anger should be short-lived too; and I have come to crave from you a seat by your fire.”

“William Beth,” replied Eachen, “it was no wish of mine we should ever meet; but to a seat by the fire you are welcome.”

Old Macinla and his sons resumed their seats; the two fishermen took their places fronting them; and for some time neither party exchanged a word.

A fire, composed mostly of fragments of wreck and drift-wood, threw up its broad, cheerful flame towards the roof; but so spacious was the cavern, that, except where here