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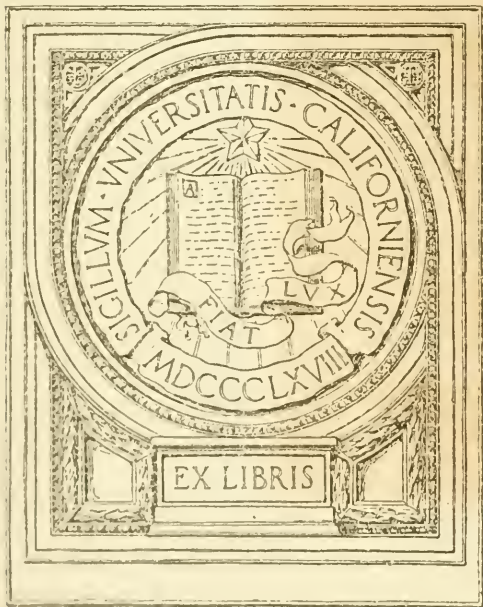
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WILSON'S
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
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WILSON'S
TALES OF THE BORDERS
AND OF SCOTLAND.

HISTORICAL, TRADITIONARY, AND IMAGINATIVE.

REVISED BY

ALEXANDER LEIGHTON.

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ALBION LADY
KING OF THE ISLANDS

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WILSON'S
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE VACANT CHAIR.*

YOU have all heard of the Cheviot mountains. They are a rough, rugged, majestic chain of hills, which a poet might term the Roman wall of nature; crowned with snow, belted with storms, surrounded by pastures and fruitful fields, and still dividing the northern portion of Great Britain from the southern. With their proud summits piercing the clouds, and their dark rocky declivities frowning upon the glens below, they appear symbolical of the wild and untamable spirits of the Borderers who once inhabited their sides. We say, you have all heard of the Cheviots, and know them to be very high hills, like a huge clasp riveting England and Scotland together; but we are not aware that you may have heard of Marchlaw, an old, gray-looking farm-house, substantial as a modern fortress, recently, and, for aught we know to the contrary, still inhabited by Peter Elliot, the proprietor of some five hundred surrounding acres. The boundaries of Peter's farm, indeed, were defined neither by fields, hedges, nor stone walls. A wooden stake here, and a stone there, at considerable distances from each other, were the general landmarks; but neither Peter nor his neighbours considered a few acres

* Our commencement with "The Vacant Chair"—the first written of the Tales of the Borders—is not inconsistent with our principle of selection in this edition, which is to distribute the contributions of the authors, so as to secure variety without any view to an early exhaustion of the best of the Tales.—*Ed.*

worth quarrelling about ; and their sheep frequently visited each other's pastures in a friendly way, harmoniously sharing a family dinner, in the same spirit as their masters made themselves free at each other's tables.

Peter was placed in very unpleasant circumstances, owing to the situation of Marchlaw House, which, unfortunately, was built immediately across the "ideal line," dividing the two kingdoms ; and his misfortune was, that, being born within it, he knew not whether he was an Englishman or a Scotchman. He could trace his ancestral line no farther back than his great-grandfather, who, it appeared from the family Bible, had, together with his grandfather and father, claimed Marchlaw as their birth-place. They, however, were not involved in the same perplexities as their descendant. The parlour was distinctly acknowledged to be in Scotland, and two-thirds of the kitchen were as certainly allowed to be in England : his three ancestors were born in the room over the parlour, and, therefore, were Scotchmen beyond question ; but Peter, unluckily, being brought into the world before the death of his grandfather, his parents occupied a room immediately over the debatable boundary line which crossed the kitchen. The room, though scarcely eight feet square, was evidently situated between the two countries ; but, no one being able to ascertain what portion belonged to each, Peter, after many arguments and altercations upon the subject, was driven to the disagreeable alternative of confessing he knew not what countryman he was. What rendered the confession the more painful was, that it was Peter's highest ambition to be thought a Scotchman. All his arable land lay on the Scotch side ; his mother was collaterally related to the Stuarts ; and few families were more ancient or respectable than the Elliots. Peter's speech, indeed, betrayed him to be a walking partition between the two kingdoms, a living representation of the Union ; for in one word he pronounced

the letter *r* with the broad, masculine sound of the North Briton, and in the next with the liquid *burr* of the Northumbrians.

Peter, or, if you prefer it, Peter Elliot, Esquire of March-law, in the counties of Northumberland and Roxburgh, was, for many years, the best runner, leaper, and wrestler between Wooler and Jedburgh. Whirled from his hand, the ponderous bullet whizzed through the air like a pigeon on the wing; and the best putter on the Borders quailed from competition. As a feather in his grasp, he seized the unwieldy hammer, swept it round and round his head, accompanying with agile limb its evolutions, swiftly as swallows play around a circle, and hurled it from his hands like a shot from a rifle, till antagonists shrunk back, and the spectators burst into a shout. "Well done, Squire! the Squire for ever!" once exclaimed a servile observer of titles. "Squire! wha are ye squiring at?" returned Peter. "Confound ye! where was ye when I was christened Squire? My name's Peter Elliot—your man, or onybody's man, at whatever they like!"

Peter's soul was free, bounding, and buoyant, as the wind that carolled in a zephyr, or shouted in a hurricane, upon his native hills; and his body was thirteen stone of healthy substantial flesh, steeped in the spirits of life. He had been long married, but marriage had wrought no change upon him. They who suppose that wedlock transforms the lark into an owl, offer an insult to the lovely beings who, brightening our darkest hours with the smiles of affection, teach us that that only is unbecoming in the husband which is disgraceful in the man. Nearly twenty years had passed over them; but Janet was still as kind, and, in his eyes, as beautiful as when, bestowing on him her hand, she blushed her vows at the altar; and he was still as happy, as generous, and as free. Nine fair children sat around their domestic hearth, and one, the youngling of

the flock, smiled upon its mother's knee. Peter had never known sorrow; he was blest in his wife, in his children, in his flocks. He had become richer than his fathers. He was beloved by his neighbours, the tillers of his ground, and his herdsmen; yea, no man envied his prosperity. But a blight passed over the harvest of his joys, and gall was rained into the cup of his felicity.

It was Christmas-day, and a more melancholy-looking sun never rose on the 25th of December. One vast, sable cloud, like a universal pall, overspread the heavens. For weeks, the ground had been covered with clear, dazzling snow; and as, throughout the day, the rain continued its unwearied and monotonous drizzle, the earth assumed a character and appearance melancholy and troubled as the heavens. Like a mastiff that has lost its owner, the wind howled dolefully down the glens, and was re-echoed from the caves of the mountains, as the lamentations of a legion of invisible spirits. The frowning, snow-clad precipices were instinct with motion, as avalanche upon avalanche, the larger burying the less, crowded downward in their tremendous journey to the plain. The simple mountain rills had assumed the majesty of rivers; the broader streams were swollen into the wild torrent, and, gushing forth as cataracts, in fury and in foam, enveloped the valleys in an angry flood. But, at Marchlaw, the fire blazed blithely; the kitchen groaned beneath the load of preparations for a joyful feast; and glad faces glided from room to room.

Peter Elliot kept Christmas, not so much because it was Christmas, as in honour of its being the birthday of Thomas, his first-born, who, that day, entered his nineteenth year. With a father's love, his heart yearned for all his children; but Thomas was the pride of his eyes. Cards of apology had not then found their way among our Border hills; and as all knew that, although Peter admitted no spirits within his threshold, nor a drunkard at his table, he was, never

theless, no niggard in his hospitality, his invitations were accepted without ceremony. The guests were assembled; and the kitchen being the only apartment in the building large enough to contain them, the cloth was spread upon a long, clear, oaken table, stretching from England into Scotland. On the English end of the board were placed a ponderous plum-pudding, studded with temptation, and a smoking sirloin; on Scotland, a savoury and well-seasoned haggis, with a sheep's-head and trotters; while the intermediate space was filled with the good things of this life, common to both kingdoms and to the season.

The guests from the north and from the south were arranged promiscuously. Every seat was filled—save one. The chair by Peter's right hand remained unoccupied. He had raised his hands before his eyes, and besought a blessing on what was placed before them, and was preparing to carve for his visitors, when his eyes fell upon the vacant chair. The knife dropped upon the table. Anxiety flashed across his countenance, like an arrow from an unseen hand.

"Janet, where is Thomas?" he inquired; "hae nane o' ye seen him?" and, without waiting an answer, he continued—"How is it possible he can be absent at a time like this? And on such a day, too? Excuse me a minute, friends, till I just step out and see if I can find him. Since ever I kept this day, as mony o' ye ken, he has always been at my right hand, in that very chair; and I cannot think o' beginning our dinner while I see it empty."

"If the filling of the chair be all," said a pert young sheep-farmer, named Johnson, "I will step into it till Master Thomas arrive."

"Ye're not a faither, young man," said Peter, and walked out of the room.

Minute succeeded minute, but Peter returned not. The guests became hungry, peevish, and gloomy, while an excellent dinner continued spoiling before them. Mrs. Elliot,

whose good-nature was the most prominent feature in her character, strove, by every possible effort, to beguile the unpleasant impressions she perceived gathering upon their countenances.

“Peter is just as bad as him,” she remarked, “to hae gane to seek him when he kenned the dinner wouldna keep. And I’m sure ‘Thomas kenned it would be ready at one o’clock to a minute. It’s sae unthinking and unfriendly like to keep folk waiting.” And, endeavouring to smile upon a beautiful black-haired girl of seventeen, who sat by her elbow, she continued in an anxious whisper—“Did ye see naething o’ him, Elizabeth, hinny?”

The maiden blushed deeply; the question evidently gave freedom to a tear, which had, for some time, been an unwilling prisoner in the brightest eyes in the room; and the monosyllable, “No,” that trembled from her lips, was audible only to the ear of the inquirer. In vain Mrs. Elliot despatched one of her children after another, in quest of their father and brother; they came and went, but brought no tidings more cheering than the moaning of the hollow wind. Minutes rolled into hours, yet neither came. She perceived the prouder of her guests preparing to withdraw, and, observing that “Thomas’s absence was so singular and unaccountable, and so unlike either him or his father, she didna ken what apology to make to her friends for such treatment; but it was needless waiting, and begged they would use no ceremony, but just begin.”

No second invitation was necessary. Good humour appeared to be restored, and sirloins, pies, pasties, and moor-fowl began to disappear like the lost son. For a moment, Mrs. Elliot apparently partook in the restoration of cheerfulness; but a low sigh at her elbow again drove the colour from her rosy cheeks. Her eye wandered to the farther end of the table, and rested on the unoccupied seat of her husband, and the vacant chair of her first-born. Her heart

fell heavily within her; all the mother gushed into her bosom; and, rising from the table, "What in the world can be the meaning o' this?" said she, as she hurried, with a troubled countenance, towards the door. Her husband met her on the threshold.

"Where hae ye been, Peter?" said she, eagerly; "hae ye seen naething o' him?"

"Naething! naething!" replied he; "is he no cast up yet?" And, with a melancholy glance, his eyes sought an answer in the deserted chair. His lips quivered, his tongue faltered.

"Fude forgie me!" said he; "and such a day for even an enemy to be out in! I've been up and down every way that I can think on, but not a living creature has seen or heard tell o' him. Ye'll excuse me, neebors," he added, leaving the house; "I must awa again, for I canna rest."

"I ken by mysel', friends," said Adam Bell, a decent-looking Northumbrian, "that a faither's heart is as sensitive as the apple o' his e'e; and I think we would show a want o' natural sympathy and respect for our worthy neighbour, if we didna every one get his foot into the stirrup without loss o' time, and assist him in his search. For, in my rough, country way o' thinking, it must be something particularly out o' the common that would tempt Thomas to be amissing. Indeed, I needna say *tempt*, for there could be n' inclination in the way. And our hills," he concluded, in a lower tone, "are not ower chancy in other respects, besides the breaking up o' the storm."

"Oh!" said Mrs. Elliot, wringing her hands, "I have had the coming o' this about me for days and days. My head was growing dizzy with happiness, but thoughts came stealing upon me like ghosts, and I felt a lonely sougling about my heart, without being able to tell the cause; but the cause is come at last! And my dear Thomas—the very pride and staff o' my life—is lost!—lost to me for ever!"

“I ken, Mrs. Elliot,” replied the Northumbrian, “it is an easy matter to say compose yourself, for them that dinna ken what it is to feel. But, at the same time, in our plain, country way o’ thinking, we are always ready to believe the worst. I’ve often heard my father say, and I’ve as often remarked it myself, that, before anything happens to a body, there is *a something* comes ower them, like a cloud before the face o’ the sun; a sort o’ dumb whispering about the breast from the other world. And though I trust there is naething o’ the kind in your case, yet, as you observe, when I find myself growing dizzy, as it were, with happiness, it makes good a saying o’ my mother’s, poor body! ‘Bairns, bairns,’ she used to say, ‘there is ower muckle singing in your heads to-night; we will have a shower before bedtime.’ And I never, in my born days, saw it fail.”

At any other period, Mr. Bell’s dissertation on presentiments would have been found a fitting text on which to hang all the dreams, wraiths, warnings, and marvellous circumstances, that had been handed down to the company from the days of their grandfathers; but, in the present instance, they were too much occupied in consultation regarding the different routes to be taken in their search.

Twelve horsemen, and some half-dozen pedestrians, were seen hurrying in divers directions from Marchlaw, as the last faint lights of a melancholy day were yielding to the heavy darkness which appeared pressing in solid masses down the sides of the mountains. The wives and daughters of the party were alone left with the disconsolate mother, who alternately pressed her weeping children to her heart, and told them to weep not, for their brother would soon return; while the tears stole down her own cheeks, and the infant in her arms wept because its mother wept. Her friends strove with each other to inspire hope,

and poured upon her ear their mingled and loquacious consolation. But one remained silent. The daughter of Adam Bell, who sat by Mrs. Elliot's elbow at table, had shrunk into an obscure corner of the room. Before her face she held a handkerchief wet with tears. Her bosom throbbed convulsively; and, as occasionally her broken sighs burst from their prison-house, a significant whisper passed among the younger part of the company.

Mrs. Elliot approached her, and taking her hand tenderly within both of hers—"O hinny! hinny!" said she, "yer sighs gae through my heart like a knife! An' what can I do to comfort ye? Come, Elizabeth, my bonny love, let us hope for the best. Ye see before ye a sorrowin' mother!—a mother that fondly hoped to see you an'—I canna say it!—an' am ill qualified to gie comfort, when my own heart is like a furnace! But, oh! let us try and remember the blessed portion, 'Whom the LORD loveth HE chasteneth,' an' inwardly pray for strength to say, 'His will be done!'"

Time stole on towards midnight, and one by one the unsuccessful party returned. As foot after foot approached, every breath was held to listen. "No, no, no!" cried the mother again and again, with increasing anguish, "it's no the foot o' my ain bairn;" while her keen gaze still remained riveted upon the door, and was not withdrawn, nor the hope of despair relinquished, till the individual entered, and, with a silent and ominous shake of his head, betokened his fruitless efforts. The clock had struck twelve; all were returned save the father. The wind howled more wildly; the rain poured upon the windows in ceaseless torrents; and the roaring of the mountain rivers gave a character of deeper ghostliness to their sepulchral silence; for they sat, each wrapt in forebodings, listening to the storm; and no sounds were heard, save the groans of the mother, the weeping of her children,

and the bitter and broken sobs of the bereaved maiden, who leaned her head upon her father's bosom, refusing to be comforted.

At length the barking of the farm-dog announced footsteps at a distance. Every ear was raised to listen, every eye turned to the door; but, before the tread was yet audible to the listeners—"Oh! it is only Peter's foot!" said the miserable mother, and, weeping, rose to meet him.

"Janet, Janet!" he exclaimed, as he entered, and threw his arms around her neck, "what's this come upon us at last?"

He cast an inquisitive glance around his dwelling, and a convulsive shiver passed over his manly frame, as his eye again fell on the vacant chair, which no one had ventured to occupy. Hour succeeded hour, but the company separated not; and low, sorrowful whispers mingled with the lamentations of the parents.

"Neighbours," said Adam Bell, "the morn is a new day, and we will wait to see what it may bring forth; but, in the meantime, let us read a portion o' the Divine word, an' kneel together in prayer, that, whether or not the day-dawn cause light to shine upon this singular bereavement, the Sun o' Righteousness may arise wi' healing on his wings, upon the hearts o' this afflicted family, an' upon the hearts o' all present."

"Amen!" responded Peter, wringing his hands; and his friend, taking down the Ha' Bible, read the chapter wherein it is written—"It is better to be in the house of mourning than in the house of feasting;" and again the portion which sayeth—"It is well for me that I have been afflicted, for before I was afflicted I went astray."

The morning came, but brought no tidings of the lost son. After a solemn farewell, all the visitants, save Adam Bell and his daughter, returned every one to their own house; and the disconsolate father, with his servants, again

renewed their search among the hills and surrounding villages.

Days, weeks, months, and years rolled on. Time had subdued the anguish of the parents into a holy calm; but their lost first-born was not forgotten, although no trace of his fate had been discovered. The general belief was, that he had perished on the breaking up of the snow; and the few in whose remembrance he still lived, merely spoke of his death as a "very extraordinary circumstance," remarking that "he was a wild, venturesome sort o' lad."

Christmas had succeeded Christmas, and Peter Elliot still kept it in commemoration of the birthday of him who was not. For the first few years after the loss of their son, sadness and silence characterized the party who sat down to dinner at Marchlaw, and still at Peter's right hand was placed the vacant chair. But, as the younger branches of the family advanced in years, the remembrance of their brother became less poignant. Christmas was, with all around them, a day of rejoicing, and they began to make merry with their friends; while their parents partook in their enjoyment, with a smile, half of approval and half of sorrow.

Twelve years had passed away; Christmas had again come. It was the counterpart of its fatal predecessor. The hills had not yet cast off their summer verdure; the sun, although shorn of its heat, had lost none of its brightness or glory, and looked down upon the earth as though participating in its gladness; and the clear blue sky was tranquil as the sea sleeping beneath the moon. Many visitors had again assembled at Marchlaw. The sons of Mr. Elliot, and the young men of the party, were assembled upon a level green near the house, amusing themselves with throwing the hammer, and other Border games, while himself and the elder guests stood by as spectators, recounting the deeds of their youth. Johnson,

the sheep-farmer, whom we have already mentioned, now a brawny and gigantic fellow of two-and-thirty, bore away in every game the palm from all competitors. More than once, as Peter beheld his sons defeated, he felt the spirit of youth glowing in his veins, and, "Oh!" muttered he, in bitterness, "had my Thomas been spared to me, he would hae thrown his heart's bluid after the hammer, before he would hae been beat by e'er a Johnson in the country!"

While he thus soliloquized, and with difficulty restrained an impulse to compete with the victor himself, a dark, foreign-looking, strong-built seaman, unceremoniously approached, and, with his arms folded, cast a look of contempt upon the boasting conqueror. Every eye was turned with a scrutinizing glance upon the stranger. In height he could not exceed five feet nine, but his whole frame was the model of muscular strength; his features open and manly, but deeply sunburnt and weather-beaten; his long, glossy, black hair, curled into ringlets by the breeze and the billow, fell thickly over his temples and forehead; and whiskers of a similar hue, more conspicuous for size than elegance, gave a character of fierceness to a countenance otherwise possessing a striking impress of manly beauty. Without asking permission, he stepped forward, lifted the hammer, and, swinging it around his head, hurled it upwards of five yards beyond Johnson's most successful throw. "Well done!" shouted the astonished spectators. The heart of Peter Elliot warmed within him, and he was hurrying forward to grasp the stranger by the hand, when the words groaned in his throat, "It was just such a throw as my Thomàs would have made!—my own lost Thomas!" The tears burst into his eyes, and, without speaking, he turned back, and hurried towards the house to conceal his emotion.

Successively, at every game, the stranger had defeated.

all who ventured to oppose him, when a messenger announced that dinner waited their arrival. Some of the guests were already seated, others entering; and, as heretofore, placed beside Mrs. Elliot was Elizabeth Bell, still in the noontide of her beauty; but sorrow had passed over her features, like a veil before the countenance of an angel. Johnson, crest-fallen and out of humour at his defeat, seated himself by her side. In early life he had regarded Thomas Elliot as a rival for her affections; and, stimulated by the knowledge that Adam Bell would be able to bestow several thousands upon his daughter for a dowry, he yet prosecuted his attentions with unabated assiduity, in despite of the daughter's aversion and the coldness of her father. Peter had taken his place at the table; and still by his side, unoccupied and sacred, appeared the vacant chair, the chair of his first-born, whereon none had sat since his mysterious death or disappearance.

"Bairns," said he, "did nane o' ye ask the sailor to come up and tak a bit o' dinner wi' us?"

"We were afraid it might lead to a quarrel with Mr. Johnson," whispered one of the sons.

"He is come without asking," replied the stranger, entering; "and the wind shall blow from a new point if I destroy the mirth or happiness of the company."

"Ye're a stranger, young man," said Peter, "or ye would ken this is no a meeting o' mirth-makers. But, I assure ye, ye are welcome, heartily welcome. Haste ye, lasses," he added to the servants; "some o' ye get a chair for the gentleman."

"Gentleman, indeed!" muttered Johnson between his teeth.

"Never mind about a chair, my hearties," said the seaman; "this will do!" And, before Peter could speak to withhold him, he had thrown himself carelessly into the

hallowed, the venerated, the twelve-years-unoccupied chair! The spirit of sacrilege uttering blasphemies from a pulpit could not have smitten a congregation of pious worshippers with deeper horror and consternation, than did this filling of the vacant chair the inhabitants of Marchlaw.

“Excuse me, sir! excuse me, sir!” said Peter, the words trembling upon his tongue; “but ye cannot—ye cannot sit there!”

“O man! man!” cried Mrs. Elliot, “get out o’ that! get out o’ that!—take my chair!—take ony chair i’ the house!—but dinna, dinna sit there! It has never been sat in by mortal being since the death o’ my dear bairn!—and to see it filled by another is a thing I cauna endure!”

“Sir! sir!” continued the father, “ye have done it through ignorance, and we excuse ye. But that was my Thomas’s seat! Twelve years this very day—his birthday—he perished, Heaven kens how! He went out from our sight, like the cloud that passes over the hills—never—never to return. And, O sir, spare a father’s feelings! for to see it filled wrings the blood from my heart!”

“Give me your hand, my worthy soul!” exclaimed the seaman; “I revere—nay, hang it! I would die for your feelings! But Tom Elliot was my friend, and I cast anchor in this chair by special commission. I know that a sudden broadside of joy is a bad thing; but, as I don’t know how to preach a sermon before telling you, all I have to say is—that Tom an’t dead.”

“Not dead!” said Peter, grasping the hand of the stranger, and speaking with an eagerness that almost choked his utterance: “O sir! sir! tell me how!—how!—Did ye say, living?—Is my ain Thomas living?”

“Not dead, do ye say?” cried Mrs. Elliot, hurrying towards him and grasping his other hand—“not dead! And shall I see my bairn again? Oh! may the blessing o’ Heaven, and the blessing o’ a broken-hearted mother

be upon the bearer o' the gracious tidings! But tell me—tell me, how is it possible! As ye would expect happiness here or hereafter, dinna, dinna deceive me!”

“Deceive you!” returned the stranger, grasping, with impassioned earnestness, their hands in his—“Never!—never! and all I can say is—Tom Elliot is alive and hearty.”

“No, no!” said Elizabeth, rising from her seat, “he does not deceive us; there is that in his countenance which bespeaks a falsehood impossible.” And she also endeavoured to move towards him, when Johnson threw his arm around her to withhold her.

“Hands off, you land-lubber!” exclaimed the seaman, springing towards them, “or, shiver me! I'll show daylight through your timbers in the turning of a hand-spike!” And, clasping the lovely girl in his arms, “Betty! Betty, my love!” he cried, “don't you know your own Tom? Father, mother, don't you know me? Have you really forgot your own son? If twelve years have made some change on his face, his heart is sound as ever.”

His father, his mother, and his brothers, clung around him, weeping, smiling, and mingling a hundred questions together. He threw his arms around the neck of each, and in answer to their inquiries, replied—“Well! well! there is time enough to answer questions, but not to-day—not to-day!”

“No, my bairn,” said his mother, “we'll ask you no questions—nobody shall ask you any! But how—how were ye torn away from us, my love? And, O hinny! where—where hae you been?”

“It's a long story, mother,” said he, “and would take a week to tell it. But, howsoever, to make a long story short, you remember when the smugglers were pursued, and wished to conceal their brandy in our house, my

father prevented them; they left muttering revenge—and they have been revenged. This day twelve years, I went out with the intention of meeting Elizabeth and her father, when I came upon a party of the gang concealed in Hell's Hole. In a moment half a dozen pistols were held to my breast, and, tying my hands to my sides, they dragged me into the cavern. Here I had not been long their prisoner, when the snow, rolling down the mountains, almost totally blocked up its mouth. On the second night they cut through the snow, and, hurrying me along with them, I was bound to a horse between two, and, before daylight, found myself stowed, like a piece of old junk, in the hold of a smuggling lugger. Within a week I was shipped on board a Dutch man-of-war, and for six years was kept dodging about on different stations, till our old yawning hulk received orders to join the fleet, which was to fight against the gallant Duncan at Camperdown. To think of fighting against my own countrymen, my own flesh and blood, was worse than to be cut to pieces by a cat-o'-nine tails; and, under cover of the smoke of the first broadside, I sprang upon the gunwale, plunged into the sea, and swam for the English fleet. Never, never shall I forget the moment that my feet first trode upon the deck of a British frigate! My nerves felt as firm as her oak, and my heart free as the pennant that waved defiance from her masthead! I was as active as any one during the battle; and when it was over, and I found myself again among my own countrymen, and all speaking my own language, I fancied—nay, hang it! I almost believed—I should meet my father, my mother, or my dear Bess, on board of the British frigate. I expected to see you all again in a few weeks at farthest; but, instead of returning to Old England, before I was aware, I found it was helm about with us. As to writing, I never had an opportunity but once. We were anchored before a French fort; a

packet was lying alongside ready to sail; I had half a side written, and was scratching my head to think how I should come over writing about you, Bess, my love, when, as bad luck would have it, our lieutenant comes to me, and says he, 'Elliot,' says he, 'I know you like a little smart service; come, my lad, take the head oar, while we board some of those French bumb-boats under the batteries!' I couldn't say no. We pulled ashore, made a bonfire of one of their craft, and were setting fire to a second, when a deadly shower of small shot from the garrison scuttled our boat, killed our commanding officer with half of the crew, and the few who were left of us were made prisoners. It is of no use bothering you by telling how we escaped from French prison. We did escape; and Tom will once more fill his vacant chair."

Should any of our readers wish farther acquaintance with our friends, all we can say is, the new year was still young when Adam Bell bestowed his daughter's hand upon the heir of Marchlaw, and Peter beheld the once vacant chair again occupied, and a namesake of the third generation prattling on his knee

THE FAA'S REVENGE.

A TALE OF THE BORDER GIPSIES.

BROWN October was drawing to a close—the breeze had acquired a degree of sharpness too strong to be merely termed bracing—and the fire, as the saying is, was becoming the best flower in the garden—for the hardiest and the latest plants had either shed their leaves, or their flowers had shrivelled at the breath of approaching winter—when a stranger drew his seat towards the parlour fire of the Three-Half-Moons inn, in Rothbury. He had sat for the space of half an hour when a party entered, who, like himself (as appeared from their conversation), were strangers, or rather visitors of the scenery, curiosities, and antiquities in the vicinity. One of them having ordered the waiter to bring each of them a glass of brandy and warm water, without appearing to notice the presence of the first mentioned stranger, after a few remarks on the objects of interest in the neighbourhood, the following conversation took place amongst them:—

“Why,” said one, “but even Rothbury here, secluded as it is from the world, and shut out from the daily intercourse of men, is a noted place. It was here that the ancient and famous northern bard and unrivalled ballad writer, Bernard Runney, was born, bred, and died. Here, too, was born Dr. Brown, who, like Young and Home, united the characters of divine and dramatist, and was the author of ‘*Barbarossa*,’ ‘*The Cure of Saul*,’ and other works, of which posterity and his country are proud. The immediate neighbourhood, also, was the birth-place of the inspired

boy, the heaven-taught mathematician, George Coughran, who knew no rival, and who bade fair to eclipse the glory of Newton, but whom death struck down ere he had reached the years of manhood."

"Why, I can't tell," said another; "I don't know much about what you've been talking of; but I know, for one thing, that Rothbury was a famous place for every sort of games; and, at Fastren's E'en times, the rule was, every male inhabitant above eight years of age to pay a shilling, or out to the foot-ball. It was noted for its game-cocks, too—they were the best breed on the Borders."

"May be so," said the first speaker; "but though I should be loath to see the foot-ball, or any other innocent game which keeps up a manly spirit, put down, yet I do trust that the brutal practice of cock-fighting will be abolished, not only on the Borders, but throughout every country which professes the name of Christian; and I rejoice that the practice is falling into disrepute. But, although my hairs are not yet honoured with the silver tints of age, I am old enough to remember, that, when a boy at school on the Scottish side of the Border, at every Fastren's E'en which you have spoken of, every schoolboy was expected to provide a cock for the battle, or main, and the teacher or his deputy presided as umpire. The same practice prevailed on the southern Border. It is a very old, savage amusement, even in this country; and perhaps the preceptors of youth, in former days, considered it *classical*, and that it would instil into their pupils sentiments of emulation; inasmuch as the practice is said to have taken rise from Themistocles perceiving two cocks tearing at and fighting with each other, while marching his army against the Persians, when he called upon his soldiers to observe them, and remarked that they neither fought for territory, defence of country, nor for glory, but they fought because the one would not yield to, or be defeated by the other; and he

desired his soldiers to take a *moral* lesson from the barn-door fowls. Cock-fighting thus became among the heathen Greeks a political precept and a religious observance—and the *Christian* inhabitants of Britain, disregarding the *religious and political moral*, kept up the practice, adding to it more disgusting barbarity, for *their amusement*.”

“Coom,” said a third, who, from his tongue, appeared to be a thorough Northumbrian, “we wur talking about Rothbury, but you are goin’ to give us a regular sarmin on cock-fighting. Let’s hae none o’ that. You was saying what clever chaps had been born here—but none o’ ye mentioned Jamie Allan, the gipsy and Northumberland piper, who was born here as weel as the best o’ them. But I hae heard that Rothbury, as weel as Yetholm and Tweedmouth Moor, was a great resort for the Faa or gipsy gangs in former times. Now, I understand that thae folk were a sort o’ bastard Egyptians; and though I am nae scholar, it strikes me forcibly that the meaning o’ the word *gipsies*, is just *Egypt*, or *Gypties*—a contraction and corruption o’ *Gyptian*!”

“Gipsies,” said he who spoke of Rumney and Brown, and abused the practice of cock-fighting, “still do in some degree, and formerly did in great numbers, infest this county; and I will tell you a story concerning them.”

“Do so,” said the thorough Northumbrian; “I like a story when it’s weel put thegither. The gipsies were queer folk. I’ve heard my faither tell many a funny thing about them, when he used to whistle ‘Felton Loanin,’ which was made by awd piper Allan—Jamie’s faither.” And here the speaker struck up a lively air, which, to the stranger by the fire, seemed a sort of parody on the well-known tune of “Johnny Cope.”

The other then proceeded with his tale, thus:—

You have all heard of the celebrated Johnny Faa, th Lord and Earl of Little Egypt, who penetrated into Scot-

land in the reign of James IV., and with whom that gallant monarch was glad to conclude a treaty. Johnny was not only the king, but the first of the Faa gang of whom we have mention. I am not aware that gipsies get the name of Faas anywhere but upon the Borders; and though it is difficult to account for the name satisfactorily, it is said to have had its origin from a family of the name of *Fall* or *F'a*, who resided here (in Rothbury), and that their superiority in their cunning and desperate profession, gave the same cognomen to all and sundry who followed the same mode of life upon the Borders. One thing is certain, that the name *Faa* not only was given to individuals whose surname might be *Fall*, but to the *Winters* and *Clarkes*—*id genus omne*—gipsy families well known on the Borders. Since waste lands, which were their hiding-places and resorts, began to be cultivated, and especially since the sun of knowledge snuffed out the taper of superstition and credulity, most of them are beginning to form a part of society, to learn trades of industry, and live with men. Those who still prefer their fathers' vagabond mode of life—finding that, in the northern counties, their old trade of fortune-telling is at a discount, and that thieving has thinned their tribe and is dangerous—now follow the more useful and respectable callings of muggers, besom-makers, and tinkers. I do not know whether, in etiquette, I ought to give precedence to the besom-maker or tinker; though, as compared with them, I should certainly suppose that the “muggers” of the present day belong to the Faa aristocracy; if it be not that they, like others, derive their nobility from descent of blood rather than weight of pocket—and that, after all, the mugger with his encampment, his caravans, horses, crystal, and crockery, is but a mere wealthy plebeian or *bourgeois* in the vagrant community.—But to my tale.

On a dark and tempestuous night in the December of

1628, a Faa gang requested shelter in the out-houses of the laird of Clennel. The laird himself had retired to rest; and his domestics being fewer in number than the Faas, feared to refuse them their request.

“Ye shall have up-putting for the night, good neighbours,” said Andrew Smith, who was a sort of major-domo in the laird’s household, and he spoke in a tone of mingled authority and terror. “But, sir,” added he, addressing the chief of the tribe—“I will trust to your honour that ye will allow none o’ your folk to be making free with the kye, or the sheep, or the poultry—that is, that ye will not allow them to mistake ony o’ them for your own, lest it bring me into trouble. For the laird has been in a fearful rage at some o’ your people lately; and if onything were to be amissing in the morning, or he kenned that ye had been here, it might be as meikle as my life is worth.”

