

CHAPTER IV

KARI

Thus began my life in London in the house of my uncle, John Grimmer, who was called the Goldsmith. In truth, however, he was more than this, since not only did he fashion and trade in costly things; he lent out moneys to interest upon security to great people who needed it, and even to the king Richard and his Court. Also he owned ships and did much commerce with Holland, France, yes, and with Spain and Italy. Indeed, although he appeared so humble, his wealth was very large and always increased, like a snowball rolling down a hill; moreover, he owned much land, especially in the neighbourhood of London where it was likely to grow in value.

"Money melts," he would say, "furs corrupt with moth and time, and thieves break in and steal. But land--if the title be good--remains. Therefore buy land, which none can carry away, near to a market or a growing town if may be, and hire it out to fools to farm, or sell it to other fools who wish to build great houses and spend their goods in feeding a multitude of idle servants. Houses eat, Hubert, and the larger they are, the more they eat."

No word did he say to me as to my dwelling on with him, yet there I remained, by common consent, as it were. Indeed on the morrow of my coming a tailor appeared to measure me for such garments as he thought

I should wear, by his command, I suppose, as I was never asked for payment, and he bade me furnish my chamber to my own liking, also another room at the back of the house that was much larger than it seemed, which he told me was to be mine to work in, though at what I was to work he did not say.

For a day or two I remained idle, staring at the sights of London and only meeting my uncle at meals which sometimes we ate alone and sometimes in the company of sea-captains and learned clerks or of other merchants, all of whom treated him with great deference and as I soon guessed, were in truth his servants. At night, however, we were always alone and then he would pour out his wisdom on me while I listened, saying little. On the sixth day, growing weary of this idleness, I made bold to ask him if there was aught that I could do.

"Aye, plenty if you have a mind to work," he answered. "Sit down now, and take pen and paper and write what I shall tell you."

Then he dictated a short letter to me as to shipping wine from Spain, and when it was sanded, read it carefully.

"You have it right," he said, seeming pleased, "and your script is clear if boyish. They taught you none so ill yonder at Hastings where I thought you had only learned to handle ropes and arrows. Work? Yes, there is plenty of it of the more private sort which I do not give to this scribe or to that who might betray my secrets. For know," he went

on in a stern voice, "there is one thing which I never pardon, and it is betrayal. Remember that, nephew Hubert, even in the arms of your loves, if you should be fool enough to seek them, or in your cups."

So he talked on, and while he did so went to an iron chest that he unlocked, and thence drew out a parchment roll which he bade me take to my workroom and copy there. I did so, and found that it was an inventory of his goods and estates, and oh! before I had done I wished that there were fewer of them. All the long day I laboured, only stopping for a bite at noon, till my head swam and my fingers ached. Yet as I did so I felt proud, for I guessed that my uncle had set me this task for two reasons: first, to show his trust in me, and, secondly, to acquaint me with the state of his possessions, but as it were in the way of business. By nightfall I had finished and checked the copy which with the original I hid in my robe when the green-robed waiting maid summoned me to eat.

At our meal my uncle asked me what I had seen that day and I replied--naught but figures and crabbed writing--and handed him the parchments which he compared item by item.

"I am pleased with you," he said at last, "for heresofar I find but a single error and that is my fault, not yours; also you have done two days' work in one. Still, it is not fit that you who are accustomed to the open air should bend continually over deeds and inventories. Therefore, to-morrow I shall have another task for you, for like

yourself your horse needs exercise."

And so he had, for with two stout servants riding with me and guiding me, he sent me out of London to view a fair estate of his upon the borders of the Thames and to visit his tenants there and make report of their husbandry, also of certain woods where he proposed to fell oak for shipbuilding. This I did, for the servants made me known to the tenants, and got back at night-fall, able to tell him all which he was glad to learn, since it seemed that he had not seen this estate for five long years.

On another day he sent me to visit ships in which goods of his were being laden at the wharf, and on another took me with him to a sale of furs that came from the far north where I was told the snow never melts and there is always ice in the sea.

Also he made me known to merchants with whom he traded, and to his agents who were many, though for the most part secret, together with other goldsmiths who held moneys of his, and in a sense were partners, forming a kind of company so that they could find great sums in sudden need. Lastly, his clerks and dependents were made to understand that if I gave an order it must be obeyed, though this did not happen until I had been with him for some time.

Thus it came about that within a year I knew all the threads of John Grimmer's great business, and within two it drifted more and more into

my hands. The last part of it with which he made me acquainted was that of lending money to those in high places, and even to the State itself, but at length I was taught this also and came to know sundry of these men, who in private were humble borrowers, but if they met us in the street passed us with the nod that the great give to their inferiors. Then my uncle would bow low, keeping his eyes fixed upon the ground and bid me do the same. But when they were out of hearing he would chuckle and say,

"Fish in my net, goldfish in my net! See how they shine who presently must wriggle on the shore. Vanity of vanities! All is vanity, and doubtless Solomon knew such in his day."

Hard I worked, and ever harder, toiling at the mill of all these large affairs and keeping myself in health during such time as I could spare by shooting at the butts with my big bow where I found that none could beat me, or practising sword play in a school of arms that was kept by a master of the craft from Italy. Also on holidays and on Sundays after mass I rode out of London to visit my uncle's estates where sometimes I slept a night, and once or twice sailed to Holland or to Calais with his cargoes.

One day, it was when I had been with him about eighteen months, he said to me suddenly.

"You plough the field, Hubert, and do not tithe the crop, but live upon

the bounty of the husbandman. Henceforward take as much of it as you will. I ask no account."

So I found myself rich, though in truth I spent but little, both because my tastes were simple and it was part of my uncle's policy to make no show which he said would bring envy on us. From this time forward he began to withdraw himself from business, the truth being that age took hold of him and he grew feeble. The highest of the affairs he left to me, only inquiring of them and giving his counsel from time to time. Still, because he must do something, he busied himself in the shop which, as he said, he kept as a trap for the birds, chaffering in ornaments and furs as though his bread depended upon his earning a gold piece, and directing the manufacture of beautiful jewels and cups which he, who was an artist, designed to be made by his skilled and highly paid workmen, some of whom were foreigners.

"We end where we began," he would say. "A smith was I from my childhood and a smith I shall die. What a fate for one of the blood of Thorgrimmer! Yet I am selling you into the same bondage, or so it would seem. But who knows? Who knows? We design, but God decrees."

It is to be noted that when old men cease from the occupation of their lives, often enough within a very little time they also cease from life itself. So it was with my uncle. Day by day he faded till at last at the beginning of the third winter after I came to him he took to his bed where he lay growing ever weaker till at length he died in the hour of

the birth of the new year.

To the last his mind remained clear and strong, and never more so than on the night of his death. That evening after I had eaten I went to his room as usual and found him reading a beautiful manuscript of the book of the Wisdom of Solomon that is called Ecclesiastes, a work which he preferred to all others, since its thoughts were his. "I gathered me also silver and gold and the peculiar treasures of kings," he read aloud, whether to himself or to me I knew not, and went on, "So I was great, and increased more than all that were before me. . . . Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do; and behold all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun."

He closed the book, saying,

"So shall you find, Nephew, you, and every man in the evil days of age when you shall say, 'I have no pleasure in them.' Hubert, I am going to my long home, nor do I grieve. In youth I met with sorrow, for though I have never told you, I was married then and had one son, a bright boy, and oh! I loved him and his mother. Then came the plague and took them both. So having naught left and being by nature one of those who could wean himself from women, which I fear that you are not, Hubert, noting all the misery there is in the world and how those who are called noble whom I hate, grind down the humble and the poor, I turned myself to good works. Half of all my gains I have given and still give to those who

minister to poverty and sickness; you will find a list of them when I am gone should you wish to continue the bounty, as to which I do not desire to bind you in any way. For know, Hubert, that I have left you all that is mine; the gold and the ships with the movables and chattels to be your own, but the lands which are the main wealth, for life and afterwards to be your children's, or if you should die childless, then to go to certain hospitals where the sick are tended."

Now I would have thanked him, but he waved my words aside and went on:

"You will be a very rich man, Hubert, one of the richest in all London; yet set not your heart on wealth, and above all do not ape nobility or strive to climb from the honest class of which you come into the ranks of those idle and dissolute cut-throats and pick-brains who are called the great. Lighten their pockets if you will, but do not seek to wear their silken, scented garments. That is my counsel to you."