“Tush, man!” said Willie Faa, the king of the tribe, “ye dree the death ye’ll never die. Willie Faa and his folk maun live as weel as the laird o’ Clennel. But, there’s my thumb, not a four-footed thing, nor the feather o’ a bird, shall be touched by me or mine. But I see the light is out in the laird’s chamber window—he is asleep and high up amang the turrets—and wherefore should ye set human bodies in byres and stables in a night like this, when your Ha’ fire is bleezing bonnily, and there is room enough around it for us a’? Gie us a seat by the cheek o’ your hearth, and ye shall be nae loser; and I promise ye that we shall be off, bag and baggage, before the skreigh o’ day, or the laird kens where his head lies.”

Andrew would fain have refused this request, but he knew that it amounted to a command; and, moreover, while he had been speaking with the chief of the tribe, the maid-servants of the household, who had followed him and the other men-servants to the door, had divers of them been solicited by the females of the gang to have futurity

revealed to them. And whether it indeed be that curiosity is more powerful in woman than in man (as it is generally said to be), I do not profess to determine; but certain it is, that the laird of Clennel's maid-servants, immediately on the hint being given by the gipsies, felt a very ardent desire to have a page or two from the sybilline leaves read to them—at least that part of them which related to their future husbands, and the time when they should obtain them. Therefore, they backed the petition or command of King Willie, and said to Andrew—

“Really, Mr. Smith, it would be very unchristian-like to put poor wandering folk into cauld out-houses on a night like this; and, as Willie says, there is room enough in the Ha’.”

“That may be a’ very true, lasses,” returned Andrew, “but only ye think what a dirdum there would be if the laird were to waken or get wit o’t!”

“Fearna the laird,” said Elspeth, the wife of King Willie—“I will lay a spell on him that he canna be roused frae sleep, till I, at sunrise, wash my hands in Darden Lough.”

The sybil then raised her arms and waved them fantastically in the air, uttering, as she waved them, the following uncouth rhymes by way of incantation—

“Bonny Queen Mab, bonny Queen Mab,
Wave ye your wee bits o’ poppy wings
Ower Clennel’s laird, that he may sleep
Till I hae washed where Darden springs.”

Thus assured, Andrew yielded to his fears and the wishes of his fellow-servants, and ushered the Faas into his master’s hall for the night. But scarce had they taken their seats upon the oaken forms around the fire, when—

“Come,” said the Faa king, “the night is cold, pinching cold, Mr. Smith: and, while the fire warms without, is there naething in the cellar that will warm within? See to it, Andrew, man—thou art no churl, or thy face is fause.”

“Really, sir,” replied Andrew—and, in spite of all his efforts to appear at ease, his tongue faltered as he spoke—“I’m not altogether certain what to say upon that subject; for ye observe that our laird is really a very singular man; ye might as weel put your head in the fire there as displease him in the smallest; and though Heaven kens that I would gie to you just as freely as I would tak to mysel, yet ye’ll observe that the liquor in the cellars is not mine, but his—and they are never sae weel plenished but I believe he would miss a thimblefu’. But there is some excellent cold beef in the pantry, if ye could put up wi’ the like o’ it, and the home-brewed which we servants use.”

“Andrew,” returned the Faa king, proudly—“castle have I none, flocks and herds have I none, neither have I haughs where the wheat, and the oats, and the barley grow—but, like Ishmael, my great forefather, every man’s hand is against me, and mine against them—yet, when I am hungry, I never lack the flesh-pots o’ my native land, where the moorfowl and the venison make brown broo together. Cauld meat agrees nae wi’ my stomach, and servants’ drink was never brewed for the lord o’ Little Egypt. Ye comprehend me, Andrew?”

“Oh, I daresay I do, sir,” said the chief domestic of the house of Clennel; “but only, as I have said, ye will recollect that the drink is not mine to give; and if I venture upon a jug, I hope ye winna think o’ asking for another.”

“We shall try it,” said the royal vagrant.

Andrew, with trembling and reluctance, proceeded to the cellar, and returned with a large earthen vessel filled with the choicest home-brewed, which he placed upon a table in the midst of them.

“Then each took a smack
Of the old black jack,
While the fire burned in the hall.”

The Faa king pronounced the liquor to be palatable, and drank to his better acquaintance with the cellars of the laird of Clennel; and his gang followed his example.

Now, I should remark that Willie Faa, the chief of his tribe, was a man of gigantic stature; the colour of his skin was the dingy brown peculiar to his race; his arms were of remarkable length, and his limbs a union of strength and lightness; his raven hair was mingled with grey; while, in his dark eyes, the impetuosity of youth and the cunning of age seemed blended together. It is in vain to speak of his dress, for it was changed daily as his circumstances or avocations directed. He was ever ready to assume all characters, from the courtier down to the mendicant. Like his wife, he was skilled in the reading of no book but the book of fate. Now, Elspeth was a less agreeable personage to look upon than even her husband. The hue of her skin was as dark as his. She was also of his age—a woman of full fifty. She was the tallest female in her tribe; but her stoutness took away from her stature. Her eyes were small and piercing, her nose aquiline, and her upper lip was “bearded like the pard.”

While her husband sat at his carousals, and handing the beverage to his followers and the domestics of the house, Elspeth sat examining the lines upon the palms of the hands of the maid-servants—pursuing her calling as a spaewife. And ever as she traced the lines of matrimony, the sybil would pause and exclaim—

“Ha!—money!—money!—cross my loof again, hinny. There is fortune before ye! Let me see! A spur!—a sword!—a shield!—a gowden purse! Heaven bless ye! They are there!—there, as plain as a pikestaff; they are a’ in your path. But cross my loof again, hinny, for until siller again cross it, I canna see whether they are to be yours or no.”

Thus did Elspeth go on until her “loof had been crossed” by the last coin amongst the domestics of the house of Clennel.

nel; and when these were exhausted, their trinkets were demanded and given to assist the spell of the prophetess. Good fortune was prognosticated to the most of them, and especially to those who crossed the loof of the reader of futurity most freely; but to others, perils, and sudden deaths, and disappointments in love, and grief in wedlock, were hinted, though to all and each of these forebodings, a something like hope—an undefined way of escape—was pended.

Now, as the voice of Elspeth rose in solemn tones, and as the mystery of her manner increased, not only were the maid-servants stricken with awe and reverence for the wondrous woman, but the men-servants also began to inquire into their fate. And as they extended their hands, and Elspeth traced the lines of the past upon them, ever and anon she spoke strange words, which intimated secret facts; and she spoke also of love-makings and likings; and ever, as she spoke, she would raise her head and grin a ghastly smile, now at the individual whose hand she was examining, and again at a maid-servant whose fortune she had read; while the former would smile and the latter blush, and their fellow domestics exclaim—

“That’s wonderfu’!—that dings a’!—ye are queer folk! hoo in the world do ye ken?”

Even the curiosity of Mr. Andrew Smith was raised, and his wonder excited; and, after he had quaffed his third cup with the gipsy king, he, too, reverentially approached the bearded princess, extending his hand, and begging to know what futurity had in store for him.

She raised it before her eyes, she rubbed hers over it.

“It is a dark and a difficult hand,” muttered she: “here are ships and the sea, and crossing the sea, and great danger, and a way to avoid it—but the gowd!—the gowd that’s there! And yet ye may lose it a’! Cross my loof, sir—yours is an ill hand to spae—for it’s set wi’ fortune, and danger and adventure.”

Andrew gave her all the money in his possession. Now it was understood that she was to return the money and the trinkets with which her loof had been crossed; and Andrew's curiosity overcoming his fears, he ventured to intrust his property in her keeping; for, as he thought, it was not every day that people could have everything that was to happen unto them revealed. But when she had again looked upon his hand—

“It winna do,” said she—“I canna see ower the danger ye hae to encounter, the seas ye hae to cross, and the mountains o' gowd that lie before ye yet—ye maun cross my loof again.” And when, with a woful countenance, he stated that he had crossed it with his last coin—

“Ye hae a chronometer, man,” said she—“it tells you the minutes now, it may enable me to show ye those that are to come!”

Andrew hesitated, and, with doubt and unwillingness, placed the chronometer in her hand.

Elsbeth wore a short cloak of faded crimson; and in a sort of pouch in it, every coin, trinket, and other article of value which was put into her hands were deposited, in order, as she stated, to forward her mystic operations. Now, the chronometer had just disappeared in the general receptacle of offerings to the oracle, when heavy footsteps were heard descending the staircase leading to the hall. Poor Andrew, the ruler of the household, gasped—the blood forsook his cheeks, his knees involuntarily knocked one against another, and he stammered out—

“For Heaven's sake, gie me my chronometer!—Oh, gie me it!—we are a' ruined!”

“It canna be returned till the spell's completed,” rejoined Elspeth, in a solemn and determined tone—and her countenance betrayed nothing of her dupe's uneasiness; while her husband deliberately placed his right hand upon a sort of dagger which he wore beneath a large coarse jacket that

was loosely flung over his shoulders. The males in his retinue, who were eight in number, followed his example.

In another moment, the laird, with wrath upon his countenance, burst into the hall.

“Andrew Smith,” cried he, sternly, and stamping his foot fiercely on the floor, “what scene is this I see? Answer me, ye robber, answer me;—ye shall hang for it!”

“O sir! sir!” groaned Andrew, “mercy!—mercy!—O sir!” and he wrung his hands together and shook exceedingly.

“Ye fause knave!” continued the laird, grasping him by the neck—and dashing him from him, Andrew fell flat upon the floor, and his terror had almost shook him from his feet before—“Speak, ye fause knave!” resumed the laird; “what means your carousin’ wi’ sic a gang? Ye robber, speak!” And he kicked him with his foot as he lay upon the ground.

“O sir!—mercy, sir!” vociferated Andrew, in the stupor and wildness of terror; “I canna speak!—ye hae killed me outright! I am dead—stone dead! But it wasna my blame—they’ll a’ say that, if they speak the truth.”

“Out! out, ye thieves!—ye gang o’ plunderers, born to the gallows!—out o’ my house!” added the laird, addressing Willie Faa and his followers.

“Thieves! ye ached loon!” exclaimed the Faa king, starting to his feet, and drawing himself up to his full height—“wha does the worm that burrows in the lands o’ Clennel ca’ thieves? Thieves, say ye!—speak such words to your equals, but no to me. Your forebears came ower wi’ the Norman, invaded the nation, and seized upon land—mine invaded it also, and only laid a tax upon the flocks, the cattle, and the poultry—and wha ca’ ye thieves?—or wi’ what grace do ye speak the word?”

“Away, ye audacious vagrant!” continued the laird; “ken ye not that the king’s authority is in my hands?—and for your former plunderings, if I again find you setting foot upon ground o’ mine, on the nearest tree ye shall find a gibbet.”

“Boast awa—boast awa, man,” said Willie; “ye are safe here, for me and mine winna harm ye; and it is a fougie cock indeed that darena craw in its ain barn-yard. But wait until the day when we may meet upon the wide moor, wi’ only twa bits o’ steel between us, and see wha shall brag then.”

“Away!—instantly away!” exclaimed Clennel, drawing his sword, and waving it threateningly over the head of the gipsy.

“Proud, cauld-hearted, and unfeeling mortal,” said Elspeth, “will ye turn fellow-beings from beneath your roof in a night like this, when the fox darena creep frae its hole, and the raven trembles on the tree?”

“Out! out! ye witch!” rejoined the laird.

“Farewell, Clennel,” said the Faa king; “we will leave your roof, and seek the shelter o’ the hill-side. But ye shall rue! As I speak, man, ye shall rue it!”

“Rue it!” screamed Elspeth, rising—and her small dark eyes flashed with indignation—“he shall rue it—the bairn unborn shall rue it—and the bann o’ Elspeth Faa shall be on Clennel and his kin, until his hearth be desolate and his spirit howl within him like the tempest which this night rages in the heavens!”

The servants shrank together into a corner of the hall, to avoid the rage of their master; and they shook the more at the threatening words of the weird woman, lest she should involve them in his doom; but he laughed with scorn at her words.

“Proud, pitiless fool,” resumed Elspeth, more bitterly than before, “repress your scorn. Whom, think ye, ye treat wi’ contempt? Ken ye not that the humble adder which ye tread upon can destroy ye—that the very wasp can sting ye, and there is poison in its sting? Ye laugh, but for your want of humanity this night, sorrow shall turn your head grey, lang before age sit down upon your brow.”

“Off! off! ye wretches!” added the laird; “vent your threats on the wind, if it will hear ye, for I regard them as little as it will. But keep out o’ my way for the future, as ye would escape the honours o’ a hempen cravat, and the hereditary exaltation o’ your race.”

Willie Faa made a sign to his followers, and without speaking they instantly rose and departed; but, as he himself reached the door, he turned round, and significantly striking the hilt of his dagger, exclaimed—

“Clennel! ye shall rue it!”

And the hoarse voice of Elspeth without, as the sound was borne away on the storm, was heard crying—“He shall rue it!” and repeating her imprecations.

Until now, poor Andrew Smith had lain groaning upon the floor more dead than alive, though not exactly “stone dead” as he expressed it; and ever, as he heard his master’s angry voice, he groaned the more, until in his agony he doubted his existence. When, therefore, on the departure of the Faas, the laird dragged him to his feet, and feeling some pity for his terror, spoke to him more mildly, Andrew gazed vacantly around him, his teeth chattering together, and he first placed his hands upon his sides, to feel whether he was still indeed the identical flesh, blood, and bones of Andrew Smith, or his disembodied spirit; and being assured that he was still a man, he put down his hand to feel for his chronometer, and again he groaned bitterly—and although he now knew he was not dead, he almost wished he were so. The other servants thought also of their money and their trinkets, which, as well as poor Andrew’s chronometer, Elspeth, in the hurry in which she was rudely driven from the house, had, by a slip of memory, neglected to return to their lawful owners.

It is unnecessary to dwell upon the laird’s anger at his domestics, or farther to describe Andrew’s agitation; but I may say that the laird was not wroth against the Faa gang

without reason. They had committed ravages on his flocks—they had carried off the choicest of his oxen—they destroyed his deer—they plundered him of his poultry—and they even made free with the grain that he reared, and which he could spare least of all. But Willie Faa considered every landed proprietor as his enemy, and thought it his duty to quarter on them. Moreover, it was his boisterous laugh, as he pushed round the tankard, which aroused the laird from his slumbers, and broke Elspeth's spell. And the destruction of the charm, by the appearance of their master, before she had washed her hands in Darden Lough, caused those who had parted with their money and trinkets to grieve for them the more, and to doubt the promises of the prophetess, or to

“Take all for gospel that the spaefolk say.”

Many weeks, however, had not passed until the laird of Clennel found that Elspeth the gipsy's threat, that he should “*rue it*,” meant more than idle words. His cattle sickened and died in their stalls, or the choicest of them disappeared; his favourite horses were found maimed in the mornings, wounded and bleeding in the fields; and, notwithstanding the vigilance of his shepherds, the depredations on his flocks augmented tenfold. He doubted not but that Willie Faa and his tribe were the authors of all the evils which were besetting him: but he knew also their power and their matchless craft, which rendered it almost impossible either to detect or punish them. He had a favourite steed, which had borne him in boyhood, and in battle when he served in foreign wars, and one morning when he went into his park, he found it lying bleeding upon the ground. Grief and indignation strove together in arousing revenge within his bosom. He ordered his sluthound to be brought, and his dependants to be summoned together, and to bring arms with them. He had previously observed foot-prints on the ground, and he exclaimed—

“Now the fiend take the Faas, they shall find whose turn it is to rue before the sun gae down.”

The gong was pealed on the turrets of Clennel Hall, and the kempers with their poles bounded in every direction, with the fleetness of mountain stags, to summon all capable of bearing arms to the presence of the laird. The mandate was readily obeyed; and within two hours thirty armed men appeared in the park. The sluthhound was led to the foot-print; and after following it for many a weary mile over moss, moor, and mountain, it stood and howled, and lashed its lips with its tongue, and again ran as though its prey were at hand, as it approached what might be called a gap in the wilderness between Keyheugh and Clovenrag.

Now, in the space between these desolate crags stood some score of peels, or rather half hovels, half encampments—and this primitive city in the wilderness was the capital of the Faa king’s people.

“Now for vengeance!” exclaimed Clennel; and his desire of revenge was excited the more from perceiving several of the choicest of his cattle, which had disappeared, grazing before the doors or holes of the gipsy village.

“Bring whins and heather,” he continued—“pile them around it, and burn the den of thieves to the ground.”

His order was speedily obeyed, and when he commanded the trumpet to be sounded, that the inmates might defend themselves if they dared, only two or three men and women of extreme age, and some half-dozen children, crawled upon their hands and knees from the huts—for it was impossible to stand upright in them.

The aged men and women howled when they beheld the work of destruction that was in preparation, and the children screamed when they heard them howl. But the laird of Clennel had been injured, and he turned a deaf ear to their misery. A light was struck, and a dozen torches applied at once. The whins crackled, the heather blazed, and

the flames overtopped the hovels which they surrounded, and which within an hour became a heap of smouldering ashes.

Clennel and his dependants returned home, driving the cattle which had been stolen from him before them, and rejoicing in what they had done. On the following day, Willie Faa and a part of his tribe returned to the place of rendezvous—their city and home in the mountains—and they found it a heap of smoking ruins, and the old men and the old women of the tribe—their fathers and their mothers—sitting wailing upon the ruins, and warming over them their shivering limbs, while the children wept around them for food.

“Whose work is this?” inquired Willie, while anxiety and anger flashed in his eyes.

“The Laird o’ Clennel!—the Laird o’ Clennel!” answered every voice at the same instant.

“By this I swear!” exclaimed the king of the Faas, drawing his dagger from beneath his coat, “from this night henceforth he is laird nor man nae langer.” And he turned hastily from the ruins, as if to put his threat in execution.

“Stay, ye madcap!” cried Elspeth, following him, “would ye fling away revenge for half a minute’s satisfaction?”

“No, wife,” cried he, “nae mair than I would sacrifice living a free and a fu’ life for half an hour’s hangin’.”

“Stop, then,” returned she, “and let our vengeance fa’ upon him, so that it may wring his life away, drap by drap, until his heart be dry; and grief, shame, and sorrow burn him up, as he has here burned house and home o’ Elspeth Faa and her kindred.”

“What mean ye, woman?” said Willie, hastily; “if I thought ye would come between me and my revenge, I would drive this bit steel through you wi’ as goodwill as I shall drive it through him.”

“And ye shall be welcome,” said Elspeth. She drew him aside, and whispered a few minutes in his ear. He listened attentively. At times he seemed to start, and at length, sheathing his dagger and grasping her hand, he exclaimed—“Excellent, Elspeth!—ye have it!—ye have it!”

At this period, the laird of Clennel was about thirty years of age, and two years before he had been married to Eleanor de Vere, a lady alike distinguished for her beauty and accomplishments. They had an infant son, who was the delight of his mother, and his father’s pride. Now, for two years after the conflagration of their little town, Clennel heard nothing of his old enemies the Faas, neither did they molest him, nor had they been seen in the neighbourhood and he rejoiced in having cleared his estate of such dangerous visitors. But the Faa king, listening to the advice of his wife, only “nursed his wrath to keep it warm,” and retired from the neighbourhood, that he might accomplish, in its proper season, his design of vengeance more effectually, and with greater cruelty.

The infant heir of the house of Clennel had been named Henry, and he was about completing his third year—an age at which children are, perhaps, most interesting, and when their fondling and their prattling sink deepest into a parent’s heart—for all is then beheld on childhood’s sunny side, and all is innocence and love. Now, it was in a lovely day in April, when every bird had begun its annual song, and flowers were bursting into beauty, buds into leaves, and the earth resuming its green mantle, when Lady Clennel and her infant son, who then, as I have said, was about three years of age, went forth to enjoy the loveliness and the luxuries of nature, in the woods which surrounded their mansion, and Andrew Smith accompanied them as their guide and protector. They had proceeded somewhat more than a mile from the house, and the child, at intervals breaking away from them, sometimes ran before his

mother, and at others sauntered behind her, pulling the wild flowers that strewed their path, when a man, springing from a dark thicket, seized the child in his arms, and again darted into the wood. Lady Clennel screamed aloud, and rushed after him. Andrew, who was coming dreaming behind, got but a glance of the ruffian stranger—but that glance was enough to reveal to him the tall, terrible figure of Willie Faa, the Gipsy king.

There are moments when, and circumstances under which even cowards become courageous, and this was one of those moments and circumstances which suddenly inspired Andrew (who was naturally no hero) with courage. He, indeed, loved the child as though he had been his own; and following the example of Lady Clennel, he drew his sword and rushed into the wood. He possessed considerable speed of foot, and he soon passed the wretched mother, and came in sight of the pursued. The unhappy lady, who ran panting and screaming as she rushed along, unable to keep pace with them, lost all trace of where the robber of her child had fled, and her cries of agony and bereavement rang through the woods.

Andrew, however, though he did not gain ground upon the gipsy, still kept within sight of him, and shouted to him as he ran, saying that all the dependants of Clennel would soon be on horseback at his heels, and trusting that every moment he would drop the child upon the ground. Still Faa flew forward, bearing the boy in his arm, and disregarding the cries and threats of his pursuer. He knew that Andrew's was not what could be called a heart of steel, but he was aware that he had a powerful arm, and could use a sword as well as a better man; and he knew also that cowards will fight as desperately, when their life is at stake, as the brave.

The desperate chase continued for four hours, and till after the sun had set, and the gloaming was falling thick on

the hills. Andrew, being younger and unencumbered, had at length gained ground upon the gipsy, and was within ten yards of him when he reached the Coquet side, about a mile below this town, at the hideous Thrumb, where the deep river, for many yards, rushes through a mere chasm in the rock. The Faa, with the child beneath his arm, leaped across the fearful gulf, and the dark flood gushed between him and his pursuer. He turned round, and, with a horrid laugh, looked towards Andrew and unsheathed his dagger. But even at this moment the unvonted courage of the chief servant of Clennel did not fail him, and as he rushed up and down upon one side of the gulf, that he might spring across and avoid the dagger of the gipsy, the other ran in like manner on the other side; and when Andrew stood as if ready to leap, the Faa king, pointing with his dagger to the dark flood that rolled between them, cried—

“See, fool! eternity divides us!”

“And for that bairn’s sake, ye wretch, I’ll brave it!” exclaimed Andrew, while his teeth gnashed together; and he stepped back, in order that he might spring across with the greater force and safety.

“Hold man!” cried the Faa; “attempt to cross to me, and I will plunge this bonny heir o’ Clennel into the flood below.”

“Oh, gracious! gracious!” cried Andrew, and his resolution and courage forsook him; “ye monster!—ye barbarian!—oh, what shall I do now!”

“Go back whence you came,” said the gipsy, or follow me another step and the child dies.”

“Oh, ye butcher!—ye murderer!” continued the other—and he tore his hair in agony—“hae ye nae mercy?”

“Sic mercy as your maister had,” returned the Faa, “when he burned our dwellings about the ears o’ the aged and infirm, and o’ my helpless bairns! Ye shall find in me

the mercy o' the fasting wolf, o' the tiger when it laps blood!"

Andrew perceived that to rescue the child was now impossible, and with a heavy heart he returned to his master's house, in which there was no sound save that of lamentation.

For many weeks, yea months, the laird of Clennel, his friends and his servants, sought anxiously throughout every part of the country to obtain tidings of his child, but their search was vain. It was long ere his lady was expected to recover the shock, and the affliction sat heavy on his soul, while in his misery he vowed revenge upon all of the gipsy race. But neither Willie Faa nor any of his tribe were again seen upon his estates, or heard of in their neighbourhood.

Four years were passed from the time that their son was stolen from them, and an infant daughter smiled upon the knee of Lady Clennel; and oft as it smiled in her face, and stretched its little hands towards her, she would burst into tears, as the smile and the infantine fondness of her little daughter reminded her of her lost Henry. They had had other children, but they had died while but a few weeks old.

For two years there had been a maiden in the household named Susan, and to her care, when the child was not in her own arms, Lady Clennel intrusted her infant daughter; for every one loved Susan, because of her affectionate nature and docile manners—she was, moreover, an orphan, and they pitied while they loved her. But one evening, when Lady Clennel desired that her daughter might be brought her in order that she might present her to a company who had come to visit them (an excusable, though not always a pleasant vanity in mothers), neither Susan nor the child were to be found. Wild fears seized the bosom of the already bereaved mother, and her husband felt his

heart throb within him. They sought the woods, the hills, the cottages around; they wandered by the sides of the rivers and the mountain burns, but no one had seen, no trace could be discovered of either the girl or the child.

I will not, because I cannot, describe the overwhelming misery of the afflicted parents. Lady Clennel spent her days in tears and her nights in dreams of her children, and her husband sank into a settled melancholy, while his hatred of the Faa race became more implacable, and he burst into frequent exclamations of vengeance against them.

More than fifteen years had passed, and though the poignancy of their grief had abated, yet their sadness was not removed, for they had been able to hear nothing that could throw light upon the fate of their children. About this period, sheep were again missed from the flocks, and, in one night, the hen-roosts were emptied. There needed no other proof that a Faa gang was again in the neighbourhood. Now, Northumberland at that period was still thickly covered with wood, and abounded with places where thieves might conceal themselves in security. Partly from a desire of vengeance, and partly from the hope of being able to extort from some of the tribe information respecting his children, Clennel armed his servants, and taking his hounds with him, set out in quest of the plunderers.

For two days their search was unsuccessful, but on the third the dogs raised their savage cry, and rushed into a thicket in a deep glen amongst the mountains. Clennel and his followers hurried forward, and in a few minutes perceived the fires of the Faa encampment. The hounds had already alarmed the vagrant colony, they had sprung upon many of them and torn their flesh with their tusks; but the Faas defended themselves against them with their poniards, and, before Clennel's approach, more than half his hounds lay dead upon the ground, and his enemies fled.

Yet there was one poor girl amongst them, who had been attacked by a fierce hound, and whom no one attempted to rescue, as she strove to defend herself against it with her bare hands. Her screams for assistance rose louder and more loud; and as Clennel and his followers drew near, and her companions fled, they turned round, and, with a fiendish laugh, cried—

“Rue it now!”

Maddened more keenly by the words, he was following on in pursuit, without rescuing the screaming girl from the teeth of the hound, or seeming to perceive her, when a woman, suddenly turning round from amongst the flying gypsies, exclaimed—

“For your sake!—for Heaven’s sake! Laird Clennel! save my bairn!”

He turned hastily aside, and, seizing the hound by the throat, tore it from the lacerated girl, who sank, bleeding, terrified, and exhausted, upon the ground. Her features were beautiful, and her yellow hair contrasted ill with the tawny hue of her countenance and the snowy whiteness of her bosom, which in the struggle had been revealed. The elder gipsy woman approached. She knelt by the side of the wounded girl.

“O my bairn!” she exclaimed, “what has this day brought upon me!—they have murdered you! This is ruing, indeed; and I rue too!”

“Susan!” exclaimed Clennel, as he listened to her words, and his eyes had been for several seconds fixed upon her countenance.

“Yes!—Susan!—guilty Susan!” cried the gipsy.

“Wretch!” he exclaimed, “my child!—where is my child?—is *this*”—and he gazed on the poor girl, his voice failed him, and he burst into tears.

“Yes!—yes!” replied she bitterly, “it is her—there lies your daughter—look upon her face.”

He needed, indeed, but to look upon her countenance—disfigured as it was, and dyed with weeds to give it a sallow hue—to behold in it every lineament of her mother's, lovely as when they first met his eye and entered his heart. He flung himself on the ground by her side, he raised her head, he kissed her cheek, he exclaimed, "My child!—my child!—my lost one! I have destroyed thee!"

He bound up her lacerated arms, and applied a flask of wine, which he carried with him, to her lips, and he supported her on his knee, and again kissing her cheek, sobbed, "My child!—my own!"

Andrew Smith also bent over her and said, "Oh, it is her! there isna the smallest doubt o' that. I could swear to her among a thousand. She's her mother's very picture." And, turning to Susan, he added, "O Susan, woman, but ye hae been a terrible hypocrite!"

Clennel having placed his daughter on horseback before him, supporting her with his arm, Susan was set between two of his followers, and conducted to the Hall.

Before the tidings were made known to Lady Clennel, the wounds of her daughter were carefully dressed, the dye that changed the colour of her countenance was removed, and her gipsy garb was exchanged for more seemly apparel.

Clennel anxiously entered the apartment of his lady, to reveal to her the tale of joy; but when he entered, he wist not how to introduce it. He knew that excess of sudden joy was not less dangerous than excess of grief, and his countenance was troubled, though its expression was less sad than it had been for many years.

"Eleanor," he at length began, "cheer up."

"Why, I am not sadder than usual, dear," replied she, in her wonted gentle manner; "and to be more cheerful would ill become one who has endured my sorrows."

"True, true," said he, "but our affliction may not be so severe as we have thought—there may be hope—there may be joy for us yet."

"What mean ye, husband?" inquired she, eagerly; "have ye heard aught—aught of my children?—you have!—you have!—your countenance speaks it."

"Yes, dear Eleanor," returned he, "I have heard of our daughter."

"And she lives?—she lives?—tell me that she lives!"

"Yes, she lives."

"And I shall see her—I shall embrace my child again?"

"Yes, love, yes," replied he, and burst into tears.

"When—oh, when?" she exclaimed, "can you take me to her now?"

"Be calm, my sweet one. You shall see our child—our long-lost child. You shall see her now—she is here."

"Here!—my child!" she exclaimed, and sank back upon her seat.

Words would fail to paint the tender interview—the mother's joy—the daughter's wonder—the long, the passionate embrace—the tears of all—the looks—the words—the moments of unutterable feeling.

I shall next notice the confession of Susan. Clennel promised her forgiveness if she would confess the whole truth; and he doubted not, that from her he would also obtain tidings of his son, and learn where he might find him, if he yet lived. I shall give her story in her own words.

"When I came amongst you," she began, "I said that I was an orphan, and I told ye truly, so far as I knew myself. I have been reared amongst the people ye call gipsies from infancy. They fed me before I could provide for myself. I have wandered with them through many lands. They taught me many things; and, while young, sent me as a

servant into families, that I might gather information to assist them in upholding their mysteries of fortune-telling, I dared not to disobey them—they kept me as their slave—and I knew that they would destroy my life for an act of disobedience. I was in London when ye cruelly burned down the bit town between the Keyheugh and Clovencrag. That night would have been your last, but Elspeth Faa vowed more cruel vengeance than death on you and yours. After our king had carried away your son, I was ordered from London to assist in the plot o' revenge. I at length succeeded in getting into your family, and the rest ye know. When ye were a' busy wi' your company, I slipped into the woods wi' the bairn in my arms, where others were ready to meet us; and long before ye missed us, we were miles across the hills, and frae that day to this your daughter has passed as mine."

"But tell me all, woman," cried Clennel, "as you hope for either pardon or protection—where is my son, my little Harry? Does he live?—where shall I find him?"

"As I live," replied Susan, "I cannot tell. There are but two know concerning him—and that is the king and his wife Elspeth; and there is but one way of discovering anything respecting him, which is by crossing Elspeth's loof, that she may betray her husband: and she would do it for revenge's sake, for an ill husband has he been to her, and in her old days he has discarded her for another."

"And where may she be found?" inquired Clennel, earnestly.

"That," added Susan, "is a question I cannot answer. She was with the people in the glen to-day, and was first to raise the laugh when your dog fastened its teeth in the flesh of your ain bairn. But she may be far to seek and hard to find now—for she is wi' those that travel fast and far, and that will not see her hindmost."

Deep was the disappointment of the laird when he found

he could obtain no tidings of his son. But, at the intercession of his daughter (whose untutored mind her fond mother had begun to instruct), Susan was freely pardoned, promised protection from her tribe, and again admitted as one of the household.

I might describe the anxious care of the fond mother, as, day by day, she sat by her new-found and lovely daughter's side, teaching her, and telling her of a hundred things of which she had never heard before, while her father sat gazing and listening near them, rejoicing over both.

But the ray of sunshine which had penetrated the house of Clennel was not destined to be of long duration. At that period a fearful cloud overhung the whole land, and the fury of civil war seemed about to burst forth.

The threatening storm did explode; a bigoted king overstepped his prerogative, set at nought the rights and the liberties of the subject, and an indignant people stained their hands with blood. A political convulsion shook the empire to its centre. Families and individuals became involved in the general catastrophe; and the house of Clennel did not escape. In common with the majority of the English gentry of that period, Clennel was a staunch loyalist, and if not exactly a lover of the king, or an ardent admirer of his acts, yet one who would fight for the crown though it should (as it was expressed about the time) "hang by a bush." When, therefore, the parliament declared war against the king, and the name of Cromwell spread awe throughout the country, and when some said that a prophet and deliverer had risen amongst them, and others an ambitious hypocrite and a tyrant, Clennel armed a body of his dependants, and hastened to the assistance of his sovereign, leaving his wife and his newly-found daughter with the promise of a speedy return.

It is unnecessary to describe all that he did or encountered during the civil wars. He had been a zealous partizan

of the first Charles, and he fought for the fortunes of his son to the last. He was present at the battle of Worcester, which Cromwell calls his "crowning mercy," in the September of 1651, where the already dispirited royalists were finally routed; and he fought by the side of the king until the streets were heaped with dead; and when Charles fled, he, with others, accompanied him to the borders of Staffordshire.

Having bid the young prince an affectionate farewell, Clennel turned back, with the intention of proceeding on his journey, on the following day, to Northumberland, though he was aware, that, from the part which he had taken in the royal cause, even his person was in danger. Yet the desire again to behold his wife and daughter overcame his fears, and the thought of meeting them in some degree consoled him for the fate of his prince, and the result of the struggle in which he had been engaged.

But he had not proceeded far when he was met by two men dressed as soldiers of the Parliamentary army—the one a veteran with grey hairs, and the other a youth. The shades of night had set in; but the latter he instantly recognized as a young soldier whom he had that day wounded in the streets of Worcester.

"Stand!" said the old man, as they met him; and the younger drew his sword.

"If I stand!" exclaimed Clennel, "it shall not be when an old man and a boy command me." And, following their example, he unsheathed his sword.

"Boy!" exclaimed the youth; "whom call ye boy?—think ye, because ye wounded me this morn, that fortune shall aye sit on your arm?—yield or try."

They made several thrusts at each other, and the old man, as an indifferent spectator, stood looking on. But the youth, by a dexterous blow, shivered the sword in Clennel's hand, and left him at his mercy.