He paused a while, picking at the bedclothes as the dying do, and continued,

"You told me that your mother thought you would be a wanderer, and it is strange that now my mind should be as hers was in this matter. For I seem to see you far away amidst war and love and splendour, holding Wave-Flame aloft as did that Thorgrimmer who begat us. Well, go where you are called or as occasion drives, though you have much to keep you at home. I would that you were wed, since marriage is an anchor that few

ships can drag. Yet I am not sure, for how know I whom you should wed, and once that anchor is down no windlass will wind it up and death alone can cut its chain. One word more. Though you are so young and strong remember that as I am, so shall you be. To-day for me, to-morrow for thee, said the wise old man, and thus it ever was and is.

"Hubert, I do not know why we are born to struggle and to suffer and at last be noosed with the rope of Doom. Yet I hope the priests are right and that we live again, though Solomon thought not so; that is, if we live where there is neither sin nor sorrow nor fear of death. If so, be sure that in some new land we shall meet afresh, and there I shall ask account of you of the wealth I entrusted to your keeping. Think of me kindly at times, for I have learned to love you who are of my blood, and while we live on in the hearts of those we love, we are not truly dead. Come hither that I may bless you in your coming in and going out while you still look upon the sun."

So he blessed me in beautiful and tender words, and kissed me on the brow, after which he bade me leave him and send the woman to watch him, because he desired to sleep.

When she looked at him at midnight just as the bells rang in the new year, he was dead.

According to his wish John Grimmer, the last of that name, was buried by the bones of his forgotten wife and child, who had left the world over

fifty years before, in the chancel of that church in the Cheap which was within a stone's throw of his dwelling house. By his desire also the funeral was without pomp, yet many came to it, some of them of high distinction, although the day was cold and snowy. I noted, moreover, the deference they showed to me who by now was known to be his heir, even if they had never spoken with me before, as was the case with certain of them, taking occasion to draw me aside and say that they trusted that their ancient friendship with my honoured uncle would be continued by myself.

Afterwards I looked up their names in his private book and found that one and all of those who had spoken thus owed moneys to his estate.

When the will was sworn and I found myself the master of many legions, or rather of more money, land, and other wealth than I had ever dreamed of, at first I was minded to be rid of trade and to take up my abode upon one or other of my manors, where I might live in plenty for the rest of my days. In the end, however, I did not do so, partly because I shrank from new faces and surroundings, and partly because I was sure that such would not have been my uncle's wish.

Instead I set myself to play and outpass his game. He had died very rich; I determined that I would die five or ten times richer; the richest man in England if I could, not because I cared for money, of which indeed I spent but little upon myself, but because the getting of it and the power that it brought, seemed to me the highest kind

of sport. So bending my mind to the matter I doubled and trebled his enterprises on this line and on that, and won and won again, for even where skill and foresight failed, Fortune stood my friend with a such strange persistence that at length I became superstitious and grew frightened of her gifts. Also I took pains to hide my great riches from the public eye, placing much of them in the names of others whom I could trust, and living most modestly in the same old house, lest I should become a man envied by the hungry and marked for plunder by the spendthrift great.

It was during the summer following my uncle's death that I went to the wharves to see to the unloading of a ship that came in from Venice, bearing many goods from the East on my account, such as ivory, silks, spices, glass, carpets, and I know not what. Having finished my business and seen these precious things warehoused, I handed over the checking of a list of them to another and turned to seek my horse.

Then it was that I saw a number of half-grown lads and other idlers mobbing a man who stood among them wrapped in a robe of what looked like tattered sheepskin, yet was not because the wool on it was of a reddish hue and very long and soft, which robe was thrown over his head hiding his face. At this man--a tall figure who stood there patiently like a martyr at the stake--these lewd fellows were hurling offal, such as

fishes' heads and rotted fruits that lay in plenty on the quay, together with coarse words. "Blackamoor" was one I caught.

Such sights were common enough, but there was a quiet dignity of bearing about this victim which moved me, so that I went to the rabble commanding them to desist. One of them, a rough bumpkin, not knowing who I was, pushed me aside, bidding me mind my own business, whereupon,

being very strong, I dealt him such a blow between the eyes that he went down like a felled ox and lay there half stunned. His companions beginning to threaten me, I blew upon my whistle, whereon two of my serving-men, without whom I seldom rode in those troublous times, ran up from behind a shed, laying hands upon their short swords, on seeing which the idlers took to their heels.

When they had gone I turned to look at the stranger, whose hood had fallen back in the hustling, and saw that he was about thirty years of age, and of a dark and noble countenance, beardless, but with straight black hair, black flashing eyes, and an aquiline nose. Another thing I noted about him was that the lobe of his ear was pierced and in a strange fashion, since the gristle was stretched to such a size that a small apple could have been placed within its ring. For the rest the man's limbs were so thin as though from hunger, that everywhere his bones showed, while his skin was scarred with cuts and scratches, and on his forehead was a large bruise. He seemed bewildered also and very weak, yet I think he understood that I was playing a friend's part to

him, for he bowed towards me in a stately, courteous way and kissed the air thrice, but what this meant at the time I did not know.

I spoke to him in English, but he shook his head gently to show that he did not understand. Then, as though by an afterthought, he touched his breast several times, and after each touch, said in a voice of strange softness, "Kari," which I took it he meant was his name. At any rate, from that time forward I called him Kari.

Now the question was how to deal with him. Leave him there to be mocked or to perish I could not, nor was there anywhere whither I could send him. Therefore it seemed the only thing to do was to take him home with me. So grasping his arm gently I led him off the quay where our horses were and motioned to him to mount one that had been ridden by a servant whom I bade to walk. At the sight of these horses, however, a great terror took hold of him for he trembled all over, a sweat bursting out upon his face, and clung to me as though for protection, making it evident that he had never seen such an animal before. Indeed, nothing would persuade him to go near them, for he shook his head and pointed to his feet, thus showing me that he preferred to walk, however weak his state.

The end of it was that walk he did and I with him from Thames side to the Cheap, since I dared not leave him alone for fear lest he should run away. A strange sight we presented, I leading this dusky wanderer through the streets, and glad was I that night was falling so that few

saw us and those who did thought, I believe, that I was bringing some foreign thief to jail.

At length we reached the Boat House as my dwelling was called, from the image of the old Viking vessel that my uncle had carved and set above the door, and I led him in staring about him with all his eyes, which in his thin face looked large as those of an owl, taking him up the stairs, which seemed to puzzle him much, for at every step he lifted his leg high into the air, to an empty guest room.

Here besides the bed and other furniture was a silver basin with its jug, one of the beautiful things that John Grimmer had brought I know not whence. On these Kari fixed his eyes at once, staring at them in the light of the candles that I had lit, as though they were familiar to him. Indeed, after glancing at me as though for permission, he went to the jug that was kept full of water in case of visitors of whom I had many on business, lifted it, and after pouring a few drops of the water on to the floor as though he made some offering, drank deeply, thus showing that he was parched with thirst.

Then without more ado he filled the basin and throwing off his tattered robe began to wash himself to the waist, round which he wore another garment, of dirty cotton I thought, which looked like a woman's petticoat. Watching him I noted two things, that his poor body was as scratched and scarred as though by old thorn wounds, as were his face and hands, also marked with great bruises as though from kicks and

blows, and secondly that hung about his neck was a wondrous golden image about four inches in length. It was of rude workmanship with knees bent up under the chin, but the face, in which little emeralds were set for eyes, was of a great and solemn dignity.

This image Kari washed before he touched himself with water, bowing to it the while, and when he saw me observing him, looked upwards to the sky and said a word that sounded like Pachacamac, from which I took it to be some idol that the poor man worshipped. Lastly, tied about his middle was a hide bag filled with I knew not what.

Now I found a washball made of oil of olives mixed with beech ash and showed him the use of it. At first he shrank from this strange thing, but coming to understand its office, served himself of it readily, smiling when he saw how well it cleansed his flesh. Further, I fetched a shirt of silk with a pair of easy shoes and a fur-lined robe that had belonged to my uncle, also hosen, and showed him how to put them on, which he learned quickly enough. A comb and a brush that were on the table he seemed to understand already, for with them he dressed his tangled hair.

When all was finished in a fashion, I led him down the stairs again to the eating-room where supper was waiting, and offered him food, at the sight of which his eyes glistened, for clearly he was well-nigh starving. The chair I gave him he would not sit on, whether from respect for me or because it was strange to him, I do not know, but seeing a low

stool of tapestry which my uncle had used to rest his feet, he crouched upon this, and thus ate of whatever I gave him, very delicately though he was so hungry. Then I poured wine from Portugal into a goblet and drank some myself to show him that it was harmless, which, after tasting it, he swallowed to the last drop.