"Now yield ye," he exclaimed; "the chance is mine now—in the morning it was thine."

"Ye seem a fair foe," replied Clennel, "and loath am I to yield, but that I am weaponless."

"Despatch him at once!" growled the old man. "If he spilled your blood in the morning, there can be no harm in spilling his the night—and especially after giein' him a fair chance."

"Father," returned the youth, "would ye have me to kill a man in cold blood?"

"Let him submit to be bound then, hands and eyes, or I will," cried the senior.

The younger obeyed, and Clennel, finding himself disarmed, submitted to his fate; and his hands were bound, and his eyes tied up, so that he knew not where they led him.

After wandering many miles, and having lain upon what appeared the cold earth for a lodging, he was aroused from a comfortless and troubled sleep, by a person tearing the bandage from his eyes, and ordering him to prepare for his trial. He started to his feet. He looked around, and beheld that he stood in the midst of a gipsy encampment. He was not a man given to fear, but a sickness came over his heart when he thought of his wife and daughter, and that, knowing the character of the people in whose power he was, he should never behold them again.

The males of the Faa tribe began to assemble in a sort of half circle in the area of the encampment, and in the midst of them, towering over the heads of all, he immediately distinguished the tall figure of Willie Faa, in whom he also discovered the grey-haired Parliamentary soldier of the previous night. But the youth with whom he had twice contended and once wounded, and by whom he had been made prisoner, he was unable to single out amongst them.

He was rudely dragged before them, and Willie Faa cried—"Ken ye the culprit?"

“Clennel o’ Northumberland!—our enemy!” exclaimed twenty voices.

“Yes,” continued Willie, “Clennel our enemy—the burner o’ our humble habitations—that left the auld, the sick, the infirm, and the helpless, and the infants o’ our kindred, to perish in the flaming ruins. Had we burned his house, the punishment would have been death; and shall we do less to him than he would do to us?”

“No! no!” they exclaimed with one voice.

“But,” added Willie, “though he would have disgraced us wi’ a gallows, as he has been a soldier, I propose that he hae the honour o’ a soldier’s death, and that Harry Faa be appointed to shoot him.”

“All! all! all!” was the cry.

“He shall die with the setting sun,” said Willie, and again they cried, “Agreed!”

Such was the form of trial which Clennel underwent, when he was again rudely dragged away, and placed in a tent round which four strong Faas kept guard. He had not been alone an hour, when his judge, the Faa king, entered, and addressed him—

“Now, Laird Clennel, say ye that I haena lived to see day about wi’ ye? When ye turned me frae beneath your roof, when the drift was fierce and the wind howled in the moors, was it not tauld to ye that *ye would rue it!*—but ye mocked the admonition and the threat, and, after that, cruelly burned us out o’ house and ha’. When I came hame, I saw my auld mother, that was within three years o’ a hunder, couring ower the reeking ruins, without a wa’ to shelter her, and crooning curses on the doer o’ the black deed. There were my youngest bairns, too, crouching by their granny’s side, starving wi’ hunger as weel as wi’ cauld, for ye had burned a’, and haudin’ their bits o’ hands before the burnin’ ruins o’ the house that they were born in, to warm them! That night I vowed vengeance on you; and even on that night I would have executed it, but I was

prevented; and glad am I now that I was prevented, for my vengeance has been complete—or a' but complete. Wi' my ain hand I snatched your son and heir from his mother's side, and a terrible chase I had for it; but revenge lent me baith strength and speed. And when ye had anither bairn that was like to live, I forced a lassie, that some o' our folk had stolen when an infant, to bring it to us. Ye have got your daughter back again, but no before she has cost ye mony a sad heart and mony a saut tear; and that was some revenge. But the substance o' my satisfaction and revenge lies in what I hae to tell ye. Ye die this night as the sun gaes down; and, hearken to me now—the young soldier whom ye wounded on the streets o' Worcester, and who last night made you prisoner, was your son—your heir—your lost son! Ha! ha!—Clennel, am I revenged?”

“My son!” screamed the prisoner—“monster, what is it that ye say? Strike me dead, now I am in your power—but torment me not!”

“Ha! ha! ha!” again laughed the grey-haired savage—“man, ye are about to die, and ye know not ye are born. Ye have not heard half I have to tell. I heard that ye had joined the standard o' King Charles. I, a king in my ain right, care for neither your king nor parliament; but I resolved to wear, for a time, the cloth o' old Noll, and to make your son do the same, that I might hae an opportunity o' meeting you as an enemy, and seeing *him* strike you to the heart. That satisfaction I had not; but I had its equivalent. Yesterday, I saw you shed his blood on the streets o' Worcester, and in the evening he gave you a prisoner into my hands that desired you.”

“Grey-haired monster!” exclaimed Clennel. “have ye no feeling—no heart? Speak ye to torment me, or tell me truly, have I seen my son?”

“Patience, man!” said the Faa, with a smile of sardonic triumph—“my story is but half finished. It was the blood o' your son ye shed yesterday at Worcester—it was your

son who disarmed ye, and gave ye into my power; and, best o' a'!—now, hear me! hear me! lose not a word!—it is the hand o' your son that this night, at sunset, shall send you to eternity! Now, tell me, Clennel, am I no revenged? Do ye no rue it?"

"Wretch! wretch!" cried the miserable parent, "in mercy strike me dead. If I have raised my sword against my son, let that suffice ye!—but spare, oh, spare my child from being an involuntary parricide!"

"Hush, fool!" said the Faa; "I have waited for this consummation o' my revenge for twenty years, and think ye that I will be deprived o' it now by a few whining words? Remember, sunset!" he added, and left the tent.

Evening came, and the disk of the sun began to disappear behind the western hills. Men and women, the old and the young, amongst the Faas, came out from their encampment to behold the death of their enemy. Clennel was brought forth between two, his hands fastened to his sides, and a bandage round his mouth, to prevent him making himself known to his executioner. A rope was also brought round his body, and he was tied to the trunk of an old ash tree. The women of the tribe began a sort of yell or coronach; and their king, stepping forward, and smiling savagely in the face of his victim, cried aloud—

"Harry Faa! stand forth and perform the duty your tribe have imposed on you."

A young man, reluctantly, and with a slow and trembling step, issued from one of the tents. He carried a musket in his hand, and placed himself in front of the prisoner, at about twenty yards from him.

"Make ready!" cried Willie Faa, in a voice like thunder. And the youth, though his hands shook, levelled the musket at his victim.

But, at that moment, one who, to appearance, seemed a maniac, sprang from a clump of whins behind the ash tree

where the prisoner was bound, and, throwing herself before him, she cried—"Hold!—would you murder your own father? Harry Clennel!—would you murder your father? Mind ye not when ye was stolen frae your mother's side, as ye gathered wild flowers in the wood?"

It was Elspeth Faa.

The musket dropped from the hands of the intended executioner—a thousand recollections, that he had often fancied dreams, rushed across his memory. He again seized the musket, he rushed forward to his father, but, ere he reached, Elspeth had cut the cords that bound the laird, and placed a dagger in his hand for his defence, and, with extended arms, he flew to meet the youth, crying—"My son!—my son!"

The old Faa king shook with rage and disappointment, and his first impulse was to poniard his wife—but he feared to do so; for although he had injured her, and had not seen her for years, her influence was greater with the tribe than his.

"Now, Willie," cried she, addressing him, "wha rues it now? Fareweel for ance and a'—and the bairn I brought up will find a shelter for my auld head."

It were vain to tell how Clennel and his son wept on each other's neck, and how they exchanged forgiveness. But such was the influence of Elspeth, that they departed from the midst of the Faas unmolested, and she accompanied them.

Imagination must picture the scene when the long-lost son flung himself upon the bosom of his mother, and pressed his sister's hand in his. Clennel Hall rang with the sounds of joy for many days; and, ere they were ended, Andrew Smith placed a ring upon the finger of Susan, and they became one flesh—she a respectable woman. And old Elspeth lived to the age of ninety and seven years beneath its roof.

KATE KENNEDY;

OR, THE MAID OF INNERKEPPLE.

INNERKEPPLE was, some three hundred years ago, as complete a fortification as could be seen along the Borders—presenting its bastions, its turrets and donjon, and all the appurtenances of a military strength, in the face of a Border riever, with that solemn air of defiance that belongs to the style of the old castles. Many a blow of a mangonel it had received; and Scotch and English engines of war had, with equal force and address, poured into its old grey ribs their destructive bolts; every wound was an acquisition of glory; and, unless where a breach demanded a repair for the sake of security, the scars on the old warrior were allowed to remain as a proof of his prowess. Indeed, these very wounds appearing on the walls had their names—being christened after the leaders of the sieges that had been in vain directed against it; and, among the number, the kings of England might have been seen indicated by the futile instruments of vengeance they had flung into the rough ribs of old Innerkepple. But let us proceed. The proprietor, good Walter Kennedy, better known by the appellative of Innerkepple, was not unlike the old strength which he inhabited; being an old, rough, burly baron, on whose face Time had succeeded in making many impressions, notwithstanding of all the opposing energies of a soul that gloried, in all manner of ways, of cheating the old greybeard of his rights and clearing off *his scores*. As a good spirit is said to be like good old wine, getting softer and more balmy

as it increases in age, old Innerkepple proved, by his good humour and jovial manners, the sterling qualities of his heart, which seemed, as he progressed in years, to swell in proportion as that organ in others shrivelled and decreased. He saw nothing in age but the necessity it imposes of having more frequent recourse to its great enemy, the grape; and that power he delighted to bow to, as he bent his head to empty the flagon which his forebear, Kenneth, got from the first King James, as a reward for his services against the house of Albany. Yet the good humour of the old baron was not that of the toper, which, produced by the bowl, would not exist but for its inspiring draught; the feeling of happiness and universal good-will lay at the bottom of the heart itself, and was only swelled into a state of glorious ebullition by the charm of the magic of the vine branch—the true Mercurial *caduceus*, the only true magic wand upon earth.

Though the spirit of antiquarianism is seldom associated with the swelling affections of the heart that is dedicated to Momus, old Innerkepple had, notwithstanding, been able to combine the two qualities or powers. Sitting in his old wainscotted hall, over a goblet of spiced Tokay, there were three old subjects he loved to speculate upon; and these were—his old castle, with its chronicled wounds, where the Genius of War sat alongside of the “auld carle” Time, in grim companionship; secondly, the family tree of the Innerkepples—with himself, a good old branch, kept green by good humour and Tokay, at the further verge; and a small green twig, as slender as a lily stalk, issuing from the old branch—no other than the daughter of Innerkepple, the fair Kate Kennedy, a buxom damsel, of goodly proportions, and as merry, with the aid of health and young sparkling blood, as the old baron was with the spiced wine of Tokay; and, in the third place, there was the true

legitimate study of the antiquary, the ancient wine itself, the mortal years of which he counted with an eye as bright as Cocker's over a triumphant solution. As this last subject grew upon him, he became inspired, like the old poet of Teos, and the rafters of Innerkepple rang to the sound of his voice, tuned to the air of "The Guidwife o' Tullybody," and fraught with the deeds, active and passive, of the barons of Innerkepple and their castle.

The fair Katherine Kennedy inherited her father's good humour, and, maugre all the polishing and freezing influences of high birth, retained her inborn freedom of thought and action, heedless whether the contortion of the *buccæ* in a broad laugh were consistent with the placidity of beauty, or the scream of the heart-excited risibility were in accordance with the formula of high breeding. Buxom in her person, and gay in her manners, she formed the most enchanting baggage of all the care-killing damsels of her day—the most exquisite ronion that ever chased Melancholy from her yellow throne on the face of Hypochondria, or threw the cracker of her persiflage into the midst of the crew of blue devils that bind down care-worn mortals by the bonds of *ennui*. She was no antiquary, even in the limited sense of her father's study of the science of cobwebs; being rather given to *neoterics*, or the science which teaches the qualities of things of to-day or yesterday. Age in all things she hated with a very good feminine spirit of detestation; and, following up her principles, she arrived at the conclusion that youth and beauty were two of the very best qualities that could be possessed by a lover. Her father's impassioned praises of the old branches of the tree of the Innerkepples—comprehending the brave Ludovick, who fell at Homildon, and the memorable Walter, who sold his life at the price of a score of fat Englishmen at the red Flodden—produced only her best and loudest laugh, as she figured to herself the folly

of preferring the rugged trunk to the green branches that suspend at their points the red-cheeked apple full of sweetness and juice. Neither cared the hilarious damsel much for the reverend turrets of Innerkepple. Her father's description, full of good humour as it was, of the various perils they had passed, and the service they had done their country, seemed to her, as she stood on the old walls, listening to the narrative, like the croak of the old corbies that sat on the pinnacles; and her laugh came again full of glee through the loopholes, or echoed from the battered curtain or recesses of the ballium.

That such a person as merry old Innerkepple should have a bitter and relentless foe in the proprietor of the old strength called Otterstone, in the neighbourhood, is one of the most instructive facts connected with the system of war and pillage that prevailed on the Borders, principally during the reign of Henry VIII. of England and James V. of Scotland, when the spirit of religion furnished a cause of aggression that could not have been afforded by the pugnacious temperaments of the victims of attack. Magnus Fotheringham of Otterstone had had a deadly feud with Kenneth Kennedy, the father of the good old Innerkepple, and ever since had nourished against his neighbour a deadly spite, which he had taken many means of gratifying. His opponent had acted merely on the defensive; but his plea had been so well vindicated by his retainers, who loved him with the affection of children, that the splenetic aggressor had been twice repulsed with great slaughter. Most readily would the jovial baron, who had never given any cause of offence, have seized upon the demon of Enmity, and, *oborto collo*, forced the fiend into the smoking flagon of spiced wine, while he held out the hand of friendship to his hereditary foe; but such was Otterstone's inveteracy, that he would not meet him but with arms in his hands, so that all the endeavours of

the warm-hearted and jolly Innerkepple to overcome the hostility of his neighbour, were looked upon as secret modes of wishing to entrap him, and take vengeance on him for his repeated attacks upon the old castle.

Some short time previous to the period about which we shall become more interested, Innerkepple, with twenty rangers, was riding the marches of his property, when he was set upon by his enemy, who had nearly twice that number of retainers. Taking up with great spirit the plea of their lord, the men who were attacked rallied round the old chief, and fought for him like lions, drowning (perhaps purposely) in the noise of the battle the cries of Innerkepple, who roared, at the top of his voice—

“Otterstone, man—hear me!—A pint o’ my auld Canary will do baith you and me mair guid than a’ that bluid o’ your men and mine. Stop the fecht, man. I hae nae feud against you, an’ I’m no answerable for the wrangs o’ thy father Kenneth.”

These peaceful words were lost amidst the sounds of the battle, and Otterstone construed the contortions of the peacemaker into indications of revenge, and his bawling was set down as his mode of inspiring his followers. The fight accordingly progressed, old Innerkepple at intervals holding up a white handkerchief as a sign of peace; but which, having been used by him in stopping the wounds of one of his men, was received with its blood-marks as a signal of revenge, both by his men and those of the aggressor. The strife accordingly increased, and all was soon mixed up in the confusion of the *melée*.

“Has feud ran awa wi’ yer senses, Otterstone?” again roared the good old baron. “I’ll gie yer son, wha’s at St. Omers, the hand o’ my dochter Kate. Do you hear me, man? If you will mix the bluids o’ oor twa houses, let it be dune by Haly Kirk.”

His words never reached Otterstone; but his own men

who adored and idolized their beautiful young mistress, whose unvaried cheerfulness and kindness had won their hearts, heard the proposition of their master with astonishment and dissatisfaction. They were still sorely pressed by their enemy, who, seeing the stained handkerchief in the hands of Innerkepple, were roused to stronger efforts. At this moment an extraordinary vision met their eyes. A detachment of retainers from the castle came forward in the most regular warlike array, having at their head their young mistress, armed with a helmet and a light jerkin, and bearing in her hand a sword of suitable proportions. A loud shout from the worsted combatants expressed their satisfaction and surprise, and in a moment the assistant corps joined their friends, and commenced to fight. The unusual vision relaxed for a moment the energies of Otterstone's men; but a cry from their chief, that they would that day be ten times vanquished if they were defeated by a female leader, again inspired them, and instigated them to the fight.

“Press forward, brave vassals of Innerkepple!” cried Katherine. “Your foes have no fair damsel to inspire them; and who shall resist those whose arms are nerved in defence of an old chief and a young mistress? He who kills the greatest number of Otterstone's men shall have the privilege of demanding a woman's guerdon from Katherine Kennedy. If this be not enough to make ye fight like lions, ye deserve to be hung in chains on the towers of Otterstone.”

Smiling as she uttered her strange speech, she hurried to her father, who was still making all the efforts in his power to bring about a parley. He had got within a few yards of Otterstone, and it required all the energies of Katherine to keep him back and defend him from insidious blows—an office she executed with great agility, by keeping her light sword whirling round her head, and

inflicting wounds—not perhaps of great depth—on those who were ungallant and temerarious enough to approach her parent.

“See, Otterstone, man,” cried the laird, still intent on peace, and sorry for the deadly work that was going on around him. “Is she no fit to mak heirs to Otterstone? Up wi’ yer helm, Kate, and show him yer fair face. Ha! man, stop this bluidy work, and let us mend a’ by a carousal. Deil’s in the heart and stamack o’ the man that prefers warring to wassailing!”

“He does not hear you, father,” cried Kate. “We must defend ourselves. On, brave followers! Ye know your guerdon. Gallant knights have kneeled for it and been refused it. You are to fight for it, and to receive it. Hurrah for Innerkepple!” And she swung her light falchion round her head, while the war-cry of the family, “*Festina lente!*” arose in answer to her inspiring appeal, and the men rushed forward with new ardour on their foes.

“You are as bluid-thirsty as he is, Kate,” cried the baron. “What mean ye, woman? Haste ye up to Otterstone, and fling yer arms round his neck, and greet a guid greet, according to the fashion o’ womankind. Awa! haste ye, and say, mairower, that ye’ll be the wife o’ his son, and join the twa baronies that are gaping for ane anither. Quick, woman; tears are mere water—thin aneuch, Gude kens!—but thae men’s bluid is thicker than my vintage o’ the year ’90.”

“Katherine Kennedy never yet wept either to friend or foe, unless in the wild glee of her frolics,” replied the maiden. “By the bones of Camilla! I thought I was only fit for sewing battle scenes on satin, and laughing as I killed a knight with my needle; but I find I have the Innerkepple blood in my veins, and my cheek is glowing like a blood-red rose. Take care of yourself, good father,

and leave the affair to me. A single glance of my eye has more power in it than the command of the proudest baron of the Borders. On, good hearts!" And she again rode among the men, and inspired them with her voice and looks.

The effect of the silvery tones of the voice of Katherine on the hearts of her father's retainers was electric; they fought like lions, and it soon became apparent to Otterstone that a woman is a more dangerous enemy than a man. The cry, "For the fair maid of Innerkepple!" resounded among the combatants, and soon exhibited greater virtue than the war-cry of the house. Against men actuated by the chivalrous feelings that naturally arose out of the defence of a beautiful woman, all resistance was vain; the ranks of Otterstone's men were broken, and this advantage having been seized by their opponents, whose energies were rising every moment, as the sound of Katherine's voice saluted their ears, a route ensued, and the usual consequences of that last resource of the vanquished—flight—were soon apparent in the wounded victims, who fell ingloriously with wounds on their backs. The pursuers were inclined to continue the pursuit even to the walls of Otterstone, but Katherine called them back.

"To slay the flying," said she, with a laugh, as the usual hilarity of her spirits returned upon her, "is what I call effeminate warfare. When men flee, women pursue; and what get they for their pains more than the wench got from Theseus, whom she hunted for his heart, and got, as our hunters do, the kick of his heel? Away, and carry in our disabled, that I may, with woman's art, cure the wounds that have been received in defence of a woman."

The men obeyed with alacrity, and Innerkepple himself stared in amazement at his daughter, who had always before

appeared to him as a wild romp, fit only for killing men with her beauty, or tormenting them with the elfin tricks or bewitching waggeries of her restless salient spirit.

"I'll hae ye in the wainscotted ha', Kate," said the father, as he entered his private chamber, leaning on the arm of his daughter, "painted wi' helm, habergeon, and halberd, and placed alongside o' Lewie o' Homildon and Watt o' Flodden."

"I care not, father," replied Katherine, "if you give the painter instructions to paint me laughing at those famous progenitors of our house, who were foolish enough to give their lives for that glory I can purchase for nothing, and get the lives of my enemies to boot; but I must go and minister to the gallant men who have been wounded."

"Minister first to your father, Kate," replied Innerkepple, with a knowing look.

"And to your father's daughter, you would add," replied she, with a smile. "A bridal and a battle lack wine." And, hastening to a cupboard, she took out and placed on the table a flagon and two cups, the latter of which she filled.

"Rest to the souls of the men I have slain!" said she, laughing, as she lifted the wine cup to her head, while her father was performing the same act.

"What! did ye kill ony o' Otterstone's men?" said Innerkepple.

"Every time I lifted up my visor," replied she, "I scattered death around me. Hal! hal! what fools men are! Their bodies are tenantless; we women are the souls that live outside of them, and take up our residence within their clayey precincts only when we have an object to serve. The tourney has taught me the power of our sex; and there I have thrown my spirit into the man I hated, to gratify my humour by seeing him, poor caitiff! as he caught my hazel eye, writhe and wring, and contort himself into all the attitudes of Proteus."

"Wicked imp!" said Innerkepple, laughing.

"And when he had sufficiently twisted himself," continued she, "I have, with a grave face given the same hazel eye to his opponent, and set his body in motion in the same way. The serpent-charmer is nothing to a woman. By this art, I to-day gained the victory; and I'll stake my auburn toupée against thy grey wig, that I beat, in the same way, the boldest baron of the Borders."

"By the faith o' Innerkepple, ye're no blate, Kate!" said the old baron, still laughing; "but come, let us see our wounded men"—taking his daughter's arm.

"Leave their wounds to me, father," said she. "The sting of the tarantula is cured by an old song. We women are the true leeches; doctors are quacks and medicasters to us. We kill and cure like the Delphic sword, which makes wounds and heals them by alternate strokes."

"Ever at your quips, roisterer," said Innerkepple, as they arrived at the court.

The wounded men had been brought in, and were consigned to the care of one of the retainers, skilled in medicine, Katherine's medicaments—her looks and tones—being reserved for a balsamic application, after the wounds were cicatrized. The other retainers were, meanwhile, busy in consultation, as might have been seen by their congregating into parties, talking low, and throwing looks at Innerkepple and his fair daughter, as they stood on the steps of the inner door of the castle.

"The guerdon! the guerdon!" at last said one of the vassals, advancing and throwing himself at the feet of Kate.

"Ha! ha! I forgot," replied she laughing; "but turn up thy face—art thou the man?"

"So say my companions, fair leddy," replied he. "I brocht doon wi' this arm five o' Otterstone's men."

"With that arm!" replied she, "and what spirit nerved the dead lumber, thinkest thou?"

"Dootless yours, fair leddy," answered he, smiling knowingly; "but, though the spirit was borrowed, I'm no the less entitled to my reward."

"A good stickler for the rights of your sex," answered she, keeping up the humour; "but what guerdon demandest thou?"

"That whilk knights hae sued in vain for at your fair feet," answered the man, smiling, as he uttered nearly the words she had used at the battle.

"Caught in my own snare," replied she, laughing loudly.

"Ah, Kate, Kate!" said the baron, joining in the humour, "hoo mony gallant barons, and knights, and gentlemen hae ye tormented by thae fair lips o' yours, which carry in their cunnin' words a defence o' themsels sae weel contrived that nane daur approach them! Ye're caught at last. Stand to yer richts, man. A kiss was promised ye, and by the honour o' Innerkepple, a kiss ye'll hae, if I should haud her head by a grip o' her bonny auburn locks."

"Hold! hold!" cried Katherine; "this matter dependeth on the answer to a question. Art thou married, sirrah?"

The man hesitated, fearful of being caught by his clever adversary

"Have a care o' yoursel, Gregory," said Innerkepple, "ye're on dangerous ground."

"What if I am or am not?" said the man, cautiously, turning up his eye into the face of the wicked querist.

"If thou art not," said she, "then would a kiss of so fair a damsel be to thee beyond the value of a croft of the best land o' the barony o' Innerkepple; but if thou art, then would the guerdon be as nothing to the kiss of thy wife, and as the weight of a feather in the scale against an oxengate of good land."

"I'm no married," replied the man; "but, an't please yer leddyship, I'll take the oxengate."

"Audacious varlet!" cried Kate, rejoicing in the adroit-

ness she exhibited; "wouldst thou prefer a piece of earth to a kiss of Kate Kennedy—a boon which the gayest knights of the Borders have sued for in vain! But 'tis well—thou hast refused the guerdon. Ha! ha! Men of Innerkepple, ye are witnesses to the fact. This man hath spurned my guerdon, and sought dull earth for my rosy lips."

"We are witnesses," cried the retainers; and the courtyard rang with the laugh which the cleverness of their fair mistress had elicited from those who envied Gregory of his privilege.

"Kate, Kate!" said the old baron, joining in the laugh, "will ever mortal be able to seize what are sae weel guarded? I believe ye will be able to argue yer husband oot o' his richts o' proving whether thae little traitors be made of mortal flesh or ripe cherries. But wine is better than women's lips; and since Kate has sae cleverly got quit o' her obligation, I'll mak amends by gieing ye a *surrogatum*."

Several measures of good old wine were served out to the men by the hands of Katherine, who rejoiced in the contradiction of refusing one thing to give a better. Her health, and that of Innerkepple, were drunk with loud shonts of approbation; and the wassail was kept up till a late hour of the night.

Meanwhile, Otterstone was struggling with his disappointment, and nourishing a deep spirit of revenge. The shame of his defeat, accomplished by a girl, was insufferable; and the gnawing pain of the loss of honour and men, in a cause where he had calculated securely on crushing his supposed enemy, affected him so severely, that he sent, it was reported, for his son, who had lived from his infancy at St. Omers, to come over to administer to him consolation. When Innerkepple heard of these things, he marvelled greatly at the stubbornness of *his* neighbour, whom he wished, above all things, to drag, *volente volente*, into a deep

wassail in the old wainscotted hall of his castle, whereby he might drown, with reason itself, all their hereditary grudges, and transform a foe into a friend. These feelings were also participated in by the warlike Kate, who acknowledged that she did not, on that memorable day, fight for anything on earth that she knew of, but the safety of her father, and the sheer glory of victory. She entertained the best possible feelings towards Otterstone, though she admitted, with a laugh, that if his men had not that day run for their lives, she would have fought till they and their lord lay all dead upon the field, and the glory of Otterstone was extinguished for ever.

A considerable period that passed in quietness, seemed to indicate that the anger of the vanquished baron had escaped by the valves appointed by nature for freeing the liver of its redundant bile. Meanwhile, Innerkeppler's universal love of mankind increased, as his friendship for the juice of the grape grew stronger and stronger, and his potations waxed deeper and deeper; so that he was represented, all over the Borders, as being the most jovial baron of his time. The fame of Kate also went abroad like fire-flaughts; but no one knew what to make of her—whether to set her down as a beautiful virago, or as a merry imp of sportive devilry, who fought her father's enemy with the same good-will she felt towards the lovers whom she delighted with her beauty and gaiety, and tormented by her cruel waggeries and wiles.

This apparent quietness, and the consequent freedom from all danger, induced the old baron to comply with a request made to him by King James, to lend him forty of his followers, to aid in suppressing some disturbances caused by a number of outlawed reivers at that time ravaging the Borders. Katherine gave her consent to the measure; but she wisely exacted the condition that the men should not be removed to a greater distance from the castle than

ten miles. When James' emissary asked her why she ad-
jected this condition to her father's agreement, she answered,
with that waggish mystery in which she often loved to
indulge, that she had such a universal love for his—the
emissary's—sex, that she could not suffer the idea of her
gallant men being further removed from her than the dis-
tance on which she had condescended. A question for ex-
planation only produced another wicked *quodlibet*; so that
the royal messenger was obliged to be contented with a
reason that sounded in his ears very like a contempt of
royal authority—a circumstance for which she cared no
more than she did for the mute expression of admiration
of her beauty, that her quick eye detected on the face of
the deputy.

The men having been detached from the castle for the
service of the king, there remained only a small number,
not more than sufficient for occupying the more important
stations on the walls of the strength. There was, however,
no cause for alarm; and old Innerkepple continued to specu-
late over his spiced Tokay, on his three grand subjects of
antiquarian research; while Katherine followed her various
occupations of listening to and laughing at his reveries,
sewing battle scenes on satin, and killing her knights with
her needle, in as many grotesque ways as her inventive
fancy could devise. One day the sound of a horn cut right
through the middle a long pull of Canary in the act of being
perfected by the old baron's powers of swallow; and, in
a short time, the warder came in and said that a wine
merchant, with sumpter mules and panniers, was at
the end of the drawbridge, and had expressed a strong
desire to submit his commodity to the test of such a
famous judge of the spirit of the grape as the baron of
Innerkepple, whose name had gone forth as transcending
that of all modern wine-drinkers.

“A wine merchant!” ejaculated Innerkepple, smacking

his tips after his interrupted draught of vintage '90. "What species o' sma' potation does he deal in? Ha! ha! It suits my humour to see the quack's een reel, as he finds his tongue and palate glued thegither wi' what I ca' wine, and gets them loosed again by his ain coloured water. Show him in, George."

"Whar is my leddy, yer Honour?" said the seneschal, looking bluntly. "Will she consent to the drawbridge bein' raised at a time when the castle's nearly empty?"

"She has just gane into the green parlour in the west tower," said the baron. "But I'll tak Kate in my ain hands. She likes fun as weel as her auld father, and will laugh to see this quack beaten wi' his ain bowls."

The seneschal withdrew, though reluctantly, and casting his eyes about for the indispensable Katherine; but she was not within his reach, and he felt himself compelled, by the impatience of the old baron, to admit the merchant. The creaking hinges of the bridge resounded through the castle and the merchant and his mules were seen by Katherine, looking through a loophole, slowly making their way into the castle. It was too late for her now to consider of the propriety of the permission to enter; so she leant her chin on her hand, and quietly scanned the stranger, as he crossed the bridge, driving his mules before him with a large stick, which he brought down with a loud thwack on their backs—accompanying his act with a loud "Whoop, ho!" and occasionally throwing his eyes over the walls as he proceeded.

"Whom have we here?" said she, as she communed with herself, and nodded her head, still apparent through the loophole. "By'r Lady! neither Gascon nor Fleming, or my eyes are no better than my father's, when he looks at *antiques* through the red medium of his vintage of '90. Perchance, a lover come to run away with Kate Kennedy. Hey! the thought tickles my wild wits, and sends me on

the wings of fancy into the regions of romance. Yet I have not read that the catching and carrying off of *Tartars* hath anything to do with the themes of romantic love-errantry. I'm witty at the expense of this poor packman; but, seriously, Katherine Kennedy must carry off her lover. True to the difference that opposes me to the rest of my sex, I could not love a man whom I did not vanquish and abduct, as a riever does the chattels of the farmer."

Continuing her gaze, as she laughed at her own strange thoughts, she saw the merchant bind his mules to a ring fixed in the inside of the wall, and take out of his panniers a vessel, with which he proceeded in the direction of the door that led to the hall. When the merchant had disappeared, she saw one of the retainers of the castle examining intently the mules and their panniers. He looked up and caught her eye; and placing his finger on his forehead, made a sign for her to come down. She obeyed with her usual alacrity, and in a moment was at the side of the retainer, who, slipping gently under the shade of the castle, so as to be out of the view of those within the hall, communicated to the ear of Katherine some intelligence of an important nature. The man looked grave; Kate snapped her fingers; the fire of her eyes glanced from the balls like the sparks of struck flint, and the expression of her countenance indicated that she had formed a purpose which she gloried in executing.

"Hark ye, Gregory," said she; "I am still your debtor, but I require again your services." And, looking carefully around her, she whispered some words into the ear of the man; and, upon receiving his nod of intelligence and assent, sprung up the steps that led to the hall.

The wine merchant was, as she entered, sitting at the oaken table, opposite to the old baron, who was holding up in his hand a species of glass jug, and looking through it with that peculiar expression which is only to be found

in the face of a luxurious wine-toper in the act of passing sentence.

"Wha, in God's name, are ye, man?" cried the baron, under the cover of whose speech Kate slipped cleverly up to the window, and sat down, with her cheek resting on her hand, in apparent listlessness, but eyeing intently the stranger. "I could have wad the picture o' my ancestor, Watt o' Flodden, or King Henry's turret, in the east wing o' Innerkepple, wi' its twenty wounds, mair precious than goold, that there wasna a cup o' vintage '90 in Scotland except what I had mysel. Whar got ye't, man? Are ye the Devil? Hae ye brocht it frae my ain cellars? Speak, Satan!"

"Vy, *mon cher* Innerkepple," replied the merchant, "did I not know that you were one grand biberon—I mean drinker of vin? It is known all over the marches—I mean the Bordures. Aha! no one Frenchman could cheat the famous Innerkepple; so I brought the best that was in all my celliers. Is it not grand and magnifique?"

"Grand an' magnifique, man!" replied Innerkepple, as he sipped the wine with the gravity of a judge. "It's mair than a' that, man, if my tongue could coin a word to express its ain sense o' what it is at this moment enjoying. But the organ's stupified wi' sheer delight, and forgets its very mither's tongue; an' nae wonder, for my very een, that didna taste it, reel and get drunk wi' the sight." And the delighted baron took another pull of the goblet.

"Aha! Innerkepple, you are von of the grandest biberons I have ever seen in all this contrée," said the merchant. "It is one great pleasir to trafique vit von so learned in the science of *bon gout*. That grand smack of your lips would tempt me to ruin myself, and drink mine own commodity."

"Hae ye a stock o' the treasure?" said the baron; "I canna riddose it."

"Just five barrils in my celliers at Berwick," answered the merchant, "containing quatre hundred pints de Paris in each one of them."

"I could walk on my bare feet to Berwick to see it and taste it," said the baron; "but what clatter o' a horse's feet is that in the court, Kate?"

"Ha! sure it is my mules," said the Frenchman, starting to his feet in alarm.

"Oh! keep your seat, Monsieur Merchant," cried Kate, laughing and looking out of the window. "Can a lady not despatch her servitor to Selkirk for a pair of sandals, that should this day have been on my feet in place of in Gilbert Skinner's hands, without raising folks from their wine?"

The Frenchman was satisfied, and retook his seat; but the baron looked at Kate, as if at a loss to know what freak had now come into her inventive head. The letting down of the drawbridge, and the sound of the horse's feet passing along the sounding wood, verified her statement, but carried no conviction to the mind of Innerkepple. He had long ceased, however, the vain effort to understand the workings of his daughter's mind, and on the present occasion he was occupied about too important a subject to be interested in the vagaries of a madcap wench.

"By the Virgin!" she said again, "my jennet will lose her own sandals in going for mine, if Gregory thus strikes the rowels into her sides."

Covering, by these words, the rapid departure of the messenger, she turned her eyes to continue the study of the merchant, whom she watched with feline assiduity. The conversation was again resumed.

"Five barrels, said ye, Monsieur?" resumed Innerkepple. "Let me see—that, wi' what I hae mysel, may see me out; but it will be a guid heir-loom to Kate's husband. What is the price?"

“One merk the gallon of four pints de Paris,” answered the merchant.

(“Yet I see no marks of Otterstone about him,” muttered Kate to herself. “How beautiful he is, maugre his disguise! Had he come on a message of love, in place of war, I would have taken him prisoner, and bound him with the rays of light that come from my languishing eyes.”)

“That’s dear, man,” said Innerkepple. “But ye’re a cunning rogue; if I keep drinking at this rate, the price will sink as the flavour rises, and ye’ll catch me, as men do gudgeons, by the tongue.”

“Aha! *mon cher* Innerkepple,” said the merchant, “you have von excellent humour of fun about ye. If I vere not *un pauvre marchand*, I would have one grand plaisir in getting *mouille*—I mean drunk—vit you.”

(“Ha! my treacherous Adonis, art on that tack, with a foul wind in thy fair face?” was Kate’s mental ejaculation. “If thou nearest thy haven, I am a worse pilot than Palinurus.”)

“Wi’ wine like that before ane,” responded the baron, “the toppers alongside o’ ye may be Frenchmen or Dutchmen, warriors or warlocks, wraiths or wassailers, merchants or mahouns—a’s alike. It will put a soul into a ghaist, a yearning heart into a gowl, and a spirit o’ nobility in the breast o’ ane wha never quartered arms but wi’ the fair anes o’ flesh an’ bluid that belang to his wife. I’ll be oblivious o’ a’ warldly things before Kate’s sandals come frae Selkirk; but yer price, man, I fear, will stick to me to the end.”

“I cannot make one deduction,” said the merchant, “but I vill give to the men in the base-court one jolly debauch of very good vin, vich is in my hampers.”

(“The kaim of chanticleer is in the wind’s eye,” muttered Katherine. “Thou pointest nobly for the direction

of treachery; but my sandals will be back from Selkirk long before I am obliged to march with thee to the prison of Otterstone.”)

“Weel, mak it a merk,” said Innerkepple, “for five pints, an’ a bouse to my retainers, wha are as muckle beloved by me as if they were my bairns; an’ I will close wi’ ye.”

“Vell, that is one covenant *inter nous*,” said the merchant; “but I cannot return to Berwick until *demain*—I mean the morrow; and we vill have the long night for one jolly carousal. I vill go *sans delai*, and give the poor fellows, in the meantime, one leetle tasting of the grand cheer.”

(“Then I am too long here,” muttered Kate. “Alexander told his men that the Persian stream was poisonous, to prevent them from stopping to drink, whereby they would have fallen into the hands of the enemy. One not less than he—ha! ha!—will save her men, by telling them there is treachery in the cup.”)

She descended instantly to the base-court, and, passing from one guard to another, she whispered in their ears certain instructions, which, by the nodding of their heads, they seemed to understand, while those she had not time to visit received from their neighbours the communication at second-hand, and thus, in a short space of time, she prepared the whole retainers for the part they were destined to play. She had scarcely finished this part of her operations, and got out of the court, when the wine merchant made his appearance on the steps leading to the hall. He nodded pleasantly to the men, and, proceeding to his mules, took out of one of the panniers a large vessel filled with wine. This he laid on the flagstones of the base-court, and alongside of it he placed a large cup. He then called out to the retainers to approach, and seemed pleased with the readiness with which they complied with his request.

"Mine very good fellows," said he, "I have sold your master, Innerkepple, one grand quantity of vine; and he says I am under one obligation to treat you vit a hamper, for the sake of the grand affection he bears to you. You may drink as much as ever you vill please; and ven this is brought to one termination, I will supply you vit more."

"We're a' under a suitable obligation to ye, sir," replied the oldest of the retainers, a sly, pawky Scotchman—"and winna fail to do credit to the present ye've sae nobly presented to us; but do ye no hear Innerkepple callin' for ye frae the ha'? Awa, sir, to the guid baron, and leave us to our carouse."

"Ay," said another; "we'll inform ye when this is finished."

"Finished!" said a third; "we'll be a' on oor backs before we see the end o't."

"Aha! excellent jolly troupl!" cried the merchant, delighted with this company.

The voice of Katherine, who appeared on the steps leading to the hall, now arrested their attention.

"My father is impatient for thee, good merchant," said she.

"*Ma chere* leddy," replied he, "I will be there *a present*." And, looking up to see that she had again disappeared—"Drink, my jolly mates," he continued. "It is the grand matiere, the *bon* stuff, the excellant good liqueur. Aha! you will be so merry, and you know you have the consent of Innerkepple."

"We'll be a' as drunk as bats," said he who spoke first, with a sly leer.

"The Deil tak him wha has the beddin' o' us!" said another.

"So say I," added half-a-dozen of voices.

"Then I am the Deil's property," said the warder, "un-

less I am saved by the power o' the wine; and, by my faith, I'll no spare't."

"Aha! very good! excellent joke!" cried the delighted merchant. "Drink, and shame the Diable, as we say in France. Wine comes from the gods, and is the grand poison of Beelzebub."

And, after enjoying deep potations, the merchant returned to the hall, amidst the laughter and pretended applause of the men. The moment he had disappeared, Katherine got carried to the spot a measure filled with wine and water; and, having emptied in another vessel the contents of the merchant's hamper, the thin and innocuous potation was poured in to supply its place. The men assisted in the operation; and, all being finished, they began to carouse with great glee and jollity.

"I said, my leddy, to the merchant, that we would be a' as drunk as bats," said one of the humorists; "and sure this is a fair beginning; for wha could stand drink o' this fearfu' strength?"

"The Deil tak him wha has the beddin' o' us!" said the other, laughing, as he drank off a glass of the thin mixture.

"Then I am the Deil's property," said the warder, "unless I am saved by the power o' this strong drink."

And thus the men, encouraged by the smiles of Kate, who was, with great activity, conducting the ceremonies, seemed to be getting boisterous on the strength of the merchant's wine. Their jokes raised real laughter; and the noise of their mirth went up and entered into the hall, falling like incense on the heart of the merchant. Katherine, meanwhile, again betook herself to her station at the hall window, using assiduously both her eyes and ears; the former being directed to a dark fir plantation that stood to the left of the castle, and the latter occupied by the conversations of her father and the merchant.

“My men,” said Innerkepple, “seem to be following the example o’ their master. They are gettin’ noisy. I hope, Monsieur, ye were moderate in yer present. A castle-fu’ o’ drunk men is as bad as a headfu’ o’ intoxicated notions.”

(“Hurrah for the French merchant! Long life to him! May he continue as strong as his liquor!”)

“Aha! the jolly good fellows are feeling the sting of the spirit,” said the merchant, with sparkling eyes.

“Ungrateful’ dogs!” rejoined Innerkepple; “I treat them as if they were my sons, and hear hoo they praise a stranger for a bellyfu’ o’ wine! My beer never produced sae muckle froth o’ flattery. But this wine o’ yours, Monsieur, drowns a’ my indignation.”

(“Long life to Innerkepple and the fair Katherine!”)

“Now you are getting the grand adulation,” said the Frenchman. “Ha! they are a jovial troupe of good chaps, and deserve one grand potation; but I gave them only one leetle hamper, for fear they should get *mouillé*.”

“Very considerate, Monsieur, very prudent and kind,” said the baron; “for twa-thirds o’ my men are fechtin for Jamie, and we hae a kittle neebor in Otterstone, whose son I hear has come hame frae St. Omers. By-the-by, saw ye the callant in France? They say he’s sair ashamed o’ the defeat o’ his father by the generalship o’ my dochter Kate.”

“Ha! did *ma chere* leddy combattre Otterstone?” ejaculated the Frenchman, laughing. “Very good! ha! ha! ha! I did not know that, ven I sold him one quantity of vin yesterday; but I assure you, *mon cher* Innerkepple, he is not at all your enemy, and his son did praise *ma chere* leddy as the most magnificent vench in all the *contrée*.”

(“Excellently sustained,” muttered Katherine to herself. “How I do love the roll of that dark eye, and the curl of

that lip covered with the black moustache! Can so much beauty conceal a deadly purpose? But the 'magnificent vench' shall earn yet a better title to the soubriquet out of thy discomfiture, fair, deceitful, sweet devil.")

"I only wish I had Otterstone whar you are, man," said Innerkepple, "wi' the liquor as sweet an' my bile nae bitterer. I would conquer him in better style than did my dochter, though, I confess, she manœuvred him beautifully."

("Perdition to the faes o' Innerkepple! and, chief o' them, the fause Otterstone, the leddy-licked loon!")

"Helas! The master and the men have the very different creeds," said the Frenchman, shrugging his shoulders; "but my vin is making the *bon* companions choleric. Ha! ha!"

("It is—it is!") muttered Katherine, as she strained her eyes to catch the signal of a white handkerchief, that floated on the top of one of the trees in the fir-wood.)

She now abruptly left the hall, and proceeded to the place in the court occupied by those who were wassailing on the coloured water she had brewed for them with her fair hands. They were busily occupied by the manifestations of their mirth, which was not altogether simulated. A cessation of the noise evinced the effect of her presence among those who deified her.

"Up with the merry strain, my jolly revellers!" said she, smiling, and immediately "Bertram the Archer," in loud notes, rung in the ballium:—

"And Bertram held aloft the horn,
Filled wi' the bluid-red wyne,
And three times has he loudly sworn
His luvè he winna tyne.

"My Anne sits on yon eastern tower,
An' greets baith day and night,
An' scrows for her luvèr lost,
An' right turned into might.

“ ‘Then hie ye all, my merry men,
 To yonder lordly ha’!
 An if they winna ope the gate,
 We’ll scale the burly wa’.’

“ ‘Hurra!’ then shouted Bertram’s men,
 And loudly they hae sworn,
 That they will right their gallant knight
 Before the opening morn.”*

Under the cover of the noise of the song, which was sung with bacchanalian glee, Katherine communicated her farther instructions to the man who had assumed the principal direction; and, retreating quickly, lest the wine merchant should come out and surprise her, she left the revellers to continue their work. She was soon again at her post at the window. The boon companions within the hall were still busy with their conversation and their wine; and by this time the shades of evening had begun to darken the view from the castle, and envelop the towers in gloom; the rooks had retired to rest, the owls had taken up the screech note which pains the sensitive ear of night, and the bats were beginning to flap their leathern wings on the rough sides of the old walls.

The sounds of the revellers in the court-yard began gradually to die away, and the strains of “Bertram the Archer” were limited to a weak repetition of the last lines, somewhat curtailed of their legitimate syllables:—

“ And we will right our gallant knight
 Before the opening morn.”

These indications of the effect of the wine increased, till, by-and-by, all seemed to be muffled up in silence. The circumstance seemed to be noticed at once by the wine merchant; but he took no notice of it to Innerkepple whom he still continued to ply with the rich vintage

* Pinkerton gives only one verse of “Bertram the Archer,” but in those days men did not require to be antiquaries.

Kate's senses were all on the alert, and she watched every scene of the acting drama, set agoing by her own master mind. A noise was now heard at the door of the hall, as if some one wished to get in, but could not effect an opening.

"Who's there?" cried Kate, as she proceeded to open the door.

"It's me, your Lddyship's Honour," answered George, the seneschal, as he staggered, apparently in the last stage of drunkenness, into the hall.

"What means this?" cried Innerkepple, rising up, and not very well able to stand himself. "The warder o' my castle in that condition, an' a' our lives dependin' on his prudence!"

"Your Honour's maist forgiving pardon," said the warder. "I am come here, maist lordly Innerkepple"—hiccup—"to inform your Highness that a' the men o' the castle are lying in the base-court like swine. I am the only sober man in the hale menyie"—hic—hic. "But whar's the ferly? The strength o' the Frenchman's wine would have floored the strongest hensure o' the Borders"—hiccup—"an' I would hae been like the rest, if I hadna been the keeper o' the keys o' Innerkepple."

("As well as Roscius, George," muttered Kate, as she, with a smile, contemplated the actor.)

"George, George, man," said the baron, "ye're just as bad as the rest. You've been ower guid to them, Monsieur; but this *mooliness*, as ye ca' it, has a' its dangers in thae times, when castles are surprised an' taen like sleepin' mawkins in bushes o' broom. Awa to yer bed ahint the gratin', man, an' sleep aff the wine, as fast as it is possible for a drunk man to do."

George bowed, and staggered out of the hall, to betake himself to his couch.

"Aha! this is one sad misadventure," said the merchant.

“I did not know there vas half so much strength in this vin. Let us see the jolly toppers, mon noble Innerkepple. It is one grand vision to a vendeur of good vin to see the biberons lying on the ground, all *mouillé*. Helas! I was very wrong; but mon noble baron will forgive the grand fault of liberality.”

The merchant rose, and, giving his arm to Innerkepple, who had some difficulty in steadying himself, proceeded towards the court, where they saw verified the report of the warder. The men were lying about the yard, apparently in a state of perfect insensibility. The wine measure was empty and overturned; several drinking horns lay scattered around; and everything betokened a deep debauch.

“This maun hae been potent liquor,” said the baron, taking up one of the cups, in which a few drops remained, and drinking it. “Ha! man, puir gear after a’. A man nicht drink three gallons o’t, and dance to the tune o’ Gilquhisker after he has finished. What’s the meaning o’ this?”

“Aha! your tongue is *mouillé*, mon noble Innerkepple,” said the merchant.

“It may be sae,” replied the baron; “but it wasna made mooly, as ye denominate it, by drink like that. I canna understand it, Monsieur.”

As he stood musing on the strange circumstance, he caught, by the light of a torch, the eye of Kate at the window, and felt his bewilderment increased by a leer in that dark bewitching orb, whose language appeared to him often—and never more so than at present—like Greek. His attention was next claimed by the merchant, who proposed that the men should be allowed to sleep out their inebriety where they lay. This proposition was reasonable; and it would, besides, operate as a proper punishment for their exceeding the limits of that prudence which their duty to

their master required them to observe. The baron agreed to it, and, seeking again the support of the Frenchman's arm, he returned to the hall.

The night was now fast closing in. An old female domestic had placed lamps in the hall, and some supper was served up to the baron and the merchant. Kate retired, as she said, to her couch; but it may be surmised that an antechamber received her fair person, where she had something else to do than to sleep. The loud snoring of the men in the court-yard was heard distinctly, mixing with the screams of the owls that perched on the turrets. The two biberons sat down to partake of the supper, and prepare their stomachs, as Innerkepple said, for another bouse of the grand liquor. The conduct of the two carousers now assumed aspects very different from each other. The baron was gradually getting more easy and comfortable, while the merchant displayed an extreme restlessness and anxiety. The praises of his wine fell dead upon his ear, and the jokes of the good Innerkepple seemed to have become vapid and tiresome to him.

"That's a grand chorus in the court-yard, Monsieur," said the baron. "Singing, snoring, groaning, are the three successive acts o' the wassailers. They would have been better engaged eating their supper. Yah! I'm gettin' sleepy, Monsieur."

"Helas! helas!" ejaculated the merchant. "You prick my memory, mon noble Innerkepple. My poor mules! They have got no souper. Ah! cruel master that I am to forget the *pauvre* animals that have got no language to tell their wants."

("So, so—the time approaches," ejaculated Kate, mentally, as she watched behind the door.)

"Pardon me, *mon cher* baron," he continued, "I vill go and give them one leetle feed, and return to you *a present*. I have got beans in my hampers."

“Humanity needs nae pardon, man,” replied the baron, nodding with sleep. “Awa and feed the puir creatures; but tak care an’ no tramp on an’ kill ony o’ my brave men in yer effort to save the lives o’ yer mules.”

“Never fear,” said the other, taking from his pocket a small lantern, which he lighted. “Travellers stand in grand need of this machine,” he continued. “I will return on the instant.”

He now left the baron to his sleep, and crept stealthily along the passage to the door leading to the court. He was followed, unseen, by Katherine, who watched every motion. He felt some difficulty in avoiding the men, who still lay on the ground; but with careful steps he reached the wall, and suddenly sprung on the parapet.

“Prepare!” whispered Katherine into the ears of the prostrate retainers; “the time approaches.”

While thus engaged, she kept her eye upon the dark shadow of the merchant, and saw with surprise a blue light flash up from the top of the wall, and throw its ominous glare on the surrounding objects. A scream of the birds on the castle walls announced their wonder at the strange vision, and Katherine concluded that the merchant had thus produced his signal from some phosphorescent mixture, which he had ignited by the aid of the lantern. The light was followed instantly by a shrill blast of a horn. With a bound he reached the floor of the court, and, hastening to the warder’s post, threw off the guard of the wheel, and, with all the art and rapidity of a seneschal, prepared for letting down the bridge. All was still as death; there seemed to be no interruption to his proceedings; but he started as he saw the rays of a lamp thrown from a loophole over his head, upon that part of the moat which the bridge covered. He had gone too far to recede, the creaking of the hinges grated, and down came the bridge with a hollow sound. A rush was now heard as of

a body of men pressing forward to take possession of the passage; and tramp, tramp came the sounds of the marching invaders over the hollow-sounding wood. All was still silent within the castle, and the sound of the procession continued. In an instant, a dense, dark body issued from the fir-wood, and rushed with heavy impetuous force on the rear of the corps that were passing into the castle; and, simultaneously with that movement, the whole body of the men within the castle pressed forward to the end of the bridge, and met the front of the intruders, who were thus hedged in by two forces that had taken them by surprise, in both front and rear.

“Caught in our own snare!” cried the voice of old Otterstone.

“Disarm them,” sounded shrilly from the lips of Katharine Kennedy.

And a scuffle of wrestling men sent its fearful, death-like sound through the dark ballium. The strife was short and comparatively silent. The men who had rushed from the wood, and who were no other than the absent retainers of Innerkepple, coming from behind, and those within the strength meeting them in front, produced such an alarm in the enclosed troops, that the arms were taken from their hands as if they had been struck with palsy. Every two men seized their prisoner, while some holding burning torches came running forward, to show the revengeful baron the full extent of his shame. Ranged along the court, the spectacle presented by the prisoners was striking and grotesque. Their eyes sought in surprise the form of a female, who, with a sword in one hand and a torch in the other, stood in front of them, as the genius of their misfortune.

The hall door was now opened, where the old baron still sat sound asleep in his chair, unconscious of all these proceedings. The prisoners were led into the spacious

apartment, and ranged along the sides in long ranks. Innerkepple rubbed his eyes, stared, rubbed them again, and seemed lost in perfect bewilderment. All was conducted in dumb show. The proud and revengeful Otterstone was placed alongside of the good baron, his enemy; and Kate smiled as she contemplated the strange looks which the two rivals threw upon each other.

“Right happy am I,” said Katherine, coming forward in the midst of the assembly, “to meet my good friends, the noble Otterstone and his men, in my father’s hall, under the auspices of a healing friendship. Father, I offer thee the hand of Otterstone. Otterstone, I offer thee the hand of Innerkepple. Ye have long been separated by strife and war, though, on the one side, there was always a good feeling of generous kindness, opposed to a bitterness that had no cause, and a revenge that knew no excuse. Born nobles and neighbours, educated civilized men, and baptized Christians, why should ye be foes? but, above all, why should the one strike with the sword of war the hand that has held out to him the wine-cup? My father has ever been thy friend, noble Otterstone, and thou hast ever been his foe. How is this? Ah! I know it. Thou wert ignorant, noble guest, of my good father’s generous and friendly feelings, and I have taken this opportunity of introducing you to each other, that ye may mutually come to the knowledge of each other’s better qualities and intentions.”

“What, in the name o’ heaven, means a’ this, Kate?” ejaculated Innerkepple, in still unsubdued amazement. “Am I dreamin’, or am I betrayed? Whar is the wine merchant? Hoo cam ye here, Otterstone? Am I a prisoner in my ain castle, and my ain men and dochter laughing at my misfortune? But ye spoke o’ friendship, Kate. Is it possible, Otterstone, ye hae repented o’ yer ill will, and come to mak amends for past grievances?”

“Thou hast heard him, Otterstone,” said Kate. “Wilt thou still refuse the hand?”

The chief hesitated; but the good-humoured looks of Innerkepple melted him, and he held out the right hand of good-fellowship to the old baron, who seized it cordially, and shook it heartily.

“Now,” said Kate, “we must seal this friendship with a cup of wine. Bring in the wine merchant.”

The Frenchman was produced by the warder, along with the remaining hampers of the wine that had been left in the court-yard. As may have been already surmised, he was no other than the son of old Otterstone. Surprised and confounded by all these proceedings, he stood in the midst of the company, looking first at his father, and then at Innerkepple, without forgetting Kate, who stood like a majestic queen, enjoying the triumph of her spirit and ingenuity. Above all things, he wondered at the smile of good humour in the face of his father; and his surprise knew no bounds when he saw every one around as well pleased as if they had been convened for the ends of friendship.

“Hector,” said old Otterstone, looking at his son, “the game is up. This maiden has outwitted us, and we are caught in our own snare. Off with thy disguise, and show this noble damsel that thou art worthy of her best smiles.”

Hector obeyed, and took off his wig, and the clumsy habiliments that covered his armour, and stood in the midst of the assembly, a young man of exquisite beauty.

“The wine merchant, Hector Fotheringham!” cried Innerkepple. “Ah, Kate, Kate! is this the way ye bring yer lovers to Innerkepple ha’?—in the shape o’ a wine merchant—the only form o’ the Deevil I wad like to see on this earth? Ha! ye baggage, weel do ye ken hoo to get at the heart o’ your faither. But whar was the use o’

secrecy, woman? And you, Hector, man, I needed nae bribe o' Tokay to be friendly to the lover o' my dochter. A fine youth—a fine youth. Surely, surely, this man was made for my dochter Kate."

"And thy daughter Kate was made for him," cried Otterstone.

The retainers of both houses shouted applause, and the hall rang with the noise. The wine, which was intended for deception and treachery, was circulated freely, and opened the hearts of the company. Innerkepple was ready again for his Tokay, and, lifting a large goblet to his head—

"To the union o' the twa hooses!" cried he. "And I wish I had twenty dochters, and Otterstone as mony sons, that they might a' be married thegither; but, on this condition, that the bridegrooms should a' come in the shape o' wine merchants."

"Hurra, hurra!" shouted the retainers. The night was spent in good humour and revelry. All was restored; and, in a short time, the two houses were united by the marriage of Hector Fotheringham and Katherine Kennedy.

RECOLLECTIONS OF FERGUSON *

CHAPTER I.

“Of Ferguson, the bauld and slee.”—BURNS.

I HAVE, I believe, as little of the egotist in my composition as most men; nor would I deem the story of my life, though by no means unvaried by incident, of interest enough to repay the trouble of either writing or perusing it, were it the story of my own life only; but, though an obscure man myself, I have been singularly fortunate in my friends. The party-coloured tissue of my recollections is strangely interwoven, if I may so speak, with pieces of the domestic history of men whose names have become as familiar to our ears as that of our country itself; and I have been induced to struggle with the delicacy which renders one unwilling to speak much of one's self, and to overcome the dread of exertion natural to a period of life greatly advanced, through a desire of preserving to my countrymen a few notices, which would otherwise be lost to them, of two of their greatest favourites. I could once reckon among my dearest and most familiar friends, Robert Burns and Robert Ferguson.

It is now rather more than sixty years since I studied

* The perusal of this paper, written at an early period by the lamented Hugh Miller, cannot fail to suggest some reflections on the fate of the author himself and that of the poet he describes. It would be simply fanciful to draw from his choice of subject, and the sympathy he manifests for the victim of insanity, any conclusion of a felt affinity of mental type on his part. We would presently get into the obscure subject of presentiments. It is true that Hugh Miller wrote poetry, and was thus subject to the Nemesis; but we insist for no more than a case of coincidence, leaving to psychologists to settle the question of the alleged connection between certain poetical types of mind and eventual madness—cases of which are so plentifully recorded in Germany.—*Ed.*

for a few weeks at the University of St. Andrew's. I was the son of very poor parents, who resided in a seaport town on the western coast of Scotland. My father was a house-carpenter, a quiet, serious man, of industrious habits and great simplicity of character, but miserably depressed in his circumstances, through a sickly habit of body: my mother was a warm-hearted, excellent woman, endowed with no ordinary share of shrewd good sense and sound feeling, and indefatigable in her exertions for my father and the family. I was taught to read at a very early age, by an old woman in the neighbourhood—such a person as Shenstone describes in his "Schoolmistress;" and, being naturally of a reflective turn, I had begun, long ere I had attained my tenth year, to derive almost my sole amusement from books. I read incessantly; and after exhausting the shelves of all the neighbours, and reading every variety of work that fell in my way—from "The Pilgrim's Progress" of Bunyan, and the Gospel Sonnets of Erskine, to a treatise on fortification by Vauban, and the "History of the Heavens" by the Abbé Pluche—I would have pined away for lack of my accustomed exercise, had not a benevolent baronet in the neighbourhood, for whom my father occasionally wrought, taken a fancy to me, and thrown open to my perusal a large and well-selected library. Nor did his kindness terminate until, after having secured to me all of learning that the parish school afforded, he had settled me, now in my seventeenth year, at the University.

Youth is the season of warm friendships and romantic wishes and hopes. We say of the child, in its first attempts to totter along the wall, or when it has first learned to rise beside its mother's knee, that it is yet too weak to stand alone; and we may employ the same language in describing a young and ardent mind. It is, like the child, too weak to stand alone, and anxiously seeks out some kindred mind on which to lean. I had had my intimates at school,

who, though of no very superior cast, had served me, if I may so speak, as resting-places, when wearied with my studies, or when I had exhausted my lighter reading; and now, at St. Andrew's, where I knew no one, I began to experience the unhappiness of an unsatisfied sociality. My schoolfellows were mostly stiff, illiterate lads, who, with a little bad Latin and worse Greek, plumed themselves mightily on their scholarship; and I had little inducement to form any intimacies among them; for, of all men, the ignorant scholar is the least amusing. Among the students of the upper classes, however, there was at least one individual with whom I longed to be acquainted. He was apparently much about my own age, rather below than above the middle size, and rather delicately than robustly formed; but I have rarely seen a more elegant figure or more interesting face. His features were small, and there was what might perhaps be deemed a too feminine delicacy in the whole contour; but there was a broad and very high expansion of forehead, which, even in those days, when we were acquainted with only the phrenology taught by Plato, might be regarded as the index of a capacious and powerful mind; and the brilliant light of his large black eyes, seemed to give earnest of its activity.

“Who, in the name of wonder, is that?” I inquired of a class-fellow, as this interesting-looking young man passed me for the first time.

“A clever, but very unsettled fellow from Edinburgh,” replied the lad; “a capital linguist, for he gained our first bursary three years ago; but our Professor says he is certain he will never do any good. He cares nothing for the company of scholars like himself; and employs himself—though he excels, I believe, in English composition—in writing vulgar Scotch rhymes, like Allan Ramsay. His name is Robert Ferguson.”

I felt, from this moment, a strong desire to rank among

the friends of one who cared nothing for the company of such men as my class-fellow, and who, though acquainted with the literature of England and Rome, could dwell with interest on the simple poetry of his native country.

There is no place in the neighbourhood of St. Andrew's where a leisure hour may be spent more agreeably than among the ruins of the Cathedral. I was not slow in discovering the eligibilities of the spot; and it soon became one of my favourite haunts. One evening, a few weeks after I had entered on my course at college, I had seated myself among the ruins in a little ivied nook fronting the setting sun, and was deeply engaged with the melancholy Jaques in the forest of Ardennes, when, on hearing a light footstep, I looked up, and saw the Edinburgh student whose appearance had so interested me, not four yards away. He was busied with his pencil and his tablets, and muttering, as he went, in a half audible voice, what, from the inflection of the tones, seemed to be verse. On seeing me, he started, and apologizing, in a few hurried but courteous words, for what he termed the involuntary intrusion, would have passed; but, on my rising and stepping up to him, he stood.

"I am afraid, Mr. Ferguson," I said, "'tis I who owe *you* an apology; the ruins have long been yours, and I am but an intruder. But you must pardon me; I have often heard of them in the west, where they are hallowed, even more than they are here, from their connection with the history of some of our noblest Reformers; and, besides, I see no place in the neighbourhood where Shakspeare can be read to more advantage."

"Ah," said he, taking the volume out of my hand, "a reader of Shakspeare and an admirer of Knox. I question whether the heresiarch and the poet had much in common."

"Nay, now, Mr. Ferguson," I replied, "you are too true a Scot to question that. They had much, very much in

common. Knox was no rude Jack Cade, but a great and powerful-minded man; decidedly as much so as any of the nobler conceptions of the dramatist—his Cæsars, Brutuses, or Othellos. Buchanan could have told you that he had even much of the spirit of the poet in him, and wanted only the art; and just remember how Milton speaks of him in his “*Areopagitica*.” Had the poet of “*Paradise Lost*” thought regarding him as it has become fashionable to think and speak now, he would hardly have apostrophized him as—*Knox, the reformer of a nation—a great man animated by the spirit of God.*”

“Pardon me,” said the young man, “I am little acquainted with the prose writings of Milton; and have, indeed, picked up most of my opinions of Knox at second-hand. But I have read his *merry* account of the murder of Beaton, and found nothing to alter my preconceived notions of him, from either the matter or manner of the narrative. Now that I think of it, however, my opinion of Bacon would be no very adequate one, were it formed solely from the extract of his history of Henry VII., given by Kaimes in his late publication.—Will you not extend your walk?”

We quitted the ruins together, and went sauntering along the shore. There was a rich sunset glow on the water, and the hills that rise on the opposite side of the Frith stretched their undulating line of azure under a gorgeous canopy of crimson and gold. My companion pointed to the scene:—“These glorious clouds,” he said, “are but wreaths of vapour; and these lovely hills, accumulations of earth and stone. And it is thus with all the past—with the past of our own little histories, that borrows so much of its golden beauty from the medium through which we survey it—with the past, too, of all history. There is poetry in the remote—the bleak hill seems a darker firmament, and the chill wreath of vapour a river of fire. And you, sir, seem to have contemplated the history of our stern Reformers

through this poetical medium, till you forget that the poetry was not in them, but in that through which you surveyed them."

"Ah, Mr. Ferguson," I replied, "you must permit me to make a distinction. I acquiesce fully in the justice of your remark; the analogy, too, is nice and striking, but I would fain carry it a little further. Every eye can see the beauty of the remote; but there is a beauty in the near—an interest, at least—which every eye cannot see. Each of the thousand little plants that spring up at our feet, has an interest and beauty to the botanist; the mineralogist would find something to engage him in every little stone. And it is thus with the poetry of life—all have a sense of it in the remote and the distant; but it is only the men who stand high in the art—its men of profound science—that can discover it in the near. The *mediocre* poet shares but the commoner gift, and so he seeks his themes in ages or countries far removed from his own; while the man of nobler powers, knowing that all nature is instinct with poetry, seeks and finds it in the men and scenes in his immediate neighbourhood. As to our Reformers"—

"Pardon me," said the young poet; "the remark strikes me, and, ere we lose it in something else, I must furnish you with an illustration. There is an acquaintance of mine, a lad much about my own age, greatly addicted to the study of poetry. He has been making verses all his life-long; he began ere he had learned to write them even; and his judgment has been gradually overgrowing his earlier compositions, as you see the advancing tide rising on the beach and obliterating the prints on the sand. Now, I have observed, that, in all his earlier compositions, he went far from home; he could not attempt a pastoral without first transporting himself to the vales of Arcady; or an ode to Pity or Hope, without losing the warm living sentiment in the dead, cold, personifications of the Greek. The Hope

and Pity he addressed were, not the undying attendants of human nature, but the shadowy spectres of a remote age. Now, however, I feel that a change has come over me. I seek for poetry among the fields and cottages of my own land. I—a—a—the friend of whom I speak——But I interrupted your remark on the Reformers.”

“Nay,” I replied, “if you go on so, I would much rather listen than speak. I only meant to say that the Knoxes and Melvilles of our country have been robbed of the admiration and sympathy of many a kindred spirit, by the strangely erroneous notions that have been abroad regarding them for at least the last two ages. Knox, I am convinced, would have been as great as Jeremy Taylor, had he not been greater.”

We sauntered along the shore till the evening had darkened into night, lost in an agreeable interchange of thought. “Ah!” at length exclaimed my companion, “I had almost forgotten my engagement, Mr. Lindsay; but it must not part us. You are a stranger here, and I must introduce you to some of my acquaintance. There are a few of us—choice spirits, of course—who meet every Saturday evening at John Hogg’s; and I must just bring you to see them. There may be much less wit than mirth among us; but you will find us all sober when at the gayest; and old John will be quite a study for you.”

CHAPTER II.

“Say, ye red gowns that aften here
 Hae toasted cakes to Katie’s beer,
 Gin e’er thir days hae had their peer,
 Sae blythe, sae daft!
 Ye’ll ne’er again in life’s career
 Sit half sae saft.”

Elegy on John Hogg.

We returned to town; and, after threading a few of the narrower lanes, entered by a low door into a long dark room, dimly lighted by a fire. A tall thin woman was employed in skinning a bundle of dried fish at a table in a corner.