The meal being finished which I thought it was well to shorten lest he should eat too much who was so weak, again he lifted up his eyes as though in gratitude, and as a sign of thankfulness, or so I suppose, knelt before me, took my hand, and pressed it against his forehead, thereby, although I did not know it at the time, vowing himself to my service. Then seeing how weary he was I conducted him back to the chamber and pointed out the bed to him, shutting my eyes to show that he should sleep there. But this he would not do until he had dragged the bedding on to the floor, from which I gathered that his people, whoever they might be, had the habit of sleeping on the ground.

Greatly did I wonder who this man was and from what race he sprang, since never had I seen any human being who resembled him at all. Of one thing only was I certain, namely, that his rank was high, since no noble of the countries that I knew had a bearing so gentle or manners so fine. Of black men I had seen several, who were called negroes, and others of a higher sort called Moors; gross, vulgar fellows for the most part and cut-throats if in an ill-humour, but never a one of them like this Kari.

It was long before my curiosity was satisfied, and even then I did not

gather much. By slow degrees Kari learned English, or something of it, though never enough to talk fluently in that tongue into which he always seemed to translate in his mind from another full of strange figures of thought and speech. When after many months he had mastered sufficient of our language, I asked him to tell me his story which he tried to do. All I could make of it, however, came to this.

He was, he said, the son of a king who ruled over a mighty empire far far away, across thousands of miles of sea towards that part of the sky where the sun sank. He declared that he was the eldest lawful son, born of the King's sister, which seemed dreadful to my ideas though perhaps he meant cousin or relative, but that there were scores of other children of his father, which, if true, showed that this king must be a very loose-living man who resembled in his domesticities the wise Solomon of whom my uncle was so fond.

It appeared, further, according to the tale, that this king, his father, had another son born of a different mother, and that of this son he was fonder than of my guest, Kari. His name was Urco, and he was jealous of and hated Kari the lawful heir. Moreover, as is common, a woman came into the business, since Kari had a wife, the loveliest lady in all the land, though as I understood, not of the same tribe or blood as himself, and with this wife of his Urco fell in love. So greatly did he desire her, although he had plenty of wives of his own, that being the general of the King's troops, he sent Kari, with the consent of their father, to command an army that was to fight a distant savage nation, hoping

that he would be killed, much as David did in the matter of Uriah and Bathsheba, of whom the Bible tells the story. But as it happened, instead of being killed like Uriah, Kari conquered the distant nation, and after two years returned to the King's court, where he found that his brother Urco had led astray his wife whom he had taken into his household. Being very angry, Kari recovered his wife by command of the King, and put her to death because of her faithlessness.

Thereon the King, his father, a stern man, ordered him into banishment because he had broken the laws of the land, which did not permit of private vengeance over a matter of a woman who was not even of the royal blood, however fair she might be. Before he went, however, Urco, who was mad at the loss of his love, caused some kind of poison to be given to Kari, which although it does not kill, for he dared not kill him because of his station, deprives him who takes it of his reason, sometimes for ever and sometimes for a year or more. After this, said Kari, he remembered little or nothing, save long travellings in boats and through forests, and then again upon a raft or boat on which he was driven alone, for many, many days, drinking a jar of water which he had with him, and eating some dried flesh and with it a marvellous drug of his people, some of which remained to him in the leathern bag that has power to keep the life in a man for weeks, even if he is labouring hard.

At last, he declared, he was picked up by a great ship such as he had never seen before, though of this ship he recalled little. Indeed he remembered nothing more until he found himself upon the quay where I

discovered him, and of a sudden his mind seemed to return but he said he believed that he had come ashore in a boat in which were fishermen, having been thrown into it by the people on the ship which went on elsewhere, and that he had walked up the shores of a river. This story the bruises on his forehead and body seemed to bear out, but it was far from clear, and by the time I learned it months afterwards of course no traces of the fishermen or their boat could be found. I asked him the name of the country from which he came. He answered that it was called Tavantinsuyu. He added that it was a wonderful country in which were cities and churches and great snow-clad mountains and fertile valleys and high plains and hot forests through which ran wide rivers.

From all the learned men whom I could meet, especially those who had travelled far, I made inquiries concerning this country called Tavantinsuyu, but none of them had so much as heard its name. Indeed, they declared that my brown man must have come from Africa, and that his mind being disordered, he had invented this wondrous land which he said lay far away to the west where the sun sank.