“Where’s the guidman, Kate?” said my companion, changing the sweet pure English in which he had hitherto spoken for his mother tongue.

“John’s ben in the spence,” replied the woman “Little Andrew, the wratch, has been makin’ a totum wi’ his faither’s ae razor, an’ the puir man’s trying to shave himsel yonder, an’ girnan like a sheep’s head on the tangs.”

“Oh, the wratch! the ill-deedie wratch!” said John, stalking into the room in a towering passion, his face covered with suds and scratches—“I might as weel shave mysel wi’ a mussel shillet. Rob Ferguson, man, is that you!”

“Wearie warld, John,” said the poet, “for a’ oor philosophy.”

“Philosophy!—it’s but a snare, Rob—just vanity an’ vexation o’ speerit, as Solomon says. An’ isna it clear heterodox besides? Ye study an’ study till your brains gang about like a whirligig; an’ then, like bairns in a boat that see the land sailin’, ye think it’s the solid yearth that’s turnin’ roun’. An’ this ye ca’ philosophy; as if David

hadna tauld us that the warld sits coshly on the waters, an' canna be moved."

"Hoot, John," rejoined my companion, "it's no me, but Jamie Brown, that differs wi' you on these matters. I'm a Hoggonian, ye ken. The auld Jews were, doubtless, gran' Christians, an' wherefore no guid philosophers too? But it was cruel o' you to unkennel me this mornin' afore six, an' I up sae lang at my studies the nicht afore."

"Ah, Rob, Rob!" said John—"studying in *Tam Dun's* kirk. Ye'll be a minister, like a' the lave."

"Mendin' fast, John," rejoined the poet. "I was in your kirk on Sabbath last, hearing worthy Mr. Corkindale; whatever else he may hae to fear, he's in nae danger o' '*thinking his an thoughts,*' honest man."

"In oor kirk!" said John; "ye're dune, then, wi' precentin' in yer ain—an' troth nae wonder. What could hae possessed ye to gie up the puir chield's name i' the prayer. an' him sittin' at yer lug?"

I was unacquainted with the circumstance to which he alluded, and requested an explanation. "Oh, ye see," said John, "Rob, amang a' the ither gifts that he misguides, has the gift o' a sweet voice; an' naething else would ser' some o' oor Professors than to hae him for their precentor. They micht as weel hae thocht o' an organ—it wad be just as devout; but the soun's everything now, laddie, ye ken, an' the heart naething. Weel, Rob, as ye may think, was less than pleased wi' the job, an' tauld them he could whistle better than sing; but it wasna that they wanted, and sae it behoved him to tak his seat in the box. An' lest the folk should no be pleased wi' ae key to ae tune, he gied them, for the first twa or three days, a hale bunch to each; an' there was never sic singing in St. Andrew's afore. Weel, but for a' that it behoved him still to precent; though he has got rid o' it at last—for what did he do twa Sabbaths agone, but out up drucken Tam Moffat's name in the prayer

—the very chield that was sittin' at his elbow, though the minister couldna see him. An' when the puir stibbler was prayin' for the reprobate as weel's he could, ae half o' the kirk was needcessitated to come oot, that they might keep decent, an' the ither half to swallow their pocket napkins. But what think ye"——

"Hoot, John, now, leave oot the moral," said the poet. "Here's a' the lads."

Half a dozen young students entered as he spoke; and, after a hearty greeting, and when he had introduced me to them one by one, as a choice fellow of immense reading, the door was barred, and we sat down to half a dozen of home brewed, and a huge platter of dried fish. There was much mirth and no little humour. Ferguson sat at the head of the table, and old John Hogg at the foot. I thought of Eastcheap, and the revels of Prince Henry; but our Falstaff was an old Scotch Seceder, and our Prince a gifted young fellow, who owed all his influence over his fellows to the force of his genius alone.

"Prithee, Hal," I said, "let us drink to Sir John."

"Why, yes," said the poet, "with all my heart. Not quite so fine a fellow, though, 'bating his Scotch honesty. Half Sir John's genius would have served for an epic poet—half his courage for a hero."

"His courage!" exclaimed one of the lads.

"Yes, Willie, his courage, man. Do you think a coward could have run away with half the coolness? With a tithe of the courage necessary for such a retreat, a man would have stood and fought till he died. Sir John must have been a fine fellow in his youth."

"In mony a droll way may a man fa' on the drap drink," remarked John; "an' meikle ill, dootless, does it do in takin' aff the edge o' the speerit—the mair if the edge be a fine razor edge, an' no the edge o' a whittle. I mind about fifty years ago, when I was a slip o' a callant,"——

"Losh, John!" exclaimed one of the lads, "hae ye been fechtin wi' the cats? sic a scrapit face!"

"Wheesht," said Ferguson; "we owe the illustration to that, but dinna interrupt the story."

"Fifty years ago, when I was a slip o' a callant," continued John, "unco curious, an' fond o' kennin' everything, as callants will be,"——

"Hoot, John," said one of the students, interrupting him, "can ye no cut short, man? Rob promised last Saturday to gie us, 'Fie, let us a' to the bridal,' an' ye see the ale an' the nicht's baith wearin' dune."

"The song, Rob, the song!" exclaimed half a dozen voices at once; and John's story was lost in the clamour.

"Nay, now," said the good-natured poet, "that's less than kind; the auld man's stories are aye worth the hearing, an' he can relish the auld-wairld fisher-sang wi' the best o' ye. But we maun hae the story yet."

He struck up the old Scotch ditty, "Fie let us a' to the bridal," which he sung with great power and brilliancy; for his voice was a richly modulated one, and there was a fulness of meaning imparted to the words which wonderfully heightened the effect. "How strange it is," he remarked to me when he had finished, "that our English neighbours deny us humour! The songs of no country equal our Scotch ones in that quality. Are you acquainted with 'The Guidwife of Auchtermuchty?'"

"Well," I replied; "but so are not the English. It strikes me that, with the exception of Smollet's novels, all our Scotch humour is locked up in our native tongue. No man can employ in works of humour any language of which he is not a thorough master; and few of our Scotch writers, with all their elegance, have attained the necessary command of that colloquial English which Addison and Swift employed when they were merry."

"A braw redd delivery," said John, addressing me. "Are ye gaun to be a minister tae?"

"Not quite sure yet," I replied.

"Ah," rejoined the old man, "'twas better for the Kirk when the minister just made himsel ready for it, an' then waited till he kent whether it wanted him. 'There's young Rob Ferguson beside you,'—

"Setting oot for the Kirk," said the young poet, interrupting him, "an' yet drinkin' ale on Saturday at e'en wi' old John Hogg."

"Weel, weel, laddie, it's easier for the best o' us to find fault wi' ithers than to mend oorsels. Ye have the head, onyhow; but Jamie Brown tells me it's a doctor ye're gaun to be, after a'."

"Nonsense, John Hogg—I wonder how a man o' your standing"—

"Nonsense, I grant you," said one of the students; "but true enough for a' that, Bob. Ye see, John, Bob an' I were at the King's Muirs last Saturday, an ca'ed at the *pendicle*, in the passing, for a cup o' whey; when the guidwife tellt us there was ane o' the callants, who had broken into the milk-house twa nichts afore, lyin' ill o' a surfeit. 'Dangerous case,' said Bob; 'but let me see him; I have studied to small purpose if I know nothing o' medicine, my good woman.' Weel, the woman was just glad enough to bring him to the bedside; an' no wonder—ye never saw a wiser phiz in your lives—Dr. Dumpie's was naething till't; an', after he had sucked the head o' his stick for ten minutes, an' fand the loon's pulse, an' asked mair questions than the guidwife liked to answer, he prescribed. But, losh! sic a prescription! A day's fasting an' twa ladles o' nettle kail was the gist o't; but then there went mair Latin to the tail o' that, than oor neebor the Doctor ever had to lose."

But I dwell too long on the conversation of this evening. I feel, however, a deep interest in recalling it to memory. The education of Ferguson was of a twofold character—he studied in the schools and among the people; but it was

in the latter tract alone that he acquired the materials of all his better poetry; and I feel as if, for at least one brief evening, I was admitted to the privileges of a class-fellow, and sat with him on the same form. The company broke up a little after ten; and I did not again hear of John Hogg till I read his elegy, about four years after, among the poems of my friend. It is by no means one of the happiest pieces in the volume, nor, it strikes me, highly characteristic; but I have often perused it with an interest very independent of its merits.

CHAPTER III.

“But he is weak—both man and boy
Has been an idler in the land.”—WORDSWORTH.

I was attempting to listen, on the evening of the following Sunday, to a dull, listless discourse—one of the discourses so common at this period, in which there was fine writing without genius, and fine religion without Christianity—when a person who had just taken his place beside me, tapped me on the shoulder, and thrust a letter into my hand. It was my newly-acquired friend of the previous evening; and we shook hands heartily under the pew.

“That letter has just been handed me by an acquaintance from your part of the country,” he whispered; “I trust it contains nothing unpleasant.”

I raised it to the light, and on ascertaining that it was sealed and edged with black, rose and quitted the church, followed by my friend. It intimated, in two brief lines that my patron, the baronet, had been killed by a fall from his horse a few evenings before; and that, dying intestate, the allowance which had hitherto enabled me to prosecute

my studies necessarily dropped. I crumpled up the paper in my hand.

"You have learned something very unpleasant," said Ferguson. "Pardon me—I have no wish to intrude; but, if at all agreeable, I would fain spend the evening with you."

My heart filled, and grasping his hand, I briefly intimated the purport of the communication, and we walked out together in the direction of the ruins.

"It is, perhaps, as hard, Mr. Ferguson," I said, "to fall from one's hopes as from the place to which they pointed. I was ambitious—too ambitious, it may be—to rise from that level on which man acts the part of a machine, and tasks merely his body, to that higher level on which he performs the proper part of a rational creature, and employs only his mind. But that ambition need influence me no longer. My poor mother, too—I had trusted to be of use to her."

"Ah, my friend," said Ferguson, "I can tell you of a case quite as hopeless as your own—perhaps more so. But it will make you deem my sympathy the result of mere selfishness. In scarce any respect do our circumstances differ.

We had reached the ruins. the evening was calm and mild as when I had walked out on the preceding one; but the hour was earlier, and the sun hung higher over the hill. A newly-formed grave occupied the level spot in front of the little ivied corner.

"Let us seat ourselves here," said my companion, "and I will tell you a story—I am afraid a rather tame one; for there is nothing of adventure in it, and nothing of incident; but it may at least show you that I am not unfitted to be your friend. It is now nearly two years since I lost my father. He was no common man—common neither in intellect nor in sentiment; but though he once fondly hoped

it should be otherwise—for in early youth he indulged in all the dreams of the poet—he now fills a grave as nameless as the one before us. He was a native of Aberdeenshire; but held, latterly, an inferior situation in the office of the British Linen Company in Edinburgh, where I was born. Ever since I remember him, he had awakened too fully to the realities of life, and they pressed too hard on his spirits, to leave him space for the indulgence of his earlier fancies; but he could dream for his children, though not for himself; or, as I should perhaps rather say, his children fell heir to all his more juvenile hopes of fortune, and influence, and space in the world's eye;—and, for himself, he indulged in hopes of a later growth and firmer texture, which pointed from the present scene of things to the future. I have an only brother, my senior by several years, a lad of much energy, both physical and mental; in brief, one of those mixtures of reflection and activity which seem best formed for rising in the world. My father deemed him most fitted for commerce, and had influence enough to get him introduced into the counting-house of a respectable Edinburgh merchant. I was always of a graver turn—in part, perhaps, the effect of less robust health—and me he intended for the Church. I have been a dreamer, Mr. Lindsay, from my earliest years—prone to melancholy, and fond of books and of solitude; and the peculiarities of this temperament the sanguine old man, though no mean judge of character, had mistaken for a serious and reflective disposition. You are acquainted with literature, and know something, from books at least, of the lives of literary men. Judge, then, of his prospect of usefulness in any profession, who has lived, ever since he knew himself, among the poets. My hopes, from my earliest years, have been hopes of celebrity as a writer—not of wealth, or of influence, or of accomplishing any of the thousand aims which furnish the great bulk of mankind with motives. You will laugh at me. There

is something so emphatically shadowy and unreal in the object of this ambition, that even the full attainment of it provokes a smile. For who does not know

How vain that second life in others' breath,
The estate which wits inherit after death !'

And what can be more fraught with the ludicrous than a union of this shadowy ambition with *mediocre* parts and attainments ! But I digress.

“It is now rather more than three years since I entered the classes here. I competed for a bursary, and was fortunate enough to secure one. Believe me, Mr. Lindsay, I am little ambitious of the fame of mere scholarship, and yet I cannot express to you the triumph of that day. I had seen my poor father labouring, far, far beyond his strength, for my brother and myself—closely engaged during the day with his duties in the bank, and copying at night in a lawyer's office. I had seen, with a throbbing heart, his tall wasted frame becoming tremulous and bent, and the grey hair thinning on his temples ; and I now felt that I could ease him of at least part of the burden. In the excitement of the moment, I could hope that I was destined to rise in the world—to gain a name in it, and something more. You know how a slight success grows in importance when we can deem it the earnest of future good fortune. I met, too, with a kind and influential friend in one of the professors, the late Dr. Wilkie. Alas ! good, benevolent man ! you may see his tomb yonder beside the wall ; and, on my return from St. Andrew's, at the close of the session, I found my father on his deathbed. My brother Henry—who had been unfortunate, and, I am afraid, something worse—had quitted the counting-house and entered aboard of a man-of-war as a common sailor ; and the poor old man, whose heart had been bound up in him, never held up his head after.

“On the evening of my father’s funeral, I could have lain down and died. I never before felt how thoroughly I am unfitted for the world—how totally I want strength. My father, I have said, had intended me for the Church; and, in my progress onward from class to class, and from school to college, I had thought but little of each particular step, as it engaged me for the time, and nothing of the ultimate objects to which it led. All my more vigorous aspirations were directed to a remote future and an unsubstantial shadow. But I had witnessed, beside my father’s bed, what had led me seriously to reflect on the ostensible aim for which I lived and studied; and the more carefully I weighed myself in the balance, the more did I find myself wanting. You have heard of Mr. Brown of the Secession, the author of the “Dictionary of the Bible.” He was an old acquaintance of my father’s; and, on hearing of his illness, had come all the way from Haddington to see him. I felt, for the first time, as kneeling beside his bed, I heard my father’s breathings becoming every moment shorter and more difficult, and listened to the prayers of the clergyman, that I had no business in the Church. And thus I still continue to feel. ’Twere an easy matter to produce such things as pass for sermons among us, and to go respectably enough through the mere routine of the profession; but I cannot help feeling that, though I might do all this and more, my duty, as a clergyman, would be still left undone. I want singleness of aim—I want earnestness of heart. I cannot teach men effectually how to live well; I cannot show them, with aught of confidence, how they may die safe. I cannot enter the Church without acting the part of a hypocrite; and the miserable part of the hypocrite it shall never be mine to act. Heaven help me! I am too little a practical moralist myself to attempt teaching morals to others.

“But I must conclude my story, if story it may be called.”

· -I saw my poor mother and my little sister deprived, by my father's death, of their sole stay, and strove to exert myself in their behalf. In the daytime I copied in a lawyer's office; my nights were spent among the poets. You will deem it the very madness of vanity, Mr. Lindsay; but I could not live without my dreams of literary eminence. I felt that life would be a blank waste without them; and I feel so still. Do not laugh at my weakness, when I say I would rather live in the memory of my country than enjoy her fairest lands—that I dread a nameless grave many times more than the grave itself. But, I am afraid, the life of the literary aspirant is rarely a happy one; and I, alas! am one of the weakest of the class. It is of importance that the means of living be not disjoined from the end for which we live; and I feel that, in my case, the disunion is complete. The wants and evils of life are around me; but the energies through which those should be provided for, and these warded off, are otherwise employed. I am like a man pressing onward through a hot and bloody fight, his breast open to every blow, and tremblingly alive to the sense of injury and the feeling of pain, but totally unprepared either to attack or defend. And then those miserable depressions of spirits to which all men who draw largely on their imagination are so subject; and that wavering irregularity of effort which seems so unavoidably the effect of pursuing a distant and doubtful aim, and which proves so hostile to the formation of every better habit—alas! to a steady morality itself. But I weary you, Mr. Lindsay; besides, my story is told. I am groping onward, I know not whither; and, in a few months hence, when my last session shall have closed, I shall be exactly where you are at present.”

He ceased speaking, and there was a pause of several minutes. I felt soothed and gratified. There was a sweet melancholy music in the tones of his voice, that sunk to my

very heart; and the confidence he reposed in me flattered my pride. "How was it," I at length said, "that you were the gayest in the party of last night?"

"I do not know that I can better answer you," he replied, "than by telling you a singular dream which I had about the time of my father's death. I dreamed that I had suddenly quitted the world, and was journeying, by a long and dreary passage, to the place of final punishment. A blue, dismal light glimmered along the lower wall of the vault; and, from the darkness above, where there flickered a thousand undefined shapes—things without form or outline—I could hear deeply-drawn sighs, and long hollow groans and convulsive sobbings, and the prolonged moanings of an unceasing anguish. I was aware, however, though I knew not how, that these were but the expressions of a lesser misery, and that the seats of severer torment were still before me. I went on and on, and the vault widened, and the light increased, and the sounds changed. There were loud laughters and low mutterings, in the tone of ridicule; and shouts of triumph and exultation; and, in brief, all the thousand mingled tones of a gay and joyous revel. Can these, I exclaimed, be the sounds of misery when at the deepest? 'Bethink thee,' said a shadowy form beside me—'bethink thee if it be not so on earth.' And as I remembered that it was so, and bethought me of the mad revels of shipwrecked seamen and of plague-stricken cities, I awoke. But on this subject you must spare me."

"Forgive me," I said; "to-morrow I leave college, and not with the less reluctance that I must part from you. But I shall yet find you occupying a place among the *literati* of our country, and shall remember, with pride, that you were my friend."

He sighed deeply. "My hopes rise and fall with my spirits," he said; "and to-night I am melancholy. Do you ever go to buffets with yourself, Mr. Lindsay? Do you

ever mock, in your sadder moods, the hopes which render you happiest when you are gay? Ah! 'tis bitter warfare when a man contends with Hope!—when he sees her, with little aid from the personifying influence, as a thing distinct from himself—a lying spirit that comes to flatter and deceive him. It is thus I see her to-night.

“See'st thou that grave?—does mortal know
 Aught of the dust that lies below?
 'Tis foul, 'tis damp, 'tis void of form—
 A bed where winds the loathsome worm;
 A little heap, mouldering and brown,
 Like that on flowerless meadow thrown
 By mossy stream, when winter reigns
 O'er leafless woods and wasted plains:
 And yet that brown, damp, formless heap
 Once glowed with feelings keen and deep;
 Once eyed the light, once heard each sound
 Of earth, air, wave, that murmurs round.
 But now, ah! now, the name it bore,
 Sex, age, or form, is known no more.
 This, this alone, O Hope! I know,
 That once the dust that lies below,
 Was, like myself, of human race,
 And made this world its dwelling-place.
 Ah! this, when death has swept away
 The myriads of life's present day,
 Though bright the visions raised by thee,
 Will all my fame, my history be!”

We quitted the ruins and returned to town.

“Have you yet formed,” inquired my companion, “any plan for the future?”

“I quit St. Andrew's,” I replied, “to-morrow morning. I have an uncle, the master of a West Indiaman, now in the Clyde. Some years ago I had a fancy for the life of a sailor, which has evaporated, however, with many of my other boyish fancies and predilections; but I am strong and active, and it strikes me there is less competition on

sea at present than on land. A man of tolerable steadiness and intelligence has a better chance of rising as a sailor than as a mechanic. I shall set out, therefore, with my uncle on his first voyage."

CHAPTER 17.

At first, I thought the swankie didna ill—
 Again I glowr'd, to hear him better still;
 Bauld, slee, an' sweet, his lines mair glorious grew,
 Glow'd round the heart, an' glane'd the soul out through."

ALEXANDER WILSON.

I had seen both the Indies and traversed the wide Pacific, ere I again set foot on the Eastern coast of Scotland. My uncle, the shipmaster, was dead, and I was still a common sailor; but I was light-hearted and skilful in my profession, and as much inclined to hope as ever. Besides, I had begun to doubt, and there cannot be a more consoling doubt when one is unfortunate, whether a man may not enjoy as much happiness in the lower walks of life as in the upper. In one of my later voyages, the vessel in which I sailed had lain for several weeks at Boston in North America—then a scene of those fierce and angry contentions which eventually separated the colonies from the mother country; and when in this place, I had become acquainted, by the merest accident in the world, with the brother of my friend the poet. I was passing through one of the meaner lanes, when I saw my old college friend, as I thought, looking out at me from the window of a crazy wooden building—a sort of fencing academy, much frequented, I was told, by the Federalists of Boston. I crossed the lane in two huge strides.

"Mr. Ferguson," I said—"Mr. Ferguson," for he was withdrawing his head, "do you not remember me?"

"Not quite sure," he replied; "I have met with many sailors in my time; but I must just see."

He had stepped down to the door ere I had discovered my mistake. He was a taller and stronger-looking man than my friend, and his senior apparently by six or eight years; but nothing could be more striking than the resemblance which he bore to him, both in face and figure. I apologized.

"But have you not a brother, a native of Edinburgh," I inquired, "who studied at St. Andrew's about four years ago?—never before, certainly, did I see so remarkable a likeness."

—"As that which I bear to Robert?" he said. "Happy to hear it. Robert is a brother of whom a man may well be proud, and I am glad to resemble him in any way. But you must go in with me, and tell me all you know regarding him. He was a thin pale slip of a boy when I left Scotland—a mighty reader, and fond of sauntering into by-holes and corners; I scarcely knew what to make of him; but he has made much of himself. His name has been blown far and wide within the last two years."

He showed me through a large waste apartment, furnished with a few deal seats, and with here and there a fencing foil leaning against the wall, into a sort of closet at the upper end, separated from the main room by a partition of undressed slabs. There was a charcoal stove in the one corner, and a truckle bed in the other; a few shelves laden with books ran along the wall; there was a small chest raised on a stool immediately below the window, to serve as a writing desk, and another stool standing beside it. A few cooking utensils scattered round the room, and a corner cupboard, completed the entire furniture of the place.

"There is a certain limited number born to be rich, Jack," said my new companion, "and I just don't happen to be among them; but I have one stool for myself, you see, and, now that I have unshipped my desk, another for a visitor, and so get on well enough."

I related briefly the story of my intimacy with his brother; and we were soon on such terms as to be in a fair way of emptying a bottle of rum together.

"You remind me of old times," said my new acquaintance. "I am weary of these illiterate, boisterous, longsided Americans, who talk only of politics and dollars. And yet there are first-rate men among them too. I met, some years since, with a Philadelphia printer, whom I cannot help regarding as one of the ablest, best-informed men I ever conversed with. But there is nothing like general knowledge among the average class; a mighty privilege of conceit, however."

"They are just in that stage," I remarked, "in which it needs all the vigour of an able man to bring his mind into anything like cultivation. There must be many more facilities of improvement ere the mediocritist can develop himself. He is in the egg still in America, and must sleep there till the next age.—But when last heard you of your brother?"

"Why," he replied, "when all the world heard of him—with the last number of *Ruddiman's Magazine*. Where can you have been bottled up from literature of late? Why, man, Robert stands first among our Scotch poets."

"Ah! 'tis long since I have anticipated something like that for him," I said; "but, for the last two years, I have seen only two books, Shakspeare and 'The Spectator.' Pray, do show me some of the magazines."

The magazines were produced; and I heard, for the first time, in a foreign land and from the recitation of the poet's brother, some of the most national and most highly-finished

of his productions. My eyes filled and my heart wandered to Scotland and her cottage homes, as, shutting the book, he repeated to me, in a voice faltering with emotion, stanza after stanza of the "Farmer's Ingle."

"Do you not see it?—do you not see it all?" exclaimed my companion; "the wide smoky room, with the bright turf fire, the blackened rafters shining above, the straw-wrought settle below, the farmer and the farmer's wife, and auld grannie and the bairns. Never was there truer painting; and, oh, how it works on a Scotch heart! But hear this other piece."

He read "Sandy and Willie."

"Far, far ahead of Ramsay," I exclaimed. "More imagination, more spirit, more intellect, and as much truth and nature. Robert has gained his end already. Hurra for poor old Scotland!—these pieces must live for ever. But do repeat to me the 'Farmer's Ingle' once more."

We read, one by one, all the poems in the magazine, dwelling on each stanza, and expatiating on every recollection of home which the images awakened. My companion was, like his brother, a kind, open-hearted man, of superior intellect; much less prone to despondency, however, and of a more equal temperament. Ere we parted, which was not until next morning, he had communicated to me all his plans for the future, and all his fondly cherished hopes of returning to Scotland with wealth enough to be of use to his friends. He seemed to be one of those universal geniuses who do a thousand things well, but want steadiness enough to turn any of them to good account. He showed me a treatise on the use of the sword, which he had just prepared for the press; and a series of letters on the stamp act, which had appeared, from time to time, in one of the Boston newspapers, and in which he had taken part with the Americans.

"I make a good many dollars in these stirring times."

he said. "All the Yankees seem to be of opinion that they will be best heard across the water when they have got arms in their hands, and have learned how to use them; and I know a little of both the sword and the musket. But the warlike spirit is frightfully thirsty, somehow, and consumes a world of rum; and so I have not yet begun to make rich."

He shared with me his supper and bed for the night; and, after rising in the morning ere I awoke, and writing a long letter for Robert, which he gave me in the hope I might soon meet with him, he accompanied me to the vessel, then on the eve of sailing, and we parted, as it proved, for ever. I know nothing of his after life, or how or where it terminated; but I have learned that, shortly before the death of his gifted brother, his circumstances enabled him to send his mother a small remittance for the use of the family. He was evidently one of the kind-hearted, improvident few, who can share a very little, and whose destiny it is to have only a very little to share.

CHAPTER V.

"O Ferguson! thy glorious parts
 Ill suited law's dry, musty arts!
 My curse upon your whunstane hearts,
 Ye Embrugh gentry!
 The tithe o' what ye waste at cartes
 Mad stow'd his pantry!"

BURNS.

I visited Edinburgh, for the first time, in the latter part of the autumn of 1773, about two months after I had sailed from Boston. It was on a fine calm morning—one of those clear sunshiny mornings of October, when the gossa-

mer goes sailing about in long cottony threads, so light and fleecy that they seem the skeleton remains of extinct cloudlets; and when the distant hills, with their covering of grey frost rime, seem, through the clear cold atmosphere, as if chiselled in marble. The sun was rising over the town through a deep blood-coloured haze—the smoke of a thousand fires; and the huge fantastic piles of masonry that stretched along the ridge, looked dim and spectral through the cloud, like the ghosts of an army of giants. I felt half a foot taller as I strode on towards the town. It was Edinburgh I was approaching—the scene of so many proud associations to a lover of Scotland; and I was going to meet as an early friend one of the first of Scottish poets. I entered the town. There was a book stall in a corner of the street; and I turned aside for half a minute to glance my eye over the books.

“Ferguson’s Poems!” I exclaimed, taking up a little volume. “I was not aware they had appeared in a separate form. How do you sell this?”

“Just like a’ the ither booksellers,” said the man who kept the stall—“that’s nane o’ the buiks that come down in a hurry—just for the marked selling price.” I threw down the money.

“Could you tell me anything of the writer?” I said. “I have a letter for him from America.”

“Oh, that’ll be frae his brither Henry, I’ll wad; a clever chield too but ower fond o’ the drap drink, maybe, like Rob himsel’. Baith o’ them fine humane chields, though, without a grain o’ pride. Rob takes a stan’ wi’ me sometimes o’ half an hour at a time, an’ we clatter ower the buiks; an’, if I’m no mista’en, yon’s him just yonder—the thin, pale slip o’ a lad wi’ the broad brow. Ay, an’ he’s just comin’ this way.”

“Anything new to-day, Thomas?” said the young man, coming up to the stall. “I want a cheap second-hand

copy of Ramsay's 'Evergreen;' and, like a good man as you are, you must just try and find it for me."

Though considerably altered—for he was taller and thinner than when at college, and his complexion had assumed a deep sallow hue—I recognised him at once, and presented him with the letter.

"Ah! from brother Henry," said he, breaking it open, and glancing his eye over the contents. "What—*old college chum, Mr. Lindsay!*" he exclaimed, turning to me. "Yes, sure enough; how happy I am we should have met! Come this way—let us get out of the streets."

We passed hurriedly through the Canongate and along the front of Holyrood-house, and were soon in the King's Park, which seemed this morning as if left to ourselves.

"Dear me, and this is you yourself!—and we have again met, Mr. Lindsay!" said Ferguson; "I thought we were never to meet more. Nothing, for a long time, has made me half so glad. And so you have been a sailor for the last four years. Do let us sit down here in the warm sunshine, beside St. Anthony's Well, and tell me all your story, and how you happened to meet with brother Henry."

We sat down, and I briefly related, at his bidding, all that had befallen me since we had parted at St. Andrew's, and how I was still a common sailor, but, in the main, perhaps, not less happy than many who commanded a fleet.

"Ah, you have been a fortunate fellow," he said; "you have seen much and enjoyed much; and I have been rusting in unhappiness at home. Would that I had gone to sea along with you!"

"Nay, now, that won't do," I replied. "But you are merely taking Bacon's method of blunting the edge of envy. You have scarcely yet attained the years of maturity; manhood, and yet your name has gone abroad over the

whole length and breadth of the land, and over many other lands besides. I have cried over your poems three thousand miles away, and felt all the prouder of my country for the sake of my friend. And yet you would fain persuade me that you wish the charm reversed, and that you were just such an obscure salt-water man as myself!"

"You remember," said my companion, "the story of the half-man, half-marble prince of the Arabian tale. One part was a living creature, one part a stone; but the parts were incorporated, and the mixture was misery. I am just such a poor unhappy creature as the enchanted prince of the story."

"You surprise and distress me," I rejoined. "Have you not accomplished all you so fondly purposed—realized even your warmest wishes? And this, too, in early life. Your most sanguine hopes pointed but to a name, which you yourself perhaps was never to hear, but which was to dwell on men's tongues when the grave had closed over you. And now the name is gained, and you live to enjoy it. I see the *living* part of your lot, and it seems instinct with happiness; but in what does the *dead*, the stony part, consist?"

He shook his head, and looked up mournfully in my face; there was a pause of a few seconds. "You, Mr. Lindsay," he at length replied, "you who are of an equable steady temperament, can know little, from experience, of the unhappiness of the man who lives only in extremes, who is either madly gay or miserably depressed. Try and realize the feelings of one whose mind is like a broken harp—all the medium tones gone, and only the higher and lower left; of one, too, whose circumstances seem of a piece with his mind, who can enjoy the exercise of his better powers, and yet can only live by the monotonous drudgery of copying page after page in a clerk's office; of one who is continually either groping his way

amid a chill melancholy fog of nervous depression, or carried headlong, by a wild gaiety, to all which his better judgment would instruct him to avoid; of one who, when he indulges most in the pride of superior intellect, cannot away with the thought that that intellect is on the eve of breaking up, and that he must yet rate infinitely lower in the scale of rationality than any of the nameless thousands who carry on the ordinary concerns of life around him."

I was grieved and astonished, and knew not what to answer. "You are in a gloomy mood to-day," I at length said; "you are immersed in one of the fogs you describe; and all the surrounding objects take a tinge of darkness from the medium through which you survey them. Come, now, you must make an exertion, and shake off your melancholy. I have told you all my story, as I best could, and you must tell me all yours in return."

"Well," he replied, "I shall, though it mayn't be the best way in the world of dissipating my melancholy. I think I must have told you, when at college, that I had a maternal uncle of considerable wealth, and, as the world goes, respectability, who resided in Aberdeenshire. He was placed on what one may term the table-land of society; and my poor mother, whose recollections of him were limited to a period when there is warmth in the feelings of the most ordinary minds, had hoped that he would willingly exert his influence in my behalf. Much, doubtless, depends on one's setting out in life; and it would have been something to have been enabled to step into it from a level like that occupied by my relative. I paid him a visit shortly after leaving college, and met with apparent kindness. But I can see beyond the surface, Mr. Lindsay, and I soon saw that my uncle was entirely a different man from the brother whom my mother remembered. He had risen, by a course of slow industry, from comparative poverty, and his feelings had worn out in the process.

The character was case-hardened all over; and the polish it bore—for I have rarely met a smoother man—seemed no improvement. He was, in brief, one of the class content to dwell for ever in mere decencies, with consciences made up of the conventional moralities, who think by precedent, bow to public opinion as their god, and estimate merit by its weight in guineas."

"And so your visit," I said, "was a very brief one?"

"You distress me," he replied. "It should have been so; but it was not. But what could I do? Ever since my father's death I had been taught to consider this man as my natural guardian, and I was now unwilling to part with my last hope. But this is not all. Under much apparent activity, my friend, there is a substratum of apathetical indolence in my disposition: I move rapidly when in motion, but when at rest there is a dull inertness in the character, which the will, when unassisted by passion, is too feeble to overcome. Poor, weak creature that I am! I had sitten down by my uncle's fireside, and felt unwilling to rise. Pity me, my friend—I deserve your pity—but, oh, do not despise me!"

"Forgive me, Mr. Ferguson," I said; "I have given you pain—but surely most unwittingly,"

"I am ever a fool," he continued; "but my story lags; and, surely, there is little in it on which it were pleasure to dwell. I sat at this man's table for six months, and saw, day after day, his manner towards me becoming more constrained and his politeness more cold; and yet I staid on, till at last my clothes were worn threadbare, and he began to feel that the shabbiness of the nephew affected the respectability of the uncle. His friend the soap-boiler, and his friend the oil-merchant, and his friend the manager of the hemp manufactory, with their wives and daughters—all people of high standing in the world—occasionally honoured his table with their presence, and how

could he be other than ashamed of mine? It vexes me that I cannot even yet be cool on the subject—it vexes me that a creature so sordid should have so much the power to move me—but I cannot, I cannot master my feelings. He—he told me—and with whom should the blame rest, but with the weak, spiritless thing who lingered on in mean, bitter dependence, to hear what he had to tell?—he told me that all his friends were respectable, and that my appearance was no longer that of a person whom he could wish to see at his table, or introduce to any one as his nephew. And I had staid to hear all this!

“I can hardly tell you how I got home. I travelled, stage after stage, along the rough dusty roads, with a weak and feverish body, and almost despairing mind. On meeting with my mother, I could have laid my head on her bosom and cried like a child. I took to my bed in a high fever, and trusted that all my troubles were soon to terminate; but, when the die was cast, it turned up life. I resumed my old miserable employments—for what could I else?—and, that I might be less unhappy in the prosecution of them, my old amusements too. I copied during the day in a clerk’s office that I might live, and wrote during the night that I might be known. And I have in part, perhaps, attained my object. I have pursued and caught hold of the shadow on which my heart had been so long set; and if it prove empty, and untangible, and unsatisfactory, like every other shadow, the blame surely must rest with the pursuer, not with the thing pursued. I weary you, Mr. Lindsay; but one word more. There are hours when the mind, weakened by exertion, or by the teasing monotony of an employment which tasks without exercising it, can no longer exert its powers, and when, feeling that sociality is a law of our nature, we seek the society of our fellow-men. With a creature so much the sport of impulse as I am, it is of these hours of weakness that

conscience takes most note. God help me! I have been told that life is short; but it stretches on, and on, and on before me; and I know not how it is to be passed through."

My spirits had so sunk during this singular conversation, that I had no heart to reply.

"You are silent, Mr. Lindsay," said the poet; "I have made you as melancholy as myself; but look around you, and say if ever you have seen a lovelier spot. See how richly the yellow sunshine slants along the green sides of Arthur's Seat, and how the thin blue smoke, that has come floating from the town, fills the bottom of yonder grassy dell, as if it were a little lake. Mark, too, how boldly the cliffs stand out along its sides, each with its little patch of shadow. And here, beside us, is St. Anthony's Well, so famous in song, coming gushing out to the sunshine, and then gliding away through the grass like a snake. Had the Deity purposed that man should be miserable, he would surely never have placed him in so fair a world. Perhaps much of our unhappiness originates in our mistaking our proper scope, and thus setting out from the first with a false aim."

"Unquestionably," I replied, "there is no man who has not some part to perform; and, if it be a great and uncommon part, and the powers which fit him for it proportionably great and uncommon, nature would be in error could he slight it with impunity. See, there is a wild bee bending the flower beside you. Even that little creature has a capacity of happiness and misery; it derives its sense of pleasure from whatever runs in the line of its instincts, its experience of unhappiness from whatever thwarts and opposes them; and can it be supposed that so wise a law should regulate the instincts of only inferior creatures? No, my friend, it is surely a law of our nature also."

“And have you not something else to infer?” said the poet.

“Yes,” I replied, “that you are occupied differently from what the scope and constitution of your mind demand; differently both in your hours of employment and of relaxation. But do take heart, you will yet find your proper place, and all shall be well.”

“Alas! no, my friend,” said he, rising from the sward. “I could once entertain such a hope; but I cannot now. My mind is no longer what it was to me in my happier days, a sort of *terra incognita*, without bounds or limits. I can see over and beyond it, and have fallen from all my hopes regarding it. It is not so much the gloom of present circumstances that disheartens me, as a depressing knowledge of myself, an abiding conviction that I am a weak dreamer, unfitted for every occupation of life, and not less so for the greater employments of literature than for any of the others. I feel that I am a little man and a little poet, with barely vigour enough to make one half effort at a time, but wholly devoid of the sustaining will, that highest faculty of the highest order of minds, which can direct a thousand vigorous efforts to the accomplishment of one important object. Would that I could exchange my half celebrity—and it can never be other than a half celebrity—for a temper as equable and a fortitude as unshrinking as yours! But I weary you with my complaints; I am a very coward; and you will deem me as selfish as I am weak.”

We parted. The poet, sadly and unwillingly, went to copy deeds in the office of the commissary clerk, and I, almost reconciled to obscurity and hard labour, to assist in unloading a Baltic trader in the harbour of Leith.

CHAPTER VI.

“Speech without aim and without end employ.”—CRABBE.

After the lapse of nine months, I again returned to Edinburgh. During that period, I had been so shut out from literature and the world, that I had heard nothing of my friend the poet; and it was with a beating heart I left the vessel, on my first leisure evening, to pay him a visit. It was about the middle of July; the day had been close and sultry, and the heavens overcharged with grey ponderous clouds; and, as I passed hurriedly along the walk which leads from Leith to Edinburgh, I could hear the newly awakened thunder, bellowing far in the south, peal after peal, like the artillery of two hostile armies. I reached the door of the poet's humble domicile, and had raised my hand to the knocker, when I heard some one singing from within, in a voice by far the most touchingly mournful I had ever listened to. The tones struck on my heart; and a frightful suspicion crossed my mind, as I set down the knocker, that the singer was no other than my friend. But in what wretched circumstances! what fearful state of mind! I shuddered as I listened, and heard the strain waxing louder and yet more mournful, and could distinguish that the words were those of a simple old ballad:—

“O Marti'mas wind, when wilt thou blow,
 An' shake the green leaves aff the tree?
 O gentle death, when wilt thou come,
 An' tak a life that wearies me?”

I could listen no longer, but raised the latch and went in. The evening was gloomy, and the apartment ill lighted; but I could see the singer, a spectral-looking figure, sitting on a bed in the corner, with the bedclothes wrapped round his shoulders, and a napkin deeply stained

with blood on his head. An elderly female, who stood beside him, was striving to soothe him, and busied from time to time in adjusting the clothes, which were ever and anon falling off, as he nodded his head in time to the music. A young girl of great beauty sat weeping at the bedfoot.

“O dearest Robert,” said the woman, “you will destroy your poor head; and Margaret your sister, whom you used to love so much, will break her heart. Do lie down, dearest, and take a little rest. Your head is fearfully gashed, and if the bandages loose a second time, you will bleed to death. Do, dearest Robert, for your poor old mother, to whom you were always so kind and dutiful a son till now—for your poor old mother’s sake, do lie down.”

The song ceased for a moment, and the tears came bursting from my eyes as the tune changed, and he again sang:—

“O mither dear, make ye my bed,
 For my heart it’s flichterin’ sair;
 An’ oh, gin I’ve vexed ye, mither dear,
 I’ll never vex ye mair.
 I’ve staid ar’out the lang dark nicht,
 I’ the sleet an’ the plashy rain;
 But, mither dear, make ye my bed,
 An’ I’ll ne’er gang out again.”

“Dearest, dearest Robert,” continued the poor, heart-broken woman, “do lie down; for your poor old mother’s sake, do lie down.”

“No, no,” he exclaimed, in a hurried voice, “not just now, mother, not just now. Here is my friend, Mr. Lindsay, come to see me—my true friend, Mr. Lindsay, the sailor, who has sailed all round and round the world; and I have much, much to ask him. A chair, Margaret, for Mr. Lindsay. I must be a preacher like John Knox, you know—like the great John Knox, the reformer of a nation

—and Mr. Lindsay knows all about him. A chair, Margaret, for Mr. Lindsay.”

I am not ashamed to say it was with tears, and in a voice faltering with emotion, that I apologized to the poor woman for my intrusion at such a time. Were it otherwise, I might well conclude my heart had grown hard as a piece of the nether millstone.

“I had known Robert at College,” I said—“had loved and respected him; and had now come to pay him a visit, after an absence of several months, wholly unprepared for finding him in his present condition.” And it would seem that my tears pled for me, and proved to the poor afflicted woman and her daughter, by far the most efficient part of my apology.

“All my friends have left me now, Mr. Lindsay,” said the unfortunate poet—“they have all left me now; they love this present world. We were all going down, down, down; there was the roll of a river behind us; it came bursting over the high rocks, roaring, rolling, foaming down upon us; and though the fog was thick and dark below—far below, in the place to which we were going—I could see the red fire shining through—the red, hot, unquenchable fire; and we were all going down, down, down. Mother, mother, tell Mr. Lindsay I am going to be put on my trials to-morrow. Careless creature that I am—life is short, and I have lost much time; but I am going to be put on my trials to-morrow, and shall come forth a preacher of the word.”

The thunder which had hitherto been muttering at a distance—each peal, however, nearer and louder than the preceding one—now began to roll overhead, and the lightning, as it passed the window, to illumine every object within. The hapless poet stretched out his thin wasted arm, as if addressing a congregation from the pulpit:—

“There were the flashings of lightning,” he said, “and the roll of thunder; and the trumpet waxed louder and louder. And around the summit of the mountain were the foldings of thick clouds, and the shadow fell brown and dark over the wide expanse of the desert. And the wild beasts lay trembling in their dens. But, lo! where the sun breaks through the opening of the cloud, there is the glitter of tents—the glitter of ten thousand tents that rise over the sandy waste, thick as waves of the sea. And there, there is the voice of the dance and of the revel, and the winding of horns and the clash of cymbals. Oh, sit nearer me, dearest mother, for the room is growing dark, dark; and, oh, my poor head!

‘The lady sat on the castle wa’,
 Look’d ower baith dale and down,
 And then she spied Gil-Morice head
 Come steering through the town.’

Do, dearest mother, put your cool hand on my brow, and do hold it fast ere it part. How fearfully—oh, how fearfully it aches!—and oh, how it thunders!” He sunk backward on the pillow, apparently exhausted. “Gone, gone, gone,” he muttered; “my mind gone for ever. But God’s will be done.”

I rose to leave the room; for I could restrain my feelings no longer.

“Stay, Mr. Lindsay,” said the poet, in a feeble voice; “I hear the rain dashing on the pavement; you must not go till it abates. Would that you could pray beside me!—but, no—you are not like the dissolute companions who have now all left me, but you are not yet fitted for that; and, alas! I cannot pray for myself. Mother, mother, see that there be prayers at my lykewake; for—

‘Her lykewake, it was piously spent
 In social prayer and praise,
 Performed by judicious men,
 Who stricken were in days.

‘And many a heavy, heavy heart
 Was in that mournful place;
 And many a weary, weary thought
 On her who slept in peace.’

They will come all to my lykewake, mother, won't they?—yes, all, though they have left me now. Yes, and they will come far to see my grave. I was poor, very poor, you know, and they looked down upon me; and I was no son or cousin of theirs, and so they could do nothing for me. Oh, but they might have looked less coldly! But they will all come to my grave, mother; they will come all to my grave; and they will say—‘Would he were living now to know how kind we are!’ But they will look as coldly as ever on the living poet beside them—yes, till they have broken his heart; and then they will go to his grave too. O dearest mother, do lay your cool hand on my brow.”

He lay silent and exhausted, and, in a few minutes, I could hope, from the hardness of his breathing, that he had fallen asleep.

“How long,” I inquired of his sister, in a low whisper, “has Mr. Ferguson been so unwell, and what has injured his head?”

“Alas!” said the girl, “my brother has been unsettled in mind for nearly the last six months. We first knew it one evening on his coming home from the country, where he had been for a few days with a friend. He burnt a large heap of papers that he had been employed on for weeks before—songs and poems that his friends say were the finest things he ever wrote; but he burnt them all, for he was going to be a preacher of the word, he said, and it did not become a preacher of the word to be a writer of light rhymes. And, O sir! his mind has been carried ever since; but he has been always gentle and affectionate, and his sole delight has lain in reading the Bible. Good

Dr. Erskine, of the Greyfriars, often comes to our house, and sits with him for hours together; for there are times when his mind seems stronger than ever, and he says wonderful things, that seem to hover, the minister says, between the extravagance natural to his present sad condition, and the higher flights of a philosophic genius. And we had hoped that he was getting better; but, O sir, our hopes have had a sad ending. He went out, a few evenings ago, to call on an old acquaintance; and, in descending a stair, missed footing, and fell to the bottom; and his head has been fearfully injured by the stones. He has been just as you have seen him ever since; and, oh! I much fear he cannot now recover. Alas! my poor brother!—never, never was there a more affectionate heart.”

CHAPTER VII.

“A lowly muse!

She sings of reptiles yet in song unknown.”

I returned to the vessel with a heavy heart; and it was nearly three months from this time ere I again set foot in Edinburgh. Alas! for my unfortunate friend! He was now an inmate of the asylum, and on the verge of dissolution. I was thrown, by accident, shortly after my arrival at this time, into the company of one of his boon companions. I had gone into a tavern with a brother sailor—a shrewd, honest skipper, from the north country; and, finding the place occupied by half a dozen young fellows, who were growing noisy over their liquor, I would have immediately gone out again, had I not caught, in the passing, a few words regarding my friend. And so, drawing to a side-table, I sat down.

“Believe me,” said one of the toppers, a dissolute-looking

young man, "it's all over with Bob Ferguson—all over; and I knew it from the moment he grew religious. Had old Brown tried to convert me, I would have broken his face."

"What Brown?" inquired one of his companions.

"Is that all you know?" rejoined the other. "Why, John Brown of Haddington, the Seceder. Bob was at Haddington last year, at the election; and, one morning, when in the horrors, after holding a rum night of it, who should he meet in the churchyard but old John Brown?—he writes, you know, a big book on the Bible. Well, he lectured Bob at a pretty rate, about election and the call, I suppose; and the poor fellow has been mad ever since. Your health, Jamie. For my own part, I'm a freewill man, and detest all cant and humbug."

"And what has come of Ferguson now?" asked one of the others.

"Oh, mad, sir, mad," rejoined the toper—reading the Bible all day, and cooped up in the asylum yonder. 'Twas I who brought him to it.—But, lads, the glass has been standing for the last half-hour.—'Twas I and Jack Robinson who brought him to it, as I say. He was getting wild; and so we got a sedan for him, and trumped up a story of an invitation for tea from a lady, and he came with us as quietly as a lamb. But, if you could have heard the shriek he gave when the chair stopped, and he saw where we had brought him! I never heard anything half so horrible—it rung in my ears for a week after; and then, how the mad people in the upper rooms howled and gibbered in reply, till the very roof echoed! People say he is getting better; but, when I last saw him, he was as religious as ever, and spoke so much about heaven, that it was uncomfortable to hear him. Great loss to his friends, after all the expense they have been at with his education."

“ You seem to have been intimate with Mr. Ferguson,” I said.

“ Oh, intimate with Bob!” he rejoined; “ we were hand and glove, man. I have sat with him in Lucky Middlemass’s, almost every evening, for two years; and I have given him hints for some of the best things in his book. ’Twas I who tumbled down the cage in the Meadows, and began breaking the lamps.

‘ Ye who oft finish care in Lethe’s cup,
Who love to swear and roar, and *keep it up*,
List to a brother’s voice, whose sole delight
Is sleep all day, and riot all the night.’

There’s spirit for you! But Bob was never sound at bottom; and I have told him so. ‘ Bob,’ I have said, ‘ Bob, you’re but a hypocrite after all, man—without half the spunk you pretend to. Why don’t you take a pattern by me, who fear nothing, and believe only the agreeable? But, poor fellow, he had weak nerves, and a church-going propensity that did him no good; and you see the effects. ’Twas all nonsense, Tom, of his throwing the squib into the Glassite meeting-house. Between you and I, that was a cut far beyond him in his best days, poet as he was. ’Twas I who did it, man, and never was there a cleaner row in auld Reekie.”

“ Heartless, contemptible puppy!” said my comrade, the sailor, as we left the room. “ Your poor friend must be ill, indeed, if he be but half as insane as his quondam companion. But he cannot: there is no madness like that of the heart. What could have induced a man of genius to associate with a thing so thoroughly despicable?”

“ The same misery, Miller,” I said, “ that brings a man acquainted with strange bedfellows.”

CHAPTER VIII.

“O thou, my elder brother in misfortune,
By far my elder brother in the muses,
With tears I pity thy unhappy fate!”—BURNS.

The asylum in which my unfortunate friend was confined, at this time the only one in Edinburgh, was situated in an angle of the city wall. It was a dismal-looking mansion, shut in on every side, by the neighbouring houses, from the view of the surrounding country; and so effectually covered up from the nearer street, by a large building in front, that it seemed possible enough to pass a lifetime in Edinburgh without coming to the knowledge of its existence. I shuddered as I looked up to its blackened walls, thinly sprinkled with miserable-looking windows, barred with iron, and thought of it as a sort of burial-place of dead minds. But it was a Golgotha, which, with more than the horrors of the grave, had neither its rest nor its silence. I was startled, as I entered the cell of the hapless poet, by a shout of laughter from a neighbouring room, which was answered from a dark recess behind me, by a fearfully prolonged shriek, and the clanking of chains. The mother and sister of Ferguson were sitting beside his pallet, on a sort of stone settle which stood out from the wall; and the poet himself, weak and exhausted, and worn to a shadow, but apparently in his right mind, lay extended on the straw. He made an attempt to rise as I entered; but the effort was above his strength, and, again lying down, he extended his hand.

“This is kind, Mr. Lindsay,” he said; “it is ill for me to be alone in these days; and yet I have few visitors, save my poor old mother and Margaret. But who cares for the unhappy?”

I sat down on the settle beside him, still retaining his hand. "I have been at sea, and in foreign countries," I said, "since I last saw you, Mr. Ferguson, and it was only this morning I returned; but believe me there are many, many of your countrymen who sympathize sincerely in your affliction, and take a warm interest in your recovery."

He sighed deeply. "Ah," he replied, "I know too well the nature of that sympathy. You never find it at the bedside of the sufferer—it evaporates in a few barren expressions of idle pity; and yet, after all, it is but a paying the poet in kind. He calls so often on the world to sympathize over fictitious misfortune, that the feeling wears out, and becomes a mere mood of the imagination; and, with this light, attenuated pity of his own weaving, it regards his own real sorrows. Dearest mother, the evening is damp and chill—do gather the bedclothes round me, and sit on my feet; they are so very cold and so dead, that they cannot be colder a week hence."

"O Robert, why do you speak so?" said the poor woman, as she gathered the clothes round him, and sat on his feet. "You know you are coming home to-morrow."

"To-morrow!" he said—"if I see to-morrow, I shall have completed my twenty-fourth year—a small part, surely, of the threescore and ten; but what matters it when 'tis past?"

"You were ever, my friend, of a melancholy temperament," I said, "and too little disposed to hope. Indulge in brighter views of the future, and all shall yet be well."

"I can now hope that it shall," he said. "Yes, all shall be well with me—and that very soon. But, oh, how this nature of ours shrinks from dissolution!—yes, and all the lower natures too. You remember, mother, the poor starling that was killed in the room beside us? Oh, how it struggled with its ruthless enemy, and filled the whole place with its shrieks of terror and agony. And yet, poor little thing! it had been true, all life long, to the laws of

its nature, and had no sins to account for, and no judge to meet. There is a shrinking of heart as I look before me, and yet I can hope that all shall yet be well with me—and that very soon. Would that I had been wise in time! Would that I had thought more and earlier of the things which pertain to my eternal peace! more of a living soul, and less of a dying name! But, oh, 'tis a glorious provision, through which a way of return is opened up even at the eleventh hour!"

We sat round him in silence; an indescribable feeling of awe pervaded my whole mind, and his sister was affected to tears.

"Margaret," he said, in a feeble voice—"Margaret, you will find my Bible in yonder little recess; 'tis all I have to leave you; but keep it, dearest sister, and use it, and, in times of sorrow and suffering that come to all, you will know how to prize the legacy of your poor brother. Many, many books do well enough for life; but there is only one of any value when we come to die.

"You have been a voyager of late, Mr. Lindsay," he continued, "and I have been a voyager too. I have been journeying in darkness and discomfort, amid strange unearthly shapes of dread and horror, with no reason to direct and no will to govern. Oh, the unspeakable unhappiness of these wanderings!—these dreams of suspicion, and fear, and hatred, in which shadow and substance, the true and the false, were so wrought up and mingled together, that they formed but one fantastic and miserable whole. And, oh! the unutterable horror of every momentary return to a recollection of what I had been once, and a sense of what I had become! Oh, when I awoke amid the terrors of the night—when I turned me on the rustling straw, and heard the wild wail and yet wilder laugh—when I heard and shuddered, and then felt the demon in all his might coming over me, till I laughed and wailed with the others—oh

the misery! the utter misery!—But 'tis over, my friend—'tis all over; a few, few tedious days, a few, few weary nights, and all my sufferings shall be over."

I had covered my face with my hands, but the tears came bursting through my fingers; the mother and sister of the poet sobbed aloud.

"Why sorrow for me, sirs?" he said; "why grieve for me? I am well, quite well, and want for nothing. But 'tis cold; oh, 'tis very cold, and the blood seems freezing at my heart. Ah, but there is neither pain nor cold where I am going, and I trust it shall be well with my soul. Dearest, dearest mother, I always told you it would come to this at last."

The keeper had entered to intimate to us that the hour for locking up the cells was already past, and we now rose to leave the place. I stretched out my hand to my unfortunate friend; he took it in silence, and his thin attenuated fingers felt cold within my grasp, like those of a corpse. His mother stooped down to embrace him.

"Oh, do not go yet, mother," he said—"do not go yet—do not leave me; but it must be so, and I only distress you. Pray for me, dearest mother, and, oh, forgive me; I have been a grief and a burden to you all life-long; but I ever loved you, mother; and, oh, you have been kind, kind and forgiving—and now your task is over. May God bless and reward you! Margaret, dearest Margaret, farewell!"

We parted, and, as it proved, for ever. Robert Ferguson expired during the night; and when the keeper entered the cell next morning, to prepare him for quitting the asylum, all that remained of this most hapless of the children of genius, was a pallid and wasted corpse, that lay stiffening on the straw. I am now a very old man, and the feelings wear out; but I find that my heart is even yet susceptible of emotion, and that the source of tears is not yet dried up.

THE DISASTERS
OF JOHNNY ARMSTRONG.

JOHNNY ARMSTRONG, the hero of our tale, was, and, for aught we know to the contrary, still is, an inhabitant of the town of Carlisle. He was a stout, thickset, little man, with a round, good-humoured, ruddy countenance, and somewhere about fifty years of age at the period to which our story refers. Although possessed of a good deal of natural shrewdness, Johnny was, on the whole, rather a simple sort of person. His character, in short, was that of an honest, well-meaning, inoffensive man, but with parts that certainly did not shine with a very dazzling lustre. Johnny was, to business, an ironmonger, and had, by patient industry and upright dealing, acquired a small independency. He had stuck to the counter of his little dingy shop for upwards of twenty years, and used to boast that, during all that time, he had opened and shut his shop with his own hands every day, not even excepting one. The result of this steadiness and attention to business was, as has been already said, a competency.

Fortunately for Johnny, this propensity to stick fast—which he did like a limpet—was natural to him. It was a part of his constitution. He had no desire whatever to travel, or, rather, he had a positive dislike to it—a dislike, indeed, which was so great that, for an entire quarter of a century, he had never been three miles out of Carlisle. But when Johnny had waxed pretty rich, somewhat corpulent, and rather oldish, he was suddenly struck, one fine summer afternoon, as he stood at the door of his shop with his hands in his breeches pockets, (a favourite attitude,) with an amiable and ardent desire to see certain of his

relations who lived at Brechin, in the north of Scotland; and—there is no accounting for these things—on that afternoon Johnny came to the extraordinary resolution of paying them a visit—of performing a journey of upwards of a hundred miles, even as the crow flies. It was a strange and a desperate resolution for a man of Johnny's peculiar temperament and habits; but so it was. Travel he would, and travel he did. On the third day after the doughty determination just alluded to had been formed, Johnny, swathed in an ample brown greatcoat, with a red comforter about his neck, appeared in the stable yard of the inn where most of the stage coaches that passed through Carlisle put up. Of these there were three: one for Dumfries, one for Glasgow, and one for Edinburgh—the latter being Johnny's coach; for his route was by the metropolis. We had almost forgotten to say that Johnny, who was a widower, was accompanied on this occasion by his son, Johnny junior, an only child, whom it was his intention to take along with him. The boy was about fourteen years of age, and though, upon the whole, a shrewd enough lad for his time of life, did not promise to be a much brighter genius than his father. In fact he was rather lumpish.

On arriving at the inn yard—it was about eight o'clock at night, and pretty dark, being the latter end of September—Johnny Armstrong found the coach apparently about to start, the horses being all yoked; but the vehicle happened, at the moment he entered the yard, to be in charge of an ostler—not of either the guard or driver, who had both gone out of the way for an instant. Desirous of securing a good seat for his son, Johnny Armstrong opened the coach door, thrust the lad in, and was about to follow himself, when he discovered that he had forgotten his watch. On making this discovery, he banged too the coach door without saying a word, and hurried home as fast as his little, thick, short legs would allow him, to recover his

time-piece. On his return, which was in less than five minutes, Johnny himself stepped into the vehicle, which was now crowded with passengers, and, in a few seconds, was rattling away at a rapid rate towards Edinburgh. The night was pitch dark, not a star twinkled; and it was not until Johnny arrived at his journey's end—that is, at Edinburgh—that he discovered his son was not in the coach, and had never been there at all. We will not attempt to describe Johnny's amazement and distress of mind on making this most extraordinary and most alarming discovery. They were dreadful. In great agitation, he inquired at every one of the passengers if they had not seen his son, and one and all denied they ever had. The thing was mysterious and perfectly inexplicable.

"I put the boy into the coach with my own hands," said Johnny Armstrong, in great perturbation, to the guard and half crying as he spoke.

"Very odd," said the guard.

"Very odd, indeed," said Johnny.

"Are you sure it was *our* coach, Mr. Armstrong?" inquired the guard.

The emphasis on the word *our* was startling. It evidently meant more than met the ear; and Johnny felt that it did so, and he was startled accordingly.

"*Your* coach?" he replied, but now with some hesitation of manner. "It surely was. What other coach could it be?"

"Why, it may have been the Glasgow coach," said the guard; "and I rather think it *must* have been. You have made a mistake, sir, be assured, and put the boy into the wrong coach. We start from the same place, and at the same hour, five minutes or so in or over."

The mention of this possibility, nay certainty—for Johnny had actually dispatched the boy to Glasgow—instantly struck him dumb. It relieved him, indeed, from

the misery arising from a dread of some terrible accident having happened the lad, but threw him into great tribulation as to his fate in Glasgow, without money or friends. But this being, after all, comparatively but a small affair, Johnny was now, what he had not been before, able to pay attention to minor things.

“Be sae guid,” said Johnny to the guard, who was on the top of the coach, busy unloosing packages, “as haun me doun my trunk.”

“No trunk of yours here, sir,” said the guard. “You’ll have sent it away to Glasgow with the boy.”

“No, no,” replied Johnny, sadly perplexed by this new misfortune. “I sent it wi’ the lass to the inn half an hour before I gaed mysel.”

“Oh, then, in that case,” said the guard, “ten to one it’s away to Dumfries, and not to Glasgow.”

And truly such was the fact. The girl, a fresh-caught country lass, had thrown it on the first coach she found, saying her master would immediately follow—and that happened to be the Dumfries one. Here, then, was Johnny safely arrived himself, indeed, at Edinburgh; but his son was gone to Glasgow, and his trunk to Dumfries—all with the greatest precision imaginable. Next day, Johnny Armstrong, being extremely uneasy about his boy, started for Glasgow on board of one of the canal passage boats; while the lad, being equally uneasy about his father, and, moreover, ill at ease on sundry other accounts, did precisely the same thing with the difference of direction—that is, he started for Edinburgh by a similar conveyance; and so well timed had each of their respective departures been, that, without knowing it, they passed each other exactly halfway between the two cities. On arriving at Glasgow, Johnny Armstrong could not, for a long while, discover any trace of his son; but at length succeeded in tracking him to the canal boat—which led him rightly to conclude

that he had proceeded to Edinburgh. On coming to this conclusion, Johnny again started for the metropolis, where he safely arrived about two hours after his son had left it for home, whither, finding no trace of his father in Edinburgh, he had wisely directed his steps. Johnny Armstrong, now greatly distressed about the object of his paternal solicitude, whom he vainly sought up and down the city, at last also bent his way homewards, thinking, what was true, that the boy might have gone home; and there indeed he found him. Thus nearly a week had been spent, and that in almost constant travel, and Johnny found himself precisely at the point from which he had set out. However, in three days, after having, in the meantime, recovered his trunk, he again set out on his travels to Brechin; for his courage was not in the least abated by what had happened; but on this occasion unaccompanied by his son, as he would not again run the risk of losing him, or of exposing himself to that distress of mind on his account, of which he had been before a victim. In the case of Johnny's second progress, there was "no mistake" whatever, of any kind—at least at starting. Both himself and his trunk arrived in perfect safety, and in due time, at Edinburgh.

Johnny's next route was to steam it to Kirkaldy from Newhaven. The boat started at six a.m.; and, having informed himself of this particular, he determined to be at the point of embarkation in good time. But he was rather late, and, on finding this, he ran every foot of the way from Edinburgh to the steam-boat, and was in a dreadful state of exhaustion when he reached it; but, by his exertions, he saved his distance, thereby exhibiting another proof that all is not lost that's in danger. An instant longer, however, and he would have been too late, for the vessel was just on the eve of starting. Johnny leapt on board, or rather was bundled on board; for Johnny, as

already hinted, was in what is called good bodily condition—rather extra, indeed—and was, moreover, waxing a little stiff about the joints; so that he could not get over the side of the boat so cleverly as he would have done some twenty years before. Over and above all this, he was quite exhausted with the race against time which he had just run. Seeing his distressed condition, and that the boat was on the point of sailing, two of the hands leapt on the pier, when the one seizing him by the waistband of the breeches, and the other by the breast, they fairly pitched him into the vessel, throwing his trunk after him. As it was pouring rain, Johnny, on recovering his perpendicular, immediately descended into the cabin, and, in the next instant, the boat was ploughing her way through the deep. For two hours after he had embarked, it continued to rain without intermission; and for these two hours he remained snug below without stirring. At the end of this period, however, it cleared up a little, and, in a short while thereafter, became perfectly fair. Having discovered this he ascended to the deck, to see what was going on. The captain of the vessel was himself at the helm; he, therefore, sidled towards him, and, after making some remarks on the weather and the scenery, asked the captain, in the blandest and civilest tones imaginable, when he expected they would be at Kirkaldy. The man stared at Johnny with a look of astonishment, not unmingled with displeasure; but at length said—

“Kirkaldy, sir! What do you mean by asking me that question? I don’t know when *you* expect to be at Kirkaldy, but *I* don’t expect to be there for a twelvemonth at least.”

“No!—od, that’s queer!” quoth Johnny, amazed in his turn; but thinking, after a moment, that the captain meant to be facetious, he merely added—“I wad think, captain, that we wad be there much about the same time.”

“Ay, ay, may be; but, I say, none of your gammon, friend,” said the latter, gruffly, and now getting really angry at what he conceived to be some attempt to play upon him, though he could not see the drift of the joke. “Mind your own business, friend, and I’ll mind mine.”

This he said with an air that conveyed very plainly a hint that Johnny should take himself off, which, without saying any more, he accordingly did. Much perplexed by the captain’s conduct, he now sauntered towards the fore part of the vessel, where he caught the engineer just as he was about to descend into the engine-room. Johnny tapped him gently on the shoulder, and the man, wiping his dripping face with a handful of tow, looked up to him, while Johnny, afraid to put the question, but anxious to know when he really would be at Kirkaldy, lowered himself down, by placing his hands on his knees, so as to bring his face on a level with the person he was addressing, and, in the mildest accents, and with a countenance beaming with gentleness, he popped the question in a low, soft whisper, as if to deprecate the man’s wrath. On the fatal inquiry being made at him, the engineer, as the captain had done before him, stared at Johnny Armstrong, in amazement, for a second or two, then burst into a hoarse laugh, and, without vouchsafing any other reply, plunged down into his den.

“What in a’ the earth can be the meanin’ o’ this?” quoth Johnny to himself, now ten times more perplexed than ever. “What can there be in my simple, natural, and reasonable question, to astonish folk sae muckle?”

This was an inquiry which Johnny might put to himself, but it was one which he could by no means answer. Being, however, an easy, good-natured man, and seeing how much offence in one instance, and subject for mirth in another, he had unwittingly given, by putting it, he resolved to make no further inquiries into the matter, but to await in

patience the arrival of the boat at her destination—an event which he had the sense to perceive would be neither forwarded nor retarded by his obtaining or being refused the information he had desired to be possessed of. The boat arrived in due time at the wished-for haven, and Johnny landed with the other passengers; the captain giving him a wipe, as he stepped on the plank that was to convey him ashore, about his Kirkaldy inquiries, by asking him, though now in perfect good humour, if he knew the precise length of that celebrated town; but Johnny merely smiled and passed on.

On landing, Johnny Armstrong proceeded to what had the appearance of, and really was, a respectable inn. Here, as it was now pretty far in the day, he had some dinner, and afterwards treated himself to a tumbler of toddy and a peep at the papers. While thus comfortably enjoying himself, the waiter having chanced to pop into the room, Johnny raised his eye from the paper he was reading, and, looking the lad in the face—

“Can ye tell me, friend,” he said, “when the coach for Dundee starts?”

“There’s no coach at all from this to Dundee, sir,” replied the waiter.

“No!” said Johnny, a little nonplused by this information. “That’s odd.” The waiter saw nothing odd in it.

“I was told,” continued Johnny, “that there were twa or three coaches daily from this to Dundee.”

“Oh, no, sir,” said the lad, coolly, “you have been misinformed; but if you wish to go to Dundee, sir,” he added—desirous of being as obliging as possible—“your best way is to go by steam from this to Newhaven, and from that cross over to Kirkaldy!!!”

At this fatal word, which seemed doomed to work Johnny much wo, the glass which he was about to raise to his lips fell on the floor, and went into a thousand pieces.

“Kirkaldy, laddie!” exclaimed Johnny Armstrong, with an expression of consternation in his face which it would require Cruikshank’s art and skill to do justice to—“Gude hae a care o’ me, is *this* no Kirkaldy?”

“Kirkaldy, sir!” replied the waiter, no less amazed than Johnny, though in his case it was at the absurdity of the inquiry—“oh, no, sir,” with a smile—“this is Alloa!!!”