So there I must leave this matter, though for my part I was sure that Kari was not mad, whatever he might have been in the past. A great dreamer he was, it is true, who declared that the poison which his brother had given him had "eaten a hole in his mind" through which he could see and hear things which others could not. Thus he was able to read the secret motives of men and women with wonderful clearness, so much so that sometimes I asked him, laughing, if he could not give me

some of that poison that I might see into the hearts of those with whom I dealt. Of another thing, too, he was always certain, namely, that he would return to his country Tavantinsuyu of which he thought day and night, and that I should accompany him. At this I laughed again and said that if so it would be after we were both dead.

By degrees he learned English quite well and even how to read and write it, teaching me in return much of his own language which he called Quichua, a soft and beautiful tongue, though he said that there were also many others in his country, including one that was secret to the King and his family, which he was not allowed to reveal although he knew it. In time I mastered enough of this Quichua to be able to talk to Kari in brief sentences of it when I did not wish others to understand what I said.

To tell the truth, while I studied thus and listened to his marvellous tales, a great desire arose in me to see this land of his and to open up a trade with it, since there he declared gold was as plentiful as was iron with us. I thought even of making a voyage of discovery to the west, but when I spoke of it to certain sea-captains, even the most venturesome mocked at me and said that they would wait for that journey till they "went west" themselves, by which in their sea parlance that they had learned in the Mediterranean, they meant until they died.[*]

When I told Kari this he smiled in his mysterious way and answered that all the same, I and he should make that journey together and this before we died, a thing that came about, indeed, though, not by my own will or

his.

[*] Of late there has been much dispute as to the origin of the phrase "to go west," or in other words, to die. Surely it arises from the custom of the Ancient Egyptians who, after death, were ferried across the Nile and entombed upon the western shore.--Ed.

For the rest when Kari saw my workmen fashioning gold and setting jewels in it for sale to the nobles and ladies of the Court, he was much interested and asked if he might be allowed to follow this craft, of which he said he understood something, and thus earn the bread he ate. I answered, yes, for I knew that it irked his proud nature to be dependent on me, and gave him gold and silver with a little room having a furnace in it where he could labour. The first thing he made was an object about two inches across, round and with a groove at the back of it, on the front of which he fashioned an image of the sun having a human face and rays of light projecting all about. I asked him what was its purpose, whereon he took the piece and thrust it into the lobe of his ear where the gristle had been stretched in the fashion that I have described, which it fitted exactly. Then he told me that in his country all the nobles wore such ornaments and that those who did so were called "ear-men" to distinguish them from the common people. Also he told me many other things too long to set out, which made me desire more than ever to see this empire with my eyes, for an empire and no less he declared it to be.

Afterwards Kari made many such ornaments which I sold for brooches with a pin set at the back of them. Also he shaped other things, for his skill as a goldsmith was wonderful, such as cups and platters of strange design and rich ornamentation which commanded a great price. But on every one of them, in the centre or some other part of the embossment, appeared this image of the sun. I asked him why. He answered because the sun was his god and his people were Sun-worshippers. I reminded him that he had said that a certain Pachacamac whose image he wore about his neck was his god. To this he replied:

"Yes, Pachacamac is the god above gods, the Creator, the Spirit of the World, but the Sun is his visible house and raiment that all may see and worship," a saying that I thought had truth in it, seeing that all Nature is the raiment of God.

I tried to instruct him in our faith, but although he listened patiently and I think understood, he would not become a Christian, making it very plain to me that he thought that a man should live and die in the religion in which he was born and that from what he saw in London he did not hold that Christians were any better than those who worshipped the sun and the great spirit, Pachacamac. So I abandoned this attempt, although there was danger to him while he remained a heathen. Indeed twice or thrice the priests made inquiry concerning his faith, being curious as to all that had to do with him. However, I silenced them by pretending that I was instructing him as well as I was able and that as

yet he did not know enough English to hearken to their holy expositions. Also when they became persistent I made gifts to the monasteries to which they belonged, or if they were parish priests, then to their curés or churches.

Still I was troubled about this matter, for some of these priests were very fierce and intolerant, and I was sure that in time they would push the business further.

One more thing I noticed about Kari, namely, that he shrank from women and indeed seemed to hate them. The maids who had remained with me since my uncle's death noticed this, by nature as it were, and in revenge would not serve him. The end of it was that, fearing lest they should do him some evil turn with the priests or otherwise, I sent them away and hired men to take their place. This distaste of Kari for women I set down to all that he had suffered at the hands of his false and beautiful wife not wrongly as I think.