Alloa it was, to be sure; for Johnny had taken the wrong boat, and that was all. On embarking, he had made no inquiries at those belonging to the vessel, and, of course, those in the vessel had put none to him—and this was the result. He was comfortably planted at Alloa, instead of Kirkaldy, which all our readers know lies in a very different direction; and this denouement also explains the captain’s displeasure with his passenger, and the engineer’s mirth. At the moment this extraordinary *eclaircissement* took place between Johnny Armstrong and the waiter of the King’s Arms, there happened to be a ship captain in the room—for it was the public one; and this person, who was a good-natured fellow, at once amused by, and pitying Johnny’s dilemma, turned towards him, and inquired if it was his intention to go any further than Dundee.

Johnny said that it was—he intended going to Brechin.

“Oh, in that case,” said the captain, “you had better just go with me. In an hour after this I sail for Montrose, which is within eight miles of Brechin, and I’ll be very glad to give you a cast so far, and we shan’t differ about the terms. Fine, smart little vessel mine, and, with a spanking breeze from the west or sou’-west, which we’ll very likely catch about Queensferry, I’ll land you in a jiffey within a trifle of your journey’s end—a devilish sight cleverer, I warrant you, than your round-about way of steaming and coaching it, and at half the money too.”

Johnny Armstrong was all gratitude for this very opportune piece of kindness, and gladly closed with the offer

-- the captain and he taking a couple of additional tumblers each, on the head of it, to begin with. We say to begin with; for it by no means ended with the quantity named. The captain was a jolly dog, and loved his liquor, and was, withal, so facetious a companion, that he prevailed on his new friend to swallow a great deal more than did him any good. To tell a truth, which, however, we would not have known at Carlisle, Johnny Armstrong, who had the character of a sober man, got, on this occasion, into a rather discreditable condition, and, in this state, he was escorted by the captain—who stood liquor like a water-cask—to the vessel, and was once more embarked; but it was now on board the *Fifteen Sisters* of Skatehaven. On getting him on board, the captain, seeing the state he was in, prudently bundled him down into the cabin, and thrust him into his own bed, where he immediately fell into a profound sleep that extended over twelve mortal hours. At the end of this period, however, Johnny awoke; but it was not by any means of his own accord, for he was awakened by a variety of stimulants, or *rousers*, if we may be allowed to coin a word for the occasion, all operating at once. These were, a tremendous uproar on the deck, a fearful rolling of the vessel, the roaring of wind, and the splashing, dashing, and gurling of waves; and, to crown all, a feeling of deadly sickness. When he first opened his eyes, he could not conceive where he was, or what was the meaning of the furious motion that he felt, and of the tremendous sounds that he heard. A few minutes' cogitation with himself, however, solved the mystery, and exposed to him his true position. In great alarm—for he thought the vessel was on the eve of going down—Johnny Armstrong rolled himself out of his bed, and crawled in his shirt up the cabin ladder. On gaining the summit, he found himself confronted by the captain, who, with a very serious face, was standing by the helm.

“Are—are—are—we—near—Mon—trose, captain?” inquired Johnny, in a voice rendered so feeble by sickness and terror, that it was impossible to hear him a yard off, amidst the roaring of the winds and waves; for we suppose we need not more explicitly state, that he was in the midst of a storm, and as pretty a one it was as the most devoted admirer of the picturesque could desire to see.

“What?” roared the captain, in a voice of thunder, at the same time stooping down to catch his feeble interrogatory. Johnny repeated it; but, ere he could obtain an answer, a raking wave, which came in at the stern, took him full on the breast as he stood on the companion ladder, with his bust just above the level of the deck, sent him down, heels over head, into the cabin, and, in a twinkling, buried him in a foot and a half of water on the floor, where he lay for some time at full length, sprawling and floundering amidst the wreck which the sudden and violent influx of water had occasioned. On recovering from the stunning effects of his descent—for he had, amongst other small matters, received a violent contusion on the head—Johnny for an instant imagined that he had somehow or other got to the bottom of the sea. Finding, however, at length, that this was not precisely the case, he arose, though dripping with wet, yet not very like a sea god, and having denuded himself of his only garment, his shirt, crawled into his bed, where he now determined to await quietly and patiently the fate that might be intended for him; and this fate, he had no doubt, was suffocation by drowning.

“Very extraordinary this,” said Johnny Armstrong to himself, as he lay musing in bed on the perilous situation into which he had so simply and innocently got—“very extraordinary, that I couldna get the length o’ Brechin without a’ this uproar, and confusion, and difficulty, and danger; this knocking about frae place to place, half drowned and half murdered. Here have I been now for

mair than a week at it, and it's my opinion I'm no twenty mile nearer't yet than I was, for a' this kick up. Dear me," he went on soliloquizing, "I'm sure Brechin's no sic an out o' the way place. The road's straught, and the distance no great. Then, how, in the name o' wonder, is it that I canna mak' it out like ither folk, let me do as I like?"

Thus cogitated Johnny Armstrong as he lay on his bed of sickness, sorrow, and danger. But his cogitations could in no way mend the matter, nor, though they could, was he long permitted to indulge in them; for that mortal sickness under which he had been before suffering, but which the little incident of the visit from the wave, with its consequences, had temporarily banished, again returned with tenfold vigour, making him regardless of all sublunary things—even of life itself. In this state of supineness and suffering did Johnny lie for three entire days and nights—for so long did the storm continue with unabated fury—the vessel having, for some four-and-twenty hours previously, been quite unmanageable, and driving at the mercy of the winds and waves. A dreadful crash, however, at length announced that some horrible crisis was at hand. The vessel had struck, and, in a few seconds more, she was in a thousand pieces, and her unfortunate crew, including Johnny Armstrong, were struggling in the waves. From this instant he lost all consciousness; and, when he again awoke to life, he found himself lying on the sea-beach; but how he had come there he never could tell, nor could he at all conjecture by what accident his life had been saved, when all the rest in the ill-fated vessel had perished; for Johnny was indeed the only person that had escaped. On coming to himself he started to his feet, and gazed around him, with a bewildered look, to see if any object would present itself that might help him to guess where he was. But his survey affording him no such aid to recognition, he began to move inland, in the

hope of meeting with somebody who could give him the information desired; and in this he was not disappointed, that is, he did meet somebody; but the appearance of that somebody surprised Johnny "pretty considerably." He had a high-crowned hat on, such as Johnny had never seen in his life before; an enormous pair of breeches; and a pipe a yard long in his mouth. His *tout ensemble*, in short, was exceeding strange in Johnny Armstrong's eyes. Nevertheless, he accosted him.

"Can ye tell me, freen, how far I may be frae Brechin?" he inquired.

The stranger shook his head, but made no reply.

"I'm sayin', freen," repeated Johnny, in a louder tone, thinking that his friend, as he called him, might possibly be dull of hearing, "can ye tell me if I'm anything near Brechin?"

The stranger again shook his head, but still said nothing. Johnny was confounded. At length, however, after puffing away for some seconds with a suddenly-increased energy, he slowly withdrew his pipe from his mouth, and delivered himself of what sounded to Johnny's ears very much like this, spoken with great rapidity.

"Futra butara rap a ruara dutura muttera purra murra footra den, Preekin, humph."

Of this Johnny of course could make nothing, no more than the reader can, further than recognising in the word "Preekin" a resemblance to the name of the town he so anxiously inquired after; and he was sorely perplexed thereat. Neither could he at all comprehend what sort of a being he had fallen in with.

"I dinna understan' a word o' what ye say, freen," at length said Johnny, staring hard at the stranger with open mouth.

"Umph!" said the latter; and he again withdrew his pipe from his mouth, and again sent a volley of his "dutura

mutteras" about Johnny's ears, to precisely the same purpose as before.

Finding that it was of no use making any further attempt at conversation, Johnny passed on, not doubting that he had met either with a *dummy* or a madman. But what was Johnny's amazement when, shortly afterwards, meeting a woman, whose dress, in its own way, was equally odd and strange with that of the person he had just left, he was answered (that is, to his queries again about Brechin), in the same gibberish in which the former had responded to him.

"What can be the meanin' o' this?" said Johnny to himself, in great perplexity of mind, as he jogged on, after leaving the lady in the same unsatisfactory way as he had left the gentleman. "Whar in a' the earth can I hae gotten to, that naebody I meet wi' can understan' a word o' plain English, or can speak themsels onything like an intelligible language?"

He now began to think that he had probably got into the Highlands; but, although this supposition might account for the strangeness of the language he had heard, it would not, he perceived, tally very well with the enormous breeches which the gentleman he had met with wore, and which he had seen from a distance others wearing, knowing, as he did very well, that the national dress of the Highlanders was the kilt, of which the trousers in question were the very antipodes. There was another circumstance, too, that appeared to Johnny at variance with his first conjecture, namely, that he might have got into the Highlands. Where he was there were no high lands, not an eminence the height of a mole-hill. On the contrary, the whole country, as far as his eye could reach, seemed one vast plain. Though greatly puzzled by these reflections, Johnny jogged on, and his progress at length brought him to a respectable-looking farm-house.

"'Od," said Johnny, "I'll surely get a mouthfu' o sense frae somebody here, an' fin' out whar I am."

In this Johnny certainly did succeed; but not much to his comfort, as the sequel will show. The first person he addressed, on approaching the house, was a little girl, who, when he spoke, stared at him in the greatest amazement, then rushed screaming into the house. This proceeding brought out several young men and women, to whom Johnny now addressed himself; but the only answer he obtained was a stare of astonishment similar to the child's, and then a general burst of laughter. At length one of the girls went into the house and brought out a jolly-looking elderly man, who, from certain parts of his dress, seemed to be in the seafaring way.

"Vell, mine freend, vat you vant?" said this person, who spoke broken English—"vere you come from?"

"I cam last frae Alloa," said Johnny, "and I want to ken, sir, if I'm onything near to Brechin?"

"Preekin! vere dat?"

"'Od, I thocht everbody in Scotland kent that," said Johnny, smiling.

"Ah! maybe Scotlan', mine freend, but no Hollands," replied he of the broken English.

"I dinna ken whether they ken't it in Holland or no," said Johnny; "that's a country I'm no in the least acquaint wi'; but I'm sure it's weel aneuch kent in Scotland."

"Ah! maybe Scotlan', but no Hollands, my freend," repeated the man, smiling in his turn; "but you vas in Hollands."

"Never in my life," said Johnny, earnestly.

"No, no," replied the man, impatiently, "you vas no in Hollands—but you vas in Hollands."

Johnny could make nothing of this; but it was soon cleared up by the person adding, "You vas in Hollands *now*—dis moment."

We will not even attempt to describe Johnny's amazement, horror, and consternation, on this announcement being made to him, for we feel how vain it would be, and how far short any idea we could convey would be of the reality.

"Holland!" said Johnny. "Heaven hae a care o' me! Ye surely dinna mean to say that I'm in Holland the noo?"

"To be sure I vas," said the Dutchman, smiling at Johnny's ludicrous perturbation. "Mine Got, did you not know you vas in Hollands? Vere you come from, in all de worlde, you not know dat?"

"I tell't ye already," replied Johnny, with a most rueful countenance, "that I cam last frae Alloa. But ye're surely no in earnest, freen," he added, in a desperate hope that it might, after all, be but a joke, "when ye say that I'm in Holland?"

"Ah! sure earneest—no doubt—true," said the Dutchman, now laughing outright at Johnny's perplexity.

As in the former case, we presume we need not be more explicit in saying that Johnny had actually been wrecked on the coast of Holland.

"Weel, weel," said the Brechin voyager, with an air expressive of more calmness and resignation than might have been expected, "this does cove the gowan! How, in Heaven's name, am I ever to fin' my way hame again? Little did I think I was ever to be landed this way amang savages."

Johnny Armstrong, it will be here observed, could have been no great reader—otherwise, he never would have applied the term savages to so decent, industrious, and civilized a people as the Dutch. The Dutchman, who was a kind, good-natured fellow—taking no offence whatever at Johnny's unbecoming expression, because probably he did not understand it, and compassionating his situation—

now invited him into the house, where Johnny, having succeeded in conveying to the whole household, through the medium of the speaker of broken English, the story of his misfortunes, was treated with much hospitality. With these kind people Johnny Armstrong remained for about a week—for they would not allow him to go sooner—when, having entirely recovered from the effects of his sea voyage and shipwreck, he proceeded to Rotterdam; being accompanied and assisted in all his movements by his benevolent host, Dunder Vander Dunder, of Slootzsloykin. On arriving at Rotterdam, a passage was engaged for Johnny on board one of the Leith packets, or regular traders, in which he was next day snugly deposited; and, in an hour after, he was again braving the dangers of the ocean. For some time all went on well on this occasion with him, and he was beginning to feel comfortable, and even happy, from the prospect of being soon again in his native land, and from the superior accommodations of the vessel in which he was embarked—far surpassing, as they did, those of the unfortunate *Sisters* of Skatehaven. His present ship was, in truth, a remarkably fine one, and altogether seemed well adapted for encountering the elements. The weather, too, was moderate, and the wind fair; so that a quick and pleasant passage was confidently anticipated by all on board, including Johnny Armstrong. All these agreeable circumstances combined, made him feel extremely comfortable and happy; and, in the exuberance of his feelings, and from the exciting sense of having at length triumphed over his misfortunes—it might almost be said his fate—Johnny even began to joke and laugh with those whom he found willing to joke and laugh with him. It was while in this happy frame of mind, and as he stood luxuriously leaning over the bulwark of the vessel, that the captain suddenly espied a little, smart, cutter-looking craft, sailing exactly in the same course with them—

selves, and evidently endeavouring to make up with them.

“What can the folk be wantin’?” quoth Johnny Armstrong, taking an interest in the approaching barge. His question was one which nobody could answer. In the meantime, the little vessel, moving with great velocity, was fast nearing them, when the captain, now convinced that those in her desired to have some communication with him, arrested his own vessel’s way, and awaited their coming. In a very few minutes, the little cutter was alongside, and two men leapt from her to the deck of the packet, when one of them, approaching the captain, told him that they were messengers, that they had a warrant against John Jones, a native of Britain, for debt, and that they had reason to believe he was in the vessel. The captain said he did not believe he had any such passenger on board, but informed them that they were perfectly at liberty to search the ship. During this conversation, the other officer kept his eye fixed on Johnny Armstrong, and when rejoined by his comrade, seemed to inform him—for their language was not understood—that there was something about that person well worthy of his attention. They now both looked at Johnny, and appeared both convinced that he was a fit subject for further inquiry. Accordingly one of them addressed him:—

“Your name vas John Jones, mynheer?”

“No, sir,” said Johnny; “my name’s John Armstrong.”

“Ah, a small shange—dat is all. You vas John, and he vas John, and you be both John togidder; so, you must come to de shore wid us.”

“Catch me there, lads,” quoth Johnny. “The deil a shore I’ll gang to, please Providence, but Leith shore. Na, na; I’ve had aneuch o’ this wark, and I’m determined to bring’t till an’ end noo.”

“Donner and blitzen!” shouted out one of the men,

passionately, "but you must go!"—at the same time seizing Johnny by the collar, and drawing a pistol from his bosom.

In utter amazement at this extraordinary treatment, Johnny Armstrong imploringly called on the captain and the other passengers for protection; but, as none of them were in the least acquainted with him, and therefore did not know whether he was John Jones or not, they all declined interfering—the captain saying that it would be more than his ship and situation were worth to aid any one in resisting the laws of the country—that he could not, dare not do it. His appeals, therefore, to those around him being vain, he was eventually bundled into the cutter and conveyed on shore, placed in a temporary place of confinement for the night, and next day carried before a magistrate to be identified. To effect this, several witnesses were called, when one and all of them, after examining Johnny pretty narrowly, pronounced, to the great disappointment of the officers who had apprehended him, that he was *not* the man! They, however, asserted that the resemblance between the real and supposed John Jones was very remarkable. On the discovery being made that the prisoner was not Jones, the magistrate apologized to Johnny in the most polite terms for the trouble he had been put to, and expressed great regret for the mistake of the officers; but said that, as the witnesses had stated there was a strong resemblance—an unfortunate one, he must call it—between him and the real defaulter, and seeing, moreover, that they were both natives of Britain, the officers were perfectly justified in doing what they had done, however much the hardship of the case might be matter of regret. The magistrate having thus delivered himself, Johnny Armstrong was dismissed with great civility, and wished, by all present, safe home to his own country—a wish in which he most heartily concurred, but

which seemed to him more easily entertained than gratified. On regaining his liberty, the first thing he did was to endeavour to find out when the next ship sailed for Scotland; he having, of course, lost that in which he had first embarked, and, to his great consternation and dismay, learned that there would be no vessel for a fortnight. This was sad intelligence to Johnny; for, to add to his other distresses, his funds were now waxing low, and he felt that it would require the utmost economy to enable him to spin out the time and leave sufficient to pay his passage to his native land. This economy he could very easily have practised at home, for he had a natural tendency that way; but he did not know how to set about it in a foreign country. His unhappiness and anxiety, therefore, on this point were very great. In this dilemma, he bethought him of again seeking out and quartering on his friend Vander Dunder, of Slootzloykin, till the vessel should sail; but not having, of course, a word of Dutch, he could make no inquiries on the subject of his route, or indeed of anything regarding his friend at all. This idea, therefore, he ultimately abandoned, principally through a fear that he should, by some mistake, be despatched upon a wrong scent, a species of disaster to which he was now so sensitively alive, that he would neither turn to the right nor to the left without having made himself perfectly sure that he was about to take the right course; and, as to conveyances of all kinds, of which he now entertained an especial suspicion, he had prudently determined that he would know every particular about them and their destinations before he would put a foot in one of them, for he had found, from dear-bought experience, that if he did not take this precaution, the chance was that he would never reach the place he desired to get at, and might be whisked away to some unknown country, where he would never more be heard of.

Under this wholesome terror, Johnny made no attempt to find out his friend Vander Dunder; but chance effected, in part at least, what his limited knowledge of Dutch put it out of his power, with set purpose, to accomplish. On turning the corner of a street, who should he have the good fortune to meet with but Vander Dunder. The astonishment of the good Dutchman on seeing Johnny was great, so great, indeed, as to overcome the natural phlegm of his constitution. Holding up his hands in amazement—

“Mine Got, my freend! are you shipwrack agen?” he exclaimed.

“No, no,” quoth Johnny—“bad aneuch, but no just sae bad as that.” And he proceeded to inform his friend of the real state of the case.

The good-natured Dutchman was shocked at the recital, and felt ten times more than ever for Johnny’s unhappy situation and complicated misfortunes. When he had concluded his affecting story—

“I tell you what you do, mine goot freend,” said Vander Dunder—“you go vith me to Sloodtsloykin, and you remain vith me dere till your ship sail. You do dat, mine goot freend.”

“Wi’ a’ my heart,” said Johnny, “and muckle obleeged to ye for yer kindness.”

“No, no—no obleege at all,” replied the kind-hearted Dutchman, impatiently. “Yo do the same to me in your coountry if I was shipwrack and in misfortune, and put to trooble for an innocent thief.”

“Aweel, maybe I wad; but, nevertheless, its kind o’ you to offer me the shelter o’ yer roof,” replied Johnny.

Dunder Vander Dunder now took his friend into a tavern, and treated him to a glass of schnaps. Shortly thereafter the two embarked in a canal boat for Sloodtsloykin, where they finally arrived in safety. Here Johnny

met with the same kind treatment as before; and of that kindness there was no abatement during the whole fortnight of his sojourn. At the end of this period, Johnny Armstrong once more set out for Rotterdam, on the day previous to the sailing of the vessel in which he now hoped to reach his native land, without further molestation or interruption. And, certainly, everything had the appearance of going right on this occasion. The vessel, with Johnny on board, sailed at the appointed time, and, before embarking, he had read distinctly on the ticket—a large black board, with yellow letters, which was fastened to the shrouds—that she was bound for Leith, and was the identical vessel he had had in his eye. So far as this went, there could be no mistake whatever. There was, indeed, one little circumstance that startled Johnny, but which he had not discovered till the vessel had been some time at sea. This was, that all the crew were Dutchmen, there not being a Scotchman amongst them. The circumstance did not, indeed, greatly alarm Johnny, but he certainly did think it a little odd; for he naturally expected that, as she was a Leith vessel, her crew would be, for the most part, at any rate, natives of Britain. However, he made no remarks on the subject, thinking it, as it really was, a matter of perfect indifference whether they were Scotchmen or Dutchmen. There were two or three passengers in the vessel besides himself; but they were all foreigners too, so that he could hold no converse with any of them; and thus debarred from intercourse with his fellow voyagers, he sat by himself, gazing from the deck of the vessel on the waste of waters with which he was surrounded, and musing on the strange series of mishaps of which he had so simply and innocently become the victim. It was while thus employed—the vessel having been now a good many hours at sea, and at the moment scudding away before a fine fresh breeze—that the captain approached Johnny, and in very

polite and civil terms, demanded his passage money. As he spoke in Dutch, however, the latter did not understand him. The captain observing this, and now guessing what countryman he was, addressed him in very good English, and in that language repeated his demand. With this demand, Johnny instantly complied; and, finding that he was a civil, good-natured fellow, began to open up a little conversation with him. His first remark was, that he hoped they would have good weather. The captain hoped so too. His second remark was, that they had a fine breeze. The captain agreed with him—said it was a delightful breeze—and added that, if it continued to blow as it then blew for four-and-twenty hours, he expected they would be all safe at *Rouen!*

“At whar?” shouted out Johnny, looking aghast at the speaker.

“At Rouen, to be sure,” repeated the captain, wondering at Johnny’s amazement.

“Gude’s mercy!” exclaimed Johnny, with dreadful energy, “are ye no gaun to Leith?—is this no a Leith boat?”

“Oh, no,” said the captain smiling; “this is the Rouen packet. Were ye not aware of that, sir? You have got into a sad scrape, my friend, if you were not,” he added, and now laughing outright at the dismal expression of Johnny’s countenance.

“Heaven hae a care o’ me!” said Johnny despairingly. “Did I no read distinctly on the ticket that was fastened to yer shroods, that ye were bound for Leith?”

“Yes, yes,” replied the captain, “you may have seen such a ticket as you speak of, and there was certainly such a ticket on our shroods as you say, but it did not refer to this ship, but to the vessel outside of us. We allowed the board to be exhibited on our shroods merely to accommodate our neighbour, as it could not be read from his—he being on the outside, and we next the quay. That, my friend,

is a piece of civility very commonly practised at seaports by one vessel to another, when similarly situated as we and they were. You will see it at all quays and wharfs."

Johnny Armstrong groaned, but said nothing. At length, however, he muttered, in a tone of Christian-like resignation—

"The Lord's will be dune! I see it's settled that I am never to get hame again; but to be keepit gaun frae place to place ower the face o' the earth, like anither wanderin' Jew. Gude hae a care o' me, but this is awfu'! Its judgment like."

It certainly was very remarkable, but not in the least mysterious. This new mistake of Johnny, like all the rest, was a perfectly simple occurrence; and, like them, too, arose as plainly and naturally out of circumstances as it was possible for any effect to do from a cause. But, however this may be, the captain—although he could not help laughing at the awkward predicament of his passenger—really felt for him, seeing the distress he was in, and was so much influenced by this feeling as to offer to convey him back to Rotterdam, to which, he said, he would return in two days, free of any charge; adding, with a smile, and with the kind intention of reconciling Johnny to what could not now be helped, that it was nothing, after all—that it would make a difference of only a few days—and that it would be always showing him a little *more* of the world.

"Mony thanks to ye," said Johnny, perceiving and appreciating the friendly purpose of the captain; "and I'll e'en tak advantage o' yer kind offer; but as to seein' the world, by my faith, I've seen now about just as muckle o't as I want to see, and maybe a trifle mair—a hantle mair, at ony rate, than I ever expected to see." Then, in a soliloquizing tone and manner—"God keep me, whar's Brechin noo! A' that I wanted, and a' that I intended, was to get to that bit paltry place; and, instead o' that, here am I

within a stane-cast o' the north pole, for aught I ken to the contrar, and, to a' appearances, no half dune wi't yet. Heaven kens whar I'll be sent niest!—maybe be landed on Owhyhee, or on some desert island, like another Robinson Crusoe. Na, it's certain, if things gang on muckle langer this way."

Of the drift or scope of these remarks, or, at any rate, of the feelings that dictated them, the captain could make nothing, not knowing Johnny's precise circumstances; nor did he seek to have them explained, but contented himself with repeating his offer of conveying Johnny back to Rotterdam, and renewing his well-meant efforts to reconcile him to his fate, in so far as his present voyage was concerned. In the meantime, the wind continued to blow in a manner perfectly satisfactory in every respect to all on board the *Jungfrau* of Rotterdam and Rouen; and, in about the space of time mentioned by the captain, the vessel reached her destination in safety. Johnny Armstrong, whose whole mind was absorbed by anxiety to reach that home which he yet seemed destined never again to see, took no interest whatever in the scenes presented to him in the part of the world he was now in. Indeed, he never left the vessel at all, for fear she would slip through his fingers; for, if he was afraid of accidents of this kind before, he was ten times more so now; and, with this fear upon him, that the packet might, by some chance or other, escape him, he determined to stick by her—never to lose sight of her for a moment, till she had conveyed him back to Rotterdam; and his vigilance ultimately secured the end he had in view. The *Jungfrau* sailed from Rouen with Johnny on board, and, in due time, deposited him once more at Rotterdam. But what was Johnny's surprise, what Dunder Vander Dunder's amazement, when they again encountered one another, and that within ten minutes of the former's landing! The amazement of the latter, how-

ever, was, on this occasion, evidently mingled with a degree of suspicion of the perfect uprightness of Johnny's character. He began now to think, in short, that there had been more in the circumstance of Johnny's apprehension than he had been informed of. He did not like these frequent reappearances; he thought them very odd—and he did not hesitate to say so.

"Mine Got! vat you here again for, man? Vat is de meaning of all dis, mine goot freend?" he exclaimed, with a somewhat dry and doubtful manner, quite at variance with the cordial tone of his former greetings.

Johnny Armstrong explained to him, but seemingly without obtaining implicit credence for all he said. When he had done—

"'Tis verree odd," said Vander Dunder, coldly; "verree straunge. But, you really vant to go to Scotlan, dere is vessel going to sail for Leet now, and I vill see you on board mineself."

It was very questionable whether Vander's civility, in this case, proceeded from a desire really to serve Johnny, or from a wish to get fairly rid of him. However this might be, Johnny readily accepted his offer, and at once accompanied him to the vessel he alluded to, which was, indeed, on the point of sailing. Vander, taking care that there should be no mistake in this case, conducted him down into the cabin, and waited on the quay till he saw the vessel fairly under weigh.

Having brought the disasters of Johnny Armstrong to this point, we proceed now to finish what we assure our readers, is an "ower true tale."

As we were strolling down the pier of Leith, with a friend, one afternoon in the year 18—, we saw a vessel making for the harbour. It was high water, and the scene altogether was a very pleasing and a very stirring one. But, amongst the various objects of interest that presented

themselves, there was none that attracted so much of our attention as the stately vessel that, with outspread canvas, was rapidly nearing the pier. We asked a seaman who stood beside us, where she was from. He replied—"Rotterdam."

On approaching the pier, the vessel shortened sail, and, by this process, enabled us deliberately to scan her decks from our elevated position, as she glided gently along with us. During this scrutiny, we observed amongst the passengers a stout little man in a brown greatcoat, with a large red comforter about his neck, and his hat secured on his head—for it was blowing pretty hard—by a blue pocket-handkerchief, which was passed beneath his chin, and gave him, in a very particular manner, the peculiar air of a traveller or *voyageur*. There was nothing whatever in the appearance of the little man in the brown greatcoat which would have led any one to suppose, *à priori*, that there possibly could be anything remarkable or extraordinary in his history; but I was induced suddenly to change my opinion, or at least to take some interest in him, by my friend's exclaiming, in the utmost amazement, and, at the same time, pointing to him with the red comforter—

"Gracious Heaven, if there is not Johnny Armstrong! Or it is his ghost!"

"No ghost at all, we warrant you," said we; "ghosts do not generally wear greatcoats and red comforters. But who in all the world is Johnny Armstrong?"

"Johnny Armstrong," replied our friend, greatly excited, "is a person, a particular acquaintance of mine, who has been missing these six weeks; and who was supposed, by everybody who knew him, to have perished by some accident or other, but of what nature could never be ascertained, on his way to Brechin, where he had gone to visit some relations."

We felt interested in Johnny, by this brief sketch of his mysterious story; and, not a little curious to know where on

earth he could possibly have been all the time, we readily closed with our friend's proposal to run round to the berth for which we saw the vessel was making, and to await his coming on shore.

"But how, in all the world," said our friend, communing with himself during this interval, "has he got into a vessel from Rotterdam? He could not have been there, surely? It's impossible."

As to this we could say nothing, not knowing at the time anything at all of Johnny's adventures; but of these we were not now long kept in ignorance. On his stepping on shore, our friend seized him joyously by the hand, and expressed great satisfaction at seeing him again. This satisfaction appeared to be mutual; for Johnny returned his friend's grasp with great cordiality and warmth. The first salutations over—

"But where on all the earth, Mr. Armstrong," said our friend, "have you been for these three months back?"

Johnny smiled, and said it was "ower lang a tale" to tell where we then were; but, as he meant to stop either in Leith or Edinburgh for the night, it being now pretty far in the evening, if my friend and I would adjourn with him to some respectable house, where he could get a night's quarters, he would give us the whole story of his adventures. With this proposal we readily closed; and on Johnny asking if we could point out such a house as he alluded to, we at once named the New Ship Tavern. Thither we accordingly repaired; and, in less than two hours thereafter, we were put, good reader, in possession, by Johnny himself, of that part of his story to which the preceding pages have been devoted. What follows—for Johnny's misfortunes had not yet terminated—we learned afterwards from another quarter.

On the next day—we mean the day succeeding the evening we spent with Johnny—the latter proceeded to

Edinburgh, with the view of taking coach there for Carlisle. But, in making his way up Catherine Street, and when precisely opposite No. 12, Calton Street—we like to be particular—Johnny found himself suddenly accosted by one of his oldest and most intimate friends. This was a Mr. James Stevenson, a fellow-townsmen and fellow-shop-keeper of his own.

The astonishment of the latter, on meeting with Johnny, and, indeed, of finding him at all in the land of the living, was very great; and he sufficiently expressed this feeling by the lively and highly excited manner in which he addressed him.

Having put the usual queries, with that air of intense interest which they naturally excited, as to where Johnny had been, what he had been about, &c. &c., and having obtained a brief sketch of his adventures, with the promise of a fuller one afterwards, Mr. Stevenson, in reply, asked Johnny what course he was now steering.

"Hame, to be sure," said Johnny, with a smile. "It's time noo, I think—I'm just sae far on my way to tak' oot a ticket for the coach."

"Ye needna do that unless ye like," replied Johnny's friend. "Ye may save your siller, and no be abune an hour langer tarried, by takin' a seat wi' me in the gig I hae in wi' me. I'm sure ye're welcome, and I'll be blythe o' your company."

"Hae ye a gig in wi' ye?" said Johnny, looking pleased by the intelligence.

"'Deed hae I, Mr. Armstrong, and ye'll just clink down beside me in't."

"I'll do that wi' great thankfu'ness," replied Johnny, "and muckle obleeged by the offer."

The friends now walked away, arm in arm together; and in about two hours afterwards—Mr. Stevenson having, in the meantime, despatched what business he had to do in

the city—they were both seated in the gig, and birring it on merrily towards Carlisle.

Neither Mr. Stevenson nor Johnny, however, were great whips—a deficiency which was by no means compensated for by the circumstance of their having a rather spirited horse, although blind of an eye. He was, in truth, a very troublesome animal; boggling and shying at everything that presented itself to his solitary optic. Notwithstanding this, the travellers got on very well for a time, and were whirling over the ground at a rapid rate, when an unlucky cart of hay came in their way at a narrow turn of the road. How this simple occurrence should have operated so unfavourably as it did for them, we shall explain.

A cart of hay is not a very alarming object to rational creatures like ourselves, but to the one-eyed horse of the travellers it appeared a very serious affair; for it had no sooner presented itself to his solitary organ of vision than he pricked up his ears, snorted furiously, and began to exhibit sundry other symptoms of disquietude. By dint, however, of some well-directed punishment from Jamie Stevenson's whip, which Johnny increased by an energetic application of his stick, the restive animal was brought *up* to the waggon of hay; but, for some time, the inducements just mentioned failed to prevail on him to *pass* it.

At length, however, Johnny having added greatly to the vigour of his blows with his stick, and his neighbour to that of his strokes with the whip, the horse *did* pass the waggon, and that with a vengeance. Taking heart, or rather becoming desperate, he bolted past it with the rapidity of a cannon shot; and not only this, but when he had cleared it, continued the velocity of his movements with unabated energy, to the great discomfort and no small terror of both Johnny and his companion, who now found themselves going at a rate which they had neither anticipated nor desired. Indeed, this was so very great that

both directly saw that something was wrong. Both saw, in short, what was, indeed, too true, that the horse had fairly run away with them; for he was now going like the wind, with fury and distraction in his looks. It was a shocking and most dreadfully alarming affair; and so Johnny and his friend felt it to be, as might be distinctly seen by their horror-stricken faces.

On discovering the predicament they were in, both the travellers—the one dropping his whip, and the other his stick—seized on the reins, and began pulling with all their might, in the desperate hope of checking the animal's speed by main force; Johnny, in his terror, exclaiming the while, distractedly—

“Mair o't yet, mair o't yet! Lord have a care o' me, but this is awfu'! This is waur than onything I hae met wi' yet. Waur than the *Fifteen Sisters*, Dutchmen, and a'. God be wi' us! are my misfortunes never to hae an end, till they hae finished me outright? Am I never to get safe to either ae place or anither?—either to hame or to Brechin? Surely ane o' them might be permitted to me. O, Jamie, see hoo he's gaun! He docsna seem to fin' us at his hurdies, nae mair than if we war a pair o' preencushions.”

This was true enough, The horse in his fury did not indeed seem to feel either them or the vehicle they were seated in, but pushed madly onwards, till he came to where the road divided itself into two distinct roads—the one being the right one, and the other, of course, the wrong—when, as if inspired by Johnny's evil genius, he at once took the latter, and in little more than twenty minutes, had him and his friend fully half as many miles out of their way. Now, however, the catastrophe was to be wound up. A milestone caught one of the wheels of the gig, canted it over, and threw Johnny sprawling on the road with a broken leg; his friend, although also thrown, escaping wholly unhurt.

"Aweel, here it's at last," said Johnny, sitting up in the mud amongst which he had been planted, and fully believing that his injuries were fatal. "Here it's at last. I'm clean dune for noo, after a' my escapes. It may be noo plainly seen, I think," he went on, "that some evil spirit has had me in its power, for these six weeks past at ony rate, and has been gowfin' me about the world like a fitba', to kill me wi' a gig at last."

Luckily, Johnny's injuries did not prove so serious as he had feared they would do; and no less fortunate was it that the accident to which they were owing happened not far from a small country town in which there was a resident surgeon. To the latter place Johnny was immediately removed on a temporary bier, hastily constructed for the purpose by some labouring men who chanced to be near the spot where the accident happened, and there he lay for six entire weeks, when the surgeon above alluded to, and who had attended him all that time, intimated to him that he might now venture to return home. Delighted with the intelligence, Johnny instantly acted on it, and next day entered Carlisle triumphantly in a post-chaise—not looking, nor really being, after all, much the worse for his unprecedented adventures, save and except a lameness in the injured limb, which ever after imparted to his movements the graceful up-and-down motion produced by that peculiar longitudinal proportion of the nether limbs, designated by the descriptive definition of "a short leg and a shorter." Having, with this last occurrence, concluded the story of Johnny's disasters, we have only to add that Johnny has never, to this good hour, got the length of Brechin—nor will, he says, ever again make the attempt.

THE PROFESSOR'S TALES.*

THE MOUNTAIN STORM.

PACKMAN *loquitur*.—For several days the wind had been easterly, with an intense frost. At last, however, the weather subsided into a calm and dense fog, under which, at mid-day, it was difficult to find one's way amidst those mountain tracks along which, in general, my route lay. The grass and heath were absolutely loaded with hoar-frost. My cheeks became encompassed by a powdered covering; my breath was intensely visible, and floated and lingered about my face with an oppressive and almost suffocating density. No sun, moon, or star had appeared for upwards of forty-eight hours; when, according to my preconcerted plan, I reached the farm town of Burnfoot. I was now in the centre of Queensberry Hills, the most notable sheep-pasturage in the south of Scotland. It was about three o'clock of the fifteenth day of January, when, under a cheerful welcome from the guidwife, I rested my pack (for, be it known, I belong to this class of peripatetic merchants) upon the meal ark, disengaged my arms from the leather straps by which the pack was suspended from my shoulders, and proceeded to light my pipe at the blazing peat-fire. Refreshments, such as are best suited to the *packman's drouth*,

* The author of these stories (to be continued), the well-known Professor Thomas Gillespie, was one of the principal writers in *Blackwood* during the "storm and stress" period of that magazine. As an author, his peculiarity consisted in vivid descriptions of scenery and incidents coming within the range of a very eccentric experience, all given with a versatility and *abandon* which he could not restrain, and which, being the reflex of a poetical enthusiasm, formed the charm of his writings.—*Ed.*

were soon and amply supplied, and I had the happiness of seeing my old acquaintances (for I visited Burnfoot twice a year, on my going and coming from Glasgow to Manchester) drop *in* from their several avocations, one after another, and all truly rejoiced to behold my face, and still more delighted to inspect the treasure and the wonders of "the pack." At last the guidman himself suspended his plaid from the mid-door head, put off his shoes and leggings, assumed his slippers, along with his prescriptive seat at the head or upper end of the lang-settle. The guidwife, returning *butt* from bedding the youngest of some half-score of children, welcomed her husband with a look of the most genuine affection. She put a little creepie stool under his feet, felt that his clothes were not wet, scolded the dogs to a respectful distance, and inspired the peats into a double blaze. The oldest daughter, now "woman grown," sat combing the hoar-frost from her raven locks, and looking out from beneath beautifully arched and bushy eyebrows upon the interesting addition which had been made to the meal-ark. Some half-a-score of healthy lads and lasses occupied the bench ayont the fire, o'er-canopied by sheepskins, aprons, stockings, and footless hose. The dogs, after various and somewhat noisy differences had been adjusted, fell into order and position around the hearth, enjoying the warmth, and licking, peacefully and carefully, the wet from their sides. The cat, by this time, had made a returning motion from the cupboard head, from which she had been watching the arrangements and movements beneath. As this appeared to "Help" to be an infringement of the terms of armistice and of the frontier laws, he sprang with eagerness over the hearth. Pussy, finding it dangerous, under this sudden and somewhat unexpected movement, "*dare terga*," instantly drew up her whole body into an attitude not only of defence, but defiance; curving herself into a bristling crescent, with the head of a dragon attached to it,

and, with one horrid hiss and sputter, compelled Help first to hesitate and then to retreat.

“Three paces back the youth retired,
And saved himself from harm.”

The guidwife, however,—who seemed not unaccustomed to such demonstrations, and who manifestly acted on the humane principle of assisting the weaker by assailing the stronger combatant—gave Help such demonstrations of her intentions, as at once reduced matters to the *status quo ante bellum*. (I have as good a right to scholarship as my brother packman, Plato, who carried oil to Egypt.) Thus peace and good order being restored, the treasures of my burden became an immediate and a universal subject of inquiry. I was compelled, nothing loath, to unstrap my various packages, and disclose to view all the varied treasures of the spindle and loom. Shawls were spread out into enormous display, with central, and corner, and border ornaments, the most amazing and the most fashionable; waistcoat pieces of every stripe and figure, from the straight line to the circle, of every hue and colouring which the rainbow exhibits, were unfolded in the presence and under the scrutinizing thumb of many purchasers. The guidwife herself half coaxed and half scolded a fine remnant of Flanders lace, of most tempting aspect, out of the guidman's reluctant pocket. The very dogs seemed anxious to be accommodated, and applied their noses to some unopened bales, with a knowing look of inquiry. Things were proceeding in this manner, when the door opened, and there entered a young man of the most prepossessing appearance; in fact, what Burns terms a “strapping youth.” I could observe that, at his entrance, the daughter's eye (of whom I have formerly made mention) immediately kindled into an expression of the most universal kindness and benevolence. Hitherto she had taken but a limited interest in

what was going on ; but now she became the most prominent figure in the group—whilst the mother dusted a chair for the welcome stranger with her apron, and the guidman welcomed him with a—

“Come awa, Willie Wilson, an' tak a seat. The nicht's gay dark an' dreary. I wonder how ye cleared the Whitstane Cleugh and the Side Scaur, man, on sic an eerie nicht.”

“Indeed,” responded the stranger, casting a look, in the meantime, towards the guidman's buxom, and, indeed, lovely daughter—“indeed, it's an unco fearfu' nicht—sic a mist and sic a cauld I hae seldom if ever encounterec'; but I dinna ken hoo it was—I coulda rest at hame till I had tellt ye a' the news o' the last Langhom market.”

“Ay, ay,” interrupted the guidwife; “the last Langhom market, man, is an auld tale noo, I trow. Na, na, yer mither's son canna here on sic a nicht, and at sic an hour, on sic an unmeaning errand”—finishing her sentence, however, by a whisper into Willie's ear, which brought a deeper red into his cheek, and seemed to operate in a similar manner on the apparently deeply engaged daughter.

“But, Watty,” continued my fair purchaser, “you *must* give me this Bible a little cheaper—it's ower dear, man—heard ever onybody o' five white shillings gien for a Bible, and it only a New Testament, after a'?—it's baith a sin an' a shame, Watty.”

After some suitable reluctance, I was on the point of reducing the price by a single sixpence, when Willie Wilson advanced towards the pack, and at once taking up the book and the conversation—

“Ower dear, Jessie, my dear !—it's the word o' God, ye ken—his ain precious word ; and I'll e'en mak ye a present o' the book at Watty's ain price. Ye ken he maun live, as we a' do, by his trade.”

The money was instantly paid down from a purse pretty well filled; for William Wiison was the son of a wealthy and much respected sheep-farmer in the neighbourhood, and had had his name *once* called in the kirk, along with that of "Janet Harkness of Burnfoot, both in this parish."

"Hoot noo, bairns," rejoined the mother; "ye're baith wrang—that Bible winna do ava. Ye maun hae a big ha' Bible to take the buik wi', and worship the God o' yer fathers nicht and morning, as they hae dune afore ye; and Watty will bring ye ane frae Glasgow the next time he comes roun'; and it will, maybe, be usefu', ye ken, in *anither way*."

"Tout, mither, wi' yer nonsense," interrupted the conscientious bride; "I never liked to see my name and age marked and pointed out to onybody on oor muckle Bible; sae just haud yer tongue, mither, and tak a present frae William and *me*," added she, blushing deeply, "o' that big printed Testament. The minister, ye ken, seldom meddles wi' the auld Bible, unless it be a bit o' the Psalms; and yer een noo are no sae gleg as they were whan ye were married to my father there."

The father, overcome by this well-timed and well-directed evidence of goodness, piety, and filial affection, rose from his seat on the long-settle, and, with tears in his eyes, pronounced a most fervent benediction over the shoulders of his child.

"O God in heaven, bless and preserve my dear Jessie!" said he—his child's tears now falling fast and faster. "Oh, may the God of thy fathers make thee happy—thee and thine—him there and his!—and when thy mother's grey hairs and mine are laid and hid in the dust, mayest thou have children, such as thy fond and dutiful self, to bless and comfort, to rejoice and support thy heart!"

There was not, by this time, a dry eye in the family; and, as a painful silence was on the point of succeeding to

this outbreking of nature, the venerable parent slowly and deliberately took down the big ha' Bible from its bole in the wall, and, placing it on the lang-settle table, he proceeded to family worship with the usual solemn prefatory annunciation—"Let us worship God."

Love, filial affection, and piety—what a noble, what a beautiful triumvirate! By means of these, Scotland has rendered herself comparatively great, independent, and happy. These are the graces which, in beautiful union, have protected her liberties, sweetened her enjoyments, and exalted her head amongst the nations, and which, over all, have cast an expression and a feature irresistibly winning and nationally characteristic. It is over such scenes as the kitchen fireside of Burnfoot now presented, that the soul hovers with ever-awakening and ever-intenser delight; that even amidst the coldness, and unconcern, and irreligion of an iron age, the mind, at least at intervals, is redeemed into ecstasy, and feels, in spite of habit, and example, and deadened apprehensions, that there is a beauty in pure and virgin love, a depth in genuine and spontaneous filial regard, and an impulse in communion with Him that is most high, which, even when taken separately, are hal- lowing, sacred, and elevating; but which, when blended and softened down into one great and leading feature, prove incontestably that man is, in his origin and unalloyed nature, but a little lower than the angels.

Such was the aspect of matters in this sequestered and sanctified dwelling, when the house seemed, all at once, to be smitten, like Job's, at the four corners. The soot fell in showers into the grate; the rafters creaked; the dust descended; every door in the house rattled on its sneck and hinges; and the very dogs sprung at once from their slumbers and barked. There was something so awful in the suddenness and violence of the commotion, that the prayer was abruptly and suddenly brought to a conclusion.

“Ay, fearfu’, sirs!” were John Harkness’ first words when springing to his feet; “but there’s an awfu’ nicht. Open the outer door, Jamie, and let us see what it is like.” The outer door was opened; but the drift burst in with such a suffocating swirl, that a strong lad who encountered it, reeled and gasped for breath.

“The hogs!” exclaimed the guidman, “and the gimmers!—where did ye leave them, Jamie?”

“In Capleslacks,” was the answer, “by east the Dod. The wind has set in frae the nor’-east, and fifty score o’ sheep, if this continue, will never see the mornin’”

But what was to be done?

“The wind blew as ’twould blawn its last,”

and the whole atmosphere was one almost solid wreath of penetrating snow; when you thrust forth your hand into the open air, it was as if you had perforated an iceberg. Burnfoot stands at the convergence of two mountain glens, adown one of which the tempest came as from a funnel—collected, compressed, irresistible. There was a momentary look of suspense—every one eying the rest with an expression of indecision and utter helplessness. The young couple, by some law of affinity, stood together in a corner. The shepherd lads, with Jamie Hogg at their head, were employed in adjusting plaids to their persons. The guidman had already resumed his leggings, and the dogs were all exceedingly excited—amazed at this unexpected movement, but perfectly resolved to do their duty.

“Jamie,” said the guidman, “you and I will try to mak oor way by the Head Scaur to Capleyetts, where the main hirsle was left; and Will, Tam, and Geordie will see after the hogs and gimmers ayont the Dod.”

“I, too,” exclaimed a voice from the corner, over which, however, a fair hand was pressed, and which was therefore but indistinctly heard—“I will—(canna ye let me speak, Jessie!)—I will not, I shall not be left behind—I will ac

company the guidman, and do what I can to seek and to save."

"Indeed and indeed, my dear William, ye can do nae guid—ye dinna ken the grun' like my faither; and there's mony a kittle step forbye the Head Scaur; and, the Lord be wi' us! on sic a nicht too." So saying, she clasped her betrothed firmly around the neck, and absolutely compelled him to relinquish his purpose. Having gained this one object, the fair and affectionate bride rushed across the room to her father, and falling down on her knees, grasped him by the legs, and exclaimed—

"O mither, mither! come and help me—come and help me! faither, my dear faither, let Jamie Hogg gang, and the rest; they are young, ye ken, and as weel acquaint as yer-sel' wi' the ly o' the glens! but this is no a nicht for the faither o' a family to risk his life to save his substance. O faither, faither! I am soon, ye ken, to leave you and bonny Burnfoot—grant me, oh, grant me this one, this last request!"

The mother sat all this while wringing her hands and exclaiming—

"Ay, ay, Jenny, get him to stay, get him to stay!"

The father answered not a word, but, making a sign to Hogg, and whistling on Help, and at the same time kissing his *now* all but fainting child, he rushed out of the door (as Mrs. Harkness said) "like a fey man," and he and his companion, with a suitable accompaniment of dogs, were almost instantly invisible. The three other lads, suitably armed and accompanied, followed the example set to them, and the guidwife, the two lovers, five or six younger branches, and the female servants of the family, with myself, remained at home in a state of anxiety and suspense which can be better conceived than expressed.

"The varnished clock that clicked behind the door,"
with a force and a stroke loud and painful in the extreme,

struck first ten, then eleven, then twelve; but there was no return. Again and again were voices heard commingling with the tempest's rush; again and again did the outer door seem to move backwards on its hinges; but nothing entered save the shrill pipe of the blast, accompanied by the comminuted drift, which penetrated through every seam and cranny. This state of uncertainty was awful; even the ascertained reality of death, partial or universal, had perhaps less of soul-benumbing cold in it than this inconceivable suspense. It required Willie Wilson's utmost efforts and mine to keep the frantic woman from madly rushing into the drift; and the voice of lamentation was sad and loud amongst the children and the servant lasses—each of the latter class lamented, indeed, the fate of all, but there was always an under prayer offered up for the safety of Geordie, or Will, or Jamie, in particular. At last the three lads who had encompassed the Dod arrived—alive, indeed, but almost breathless and frozen to death. They had, however, surmounted incredible difficulties, and had succeeded in placing their hirsels in a position of comparative security; but where were Jamie Hogg and the guidman? The violence of the storm had nothing abated, the snow was every moment accumulating, and the danger and difficulty increasing tenfold. Spirits, heat, and friction gradually restored the three lads to their senses, and to the kind attentions of their several favourites of the female order; but *there* sat the mother and the daughter, whilst the father was either, in all probability, dead or dying. The very thought was distracting; and, accordingly, the young bride, now turning to her lover with a look of inexpressible anguish, exclaimed—

“O Willie! my ain dear Willie, ye maun gang, after a', ye maun gang this instant,” (Willie was on his feet and plaided whilst yet the sentence was unfinished,) “and try to rescue my dear, dear father from this awfu' and untimely

end ; but tak care, oh tak care o' the big Scaur, and keep far west by Caplecleuch, and maybe ye'll meet them coming back that way." These last words were lost in the drift, whilst Willie Wilson, with his faithful follower, Rover, were penetrating, and flouncing, and floundering their way towards the place pointed out.

In about half an hour after this, the howl and scratch of a dog were heard at the door-back, and Help immediately rushed in, the welcome forerunner of his master and Hogg. They had, indeed, had a fearful struggle, and fearful wanderings ; but, in endeavouring to avoid the dangerous, because precipitous, Head Scaur, they had wandered from the track, and from the object of their travel ; and, after having been inclined once or twice to lie down and take a rest (the deceitful messenger of death), they had at last got upon the track of Caple Water ; and, by keeping to its windings—which they had often traced at the risk of being drowned—they had at last weathered the old cham'ei, the byre, and peat-stack, and were now, thank God ! within "bigget wa's."

But where, alas ! was Willie Wilson ? Him, in consequence of their deviations, they had missed ; and over him, thus exposed, the tempest was still renewing at intervals its hurricane gusts. There was one scream heard, such as would have penetrated the heart of a tiger, and all was still. There she lay, the beauteous, but now marble bride ; her head reposing on her mother's lap, her lips pale as the snowdrop, her eyes fixed and soulless, her cheek without a tint, and her mouth half-open and breathless. Long, long was the withdrawment—again and again was the dram-glass applied to the mouth, to catch the first expiration of returning breath—ere the frame began to quiver, the hands to move, the lips and cheeks to colour, and the eyes to indicate the approaching return to reason and perception.

“I have killed him! I have killed him!” were the first frantic accents. “I have murdered, murdered my dear Willie! It was me that sent him—forced him—compelled him out—out into the drift—the cold, cold drift. Away!” added the maniac—“away! I’ll go after him—I’ll perish with him—where he lies, there will I lie, and there will I be buried. What! is there none of ye that will make an effort to save a perishing—a choking—oh, my God! a suffocating man?”

Hereupon she again sank backwards, and was prevented from falling by the arms of a father.

“O my child!” said parental love and affection—“O my dear wean!—oh, be patient!—God is guid—He has preserved *us* all—He will not desert *him* in the hour of his need—He neither slumbers nor sleeps—His hand is not shortened that He cannot save—and what He can, He will—He never deserted any that trusted in Him. O my child! my bairn!—my first-born!—be patient—be patient. There—there—there is a scratch at the door-back—it is Rover.”

And to be sure Rover it was—but Rover in despair. His faithful companion and friend only entered the house to solicit immediate aid—he ran round and round, looking up into the face of every one with an expression of the most imploring anxiety. The poor frantic girl sprung from her father’s embrace, and clung to the neck of the well-known cur—she absolutely kissed him—(oh, to what will not love, omnipotent, virtuous love, descend!)—then rising, in renewed recollection, she sat herself down on the long-settle beside her father, and burst into loud and passionate grief.

It was now manifest to all that something must be attempted, else the young farmer must perish. Hogg, though awfully exhausted, was the first to volunteer a new excursion. The whole band were at once on their feet:

but Jessie now clung to her father, as she had formerly done to her lover, and would not let him go—indeed, the guidman was in no danger of putting his purpose into effect, for he could scarcely stand on his feet. He sat, or rather fell down, consequently, beside his daughter, and continued in constant prayer and supplication at the throne of grace. The daughter listened, and said she was comforted—the voyagers were again on their way—the tempest had somewhat abated—the moon had once or twice shone out—and there was now a greater chance of success in their undertaking.

How we all contrived to exist during an interval of about two hours, I cannot say; but this I know, that the endurance of this second trial was worse than the first, to all but the sweet bride herself. Her mind had now taken a more calm and religious view of the case. She repeated, at intervals and pauses in her father's ejaculatory prayer—

“Yes—oh, yes—*His* will—His holy will be done! The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away—blessed be the name of the Lord for ever! We shall meet again—oh, yes—where the weary are at rest.

‘A few short years of evil past,
We reach the happy shore
Where death-divided friends at last
Shall meet, to part no more.’

O father, is not that a gracious saying, and worthy of all acceptation!”

At length the door opened, and in walked William Wilson.

The reader need scarcely be told that the sagacious dog had left his master floundered, and unable to extricate himself in a snow wreath; that the same faithful guide had taken the searchers to the spot, where they found Wilson just in the act of falling into a sleep—from which,

indeed, but for the providential sagacity of his dog, he had never wakened; and that, by means of some spirits which they had taken in a bottle, they completely restored and conducted him home.

“Lives there one with soul so dead”

as not now to image the happy meeting betwixt bride and bridegroom, and, above all, the influence which this trial had upon the happiness and religious character of their future married and prosperous lot?

It is, indeed, long since I have laid aside the pack—to which, after a good education, I had taken, from a wandering propensity—and taken up my residence in the flourishing village of Thornhill, Dumfriesshire; living, at first, on the profits of my shop, and now retired on my little, but, to me, ample competency; but I still have great pleasure in paying a yearly visit to my friends of Mitchel-slacks, and in recalling with them, over a comfortable meal, the interesting incidents of the snow storm 1794.

THE FAIR MAID OF CELLARDYKES.

I DID not like the idea of having all the specimens of the fine arts in Europe collected into one “bonne bouche” at the Louvre. It was like collecting, while a boy, a handful of strawberries, and devouring them at one indiscriminating gulp. I do not like floral exhibitions, for the same reason. I had rather a thousand times meet my old and my new friends in my solitary walks, or in my country rambles. All museums in this way confound and bewilder me; and had the Turk not been master of Greece, I should have preferred a view of the Elgin marbles in the land of their nativity. And it is for a similar reason that my mind still reverts, with a kind of dreamy delight, to the

time when I viewed mankind in detail, and in all their individual and natural peculiarities, rather than *en masse*, and in one regimental uniform. Educate up! Educate up! Invent machinery—discover agencies—saddle nature with the panniers of labour—and, at last, stand alongside of her, clothed, from the peasant to the prince, in the wonders of her manufacture, and merrily whistling, in idle unconcern, to the tune of her unerring despatch! But what have we gained? One mass of similarities: the housemaid, the housekeeper, the lady, and the princess, speaking the same language, clothed in the same habiliments, and enjoying the same immunities from corporeal labour—the colours of the rainbow whirled and blended into one glare of white! Towards this *ultimatum* we are now fast hastening. Where is the shepherd stocking-weaver, with his wires and his fingers moving invisibly? Where the “wee and the muckle wheel,” with the aged dames, in pletted toys, singing “Tarry woo?” Where the hodden-grey clad patriarch, sitting in the midst of his family, and mixing familiarly, and in perfect equality with all the household—servant and child? My heart constantly warms to these recollections; and I feel as if wandering over a landscape variegated by pleasant and contrasting colouring, and overshadowed with associations which have long been a part of myself. One exception to the general progression and assimilation still happily remains to gratify, I must confess, my liking for things as they were. The fisher population of Newhaven, Buckhaven, and Cellardykes—(my observation extends no farther, and I limit my remarks accordingly)—are, in fact, the Scottish highlanders, the Iris^h, the Welsh, and the Manks of Fisherdom. Differing each somewhat from the other, they are united by one common bond of character—they are varieties of the same animal—the different species under one genus. I like this. I am always in high spirits when I pass through a

fishing village or a fisher street. No accumulation of filth in every hue—of shell, and gill, and fish-tail—can disgust me. I even smell a sweet savour from their empty baskets, as they exhale themselves dry in the sunbeam. And then there is a hue of robust health over all. No mincing of matters. Female arms and legs of the true Tuscan order—cheeks and chins where neither the rose nor the bone has been stinted. Children of the dub and the mire—all agog in demi-nudity, and following nature most vociferously. Snug, comfortable cabins, where garish day makes no unhandsome inquiries, and where rousing fires and plentiful meals abide from June to January. They have a language, too, of their own—the true Mucklebucket dialect; and freely and firmly do they throw from them censure, praise, or ribaldry. The men are here but men; mere human machines—useful, but not ornamental—necessary incumbrances rather than valuable protectors. “Poor creature!” says Meg of the Mucklebucket, “she canna maintain a man.” Sir Walter saw through the character I am labouring to describe; and, in one sentence, put life and identity into it. I know he was exceedingly fond of conversing with fisherwomen in particular. But, whilst such are the general features, each locality I have mentioned has its distinctive lineaments. The Newhaven fisherwoman (for the man is unknown) is a bundle of snug comfort. Her body, her dress, her countenance, her basket, her voice, all partake of the same character of *enboupointness*. Yet there is nothing at all untidy about her. She may ensconce her large limbs in more plaiden coverings than the gravedigger in “Hamlet” had waistcoats, but still she moves without constraint; and under a burden which would press my lady’s waiting-maid to the carpet, she moves free, firm, elastic. Her tongue is not labour-logged, her feet are not creel-retarded; but, altogether unconscious of the presence of hundreds, she holds

on her way and her discourse as if she were a caravan in the desert. She is to be found in every street and alley of Auld Reekie, till her work is accomplished. Her voice of call is exceedingly musical, and sounds sweetly in the ears of the infirm and bedrid. All night long she holds her stand close by the theatre, with her broad knife and her opened oyster. In vain does the young spark endeavour to engage her in licentious talk. He soon discovers that, wherever her feelings or affections tend, they do not point in his favour. Thus, loaded with pence, and primed with gin, she returns by midnight to her home—there to share a supper-pint with her man and her neighbours, and to prepare, by deep repose, for the duties of a new day. Far happier and far more useful she, in her day and generation, than that thing of fashion which men call a beau or a belle—in whose labours no one rejoices, and in whose bosom no sentiment but self finds a place. In Buckhaven, again, the Salique law prevails. There men are men, and women mere appendages. The sea department is here all in all. The women, indeed, crawl a little way, and through a few deserted fields, into the surrounding country; but the man drives the cart, and the cart carries the fish; and the fish are found in all the larger inland towns eastward. Cellardykes is a mixture of the two—a kind of William and Mary government, where, side by side, at the same cart, and not unfrequently in the same boat, are to be found man and woman, lad and lass. Oh, it is a pretty sight to see the Cellardyke fishers leaving the coast for the herring-fishing in the north! I witnessed it some years ago, as I passed to Edinburgh; and this year I witnessed it again.

Meeting and conversing with my old friend the minister of the parish of Kilrenny, we laid us down on the sunny slope of the brae facing the east and the Isle of May, whilst he gave me the following narrative:—

Thomas Laing and Sarah Black were born and brought up under the same roof—namely, that double-storied tenement which stands somewhat by itself, overlooking the harbour. They entered by the same outer door, but occupied each a separate story. Thomas Laing was always a stout, hardy, fearless boy, better acquainted with every boat on the station than with his single questions, and far fonder of little Sarah's company than of the schoolmaster's. Sarah was likewise a healthy, stirring child, extremely sensitive and easily offended, but capable, at the same time, of the deepest feelings of gratitude and attachment. Thomas Laing was, in fact, her champion, her Don Quixote, from the time when he could square his arms and manage his fists; and much mischief and obloquy did he suffer among his companions on account of his chivalrous defence of little Sally. One day whilst the fisher boys and girls were playing on the pier, whilst the tide was at the full, a mischievous boy, wishing to annoy Thomas, pushed little Sall into the harbour, where, but for Thomas's timely and skilful aid (for he was an excellent swimmer,) she would probably have been drowned. Having placed his favourite in a condition and place of safety, Tom felled the offender, with a terrible fister, to the earth. The blow had taken place on the pit of the stomach, and was mortal. Tom was taken up, imprisoned, and tried for manslaughter; but, on account of his youth—being then only thirteen—he was merely imprisoned for a certain number of months. Poor Sally, on whose account Tom had incurred the punishment of the law, visited him, as did many good-natured fishermen, whilst in prison, where he always expressed extreme contrition for his rashness. After the expiry of his imprisonment, Tom returned to Cellardykes, only to take farewell of his parents, and his now more than ever dear Sally. He could not bear, he said, to face the parents of the boy whose death he had

occasioned. The parting was momentary. He promised to spend one night at home; but he had no such intention—and, for several years, nobody knew what had become of Thomas Laing. The subject was at first a speculation, then a wonder, next an occasional recollection; and, in a few months, the place which once knew bold Tom Laing, knew him no more. Even his parents, engaged as they were in the active pursuits of fishing, and surrounded as they were by a large and dependent family, soon learned to forget him. One bosom alone retained the image of Tom, more faithfully and indelibly than ever did coin the impression of royalty. Meanwhile, Sarah grew—for she was a year older than Tom—into womanhood, and fairly took her share in all the more laborious parts of a fisher's life. She could row a boat, carry a creel, or drive a cart with the best of them; and, whilst her frame was thus hardened, her limbs acquired a consistency and proportion which bespoke the buxom woman rather than the bonny lass. Her eye, however, was large and brown, and her lips had that variety of expression which lips only can exhibit. Many a jolly fisher wished and attempted to press these lips to his; but was always repulsed. She neither spoke of her Thomas, nor did she grieve for him much in secret; but her heart revolted from a union with any other person whilst Thomas might still be alive. Upon a person differently situated, the passion (for passion assuredly it was) which she entertained for her absent lover, might and would have produced very different effects. Had Sarah been a young boarding-school miss, she would assuredly either have eloped with another, or have died in a madhouse; had she been a sentimental sprig of gentility, consumption must have followed: but Sarah was neither of these. She had a heart to feel, and deeply too; but she knew that labour was her destiny, and that when "want came in at the door, love escapes by the window." So she

just laboured, laughed, ate, drank, and slept, very much like other people. Yet few sailors came to the place whom she did not question about Thomas; and many a time and oft did she retire to the rocks of a Sabbath eve, to think of and pray for Thomas Laing. People imagine, from the free and open manner, and talk of the fisherwomen, that they are all or generally people of doubtful morality. Never was there a greater mistake. To the public in general they are inaccessible; they almost universally intermarry with one another; and there are fewer cases (said my reverend informant) of public or sessional reproof in Cellardykes, than in any other district of my parish. But, from the precarious and somewhat solitary nature of their employment, they are exceedingly superstitious; and I had access to know, that many a sly sixpence passed from Sally's pocket into old Effie the wise woman's, with the view of having the cards cut and cups read for poor Thomas.

Time, however, passed on—with time came, but did not pass misfortune. Sally's father, who had long been addicted, at intervals, to hard drinking, was found one morning dead at the bottom of a cliff, over which, in returning home inebriated, he had tumbled. There were now three sisters, all below twelve, to provide for, and Sally's mother had long been almost bedrid with severe and chronic rheumatism; consequently, the burden of supporting this helpless family devolved upon Sarah, who was now in the bloom and in the strength of her womanhood. Instead of sitting down, however, to lament what could not be helped, Sarah immediately redoubled her diligence. She even learned to row a boat as well as a man, and contrived, by the help of the men her father used to employ, to keep his boat still going. Things prospered with her for a while; but, in a sudden storm, wherein five boats perished with all on board, she lost her whole resources. They are

a high-minded people those Cellardyke fishers. The Blacks scorned to come upon the session. The young girls salted herrings, and cried haddocks in small baskets through the village and the adjoining burghs, and Sarah contrived still to keep up a cart for country service. Meanwhile, Sarah became the object of attention through the whole neighbourhood. Though somewhat larger in feature and limb than the Venus de Medicis, she was, notwithstanding, tight, clean, and sunny—her skin white as snow, and her frame a well-proportioned Doric—just such a help-mate as a husband who has to rough it through life might be disposed to select. Captain William M'Guffock, or, as he was commonly called, Big Bill, was the commander of a coasting craft, and a man of considerable substance. True, he was considerably older than Sally, and a widower, but he had no family, and a "bien house to bide in." You see that manse-looking tenement there, on the broad head towards the east—that was Captain M'Guffock's residence when his seafaring avocations did not demand his presence elsewhere. Well, Bill came acourting to Sally; but Sally "looked aslent and unco skeich." Someway or other, whenever she thought of matrimony—which she did occasionally—she at the same time thought of Thomas Laing, and, as she expressed it, her heart *scunnered* at the thought. Consequently, Bill made little progress in his courtship; which was likewise liable to be interrupted, for weeks at a time, by his professional voyages. At last a letter arrived from on board a king's vessel, then lying in Leith Roads, apprising Thomas Laing's relatives that he had died of fever on the West India station. This news affected Sally more than anything which had hitherto happened to her. She shut herself up for two hours in her mother's bedroom, weeping aloud and bitterly, exclaiming, from time to time—"Oh! my Thomas!—my own dearest Thomas! I shall never love man again. I am thine in

life and in death—in time and in eternity!" In vain did the poor bedrid woman try to comfort her daughter. Nature had her way; and, in less than three hours, Sarah Black was again in the streets, following, with a confused but a cheerful look, her ordinary occupation. This grief of Sarah's, had it been well nursed, might well have lasted a twelvemonth; but, luckily for Sarah, and for the labouring classes in general, she had not time to nurse her grief to keep it warm. "Give us this day our daily bread," said a poor helpless mother and three somewhat dependent sisters—and Sarah's exertions were redoubled.

"Oh, what a feelingless woman!" said Mrs. Paterson to me, as Sarah passed her door one day in my presence, absolutely singing—"Oh, what a feelingless woman!—and her father dead, and her mother bedrid, and poor Thomas Laing, whom she made such a fuss about, gone too—and there is she, absolutely singing after all!"

Mrs. Paterson is now Mrs. Robson, having married her second husband just six weeks after the death of the first, whom her improper conduct and unhappy temper contributed first to render miserable here, and at last to convey to the churchyard! Verily (added the worthy clergyman), the heart is deceitful above all things. But what, after all, could poor Sarah do, but marry Will M'Guffock, and thus amply provide, not only for herself, but for her mother and sister? Had Thomas (and her heart heaved at the thought) still been alive, she thought, she never would have brought herself to think of it in earnest; but now that Thomas had long ceased to think of her or of anything earthly, why should she not make a man happy who seemed distractedly in love with her, and at the same time honourably provide for her poor and dependent relatives? In the meantime, the sacramental occasion came round, and I had a private meeting previous to the first communion with Sarah Black. To me, in secret, she laid

open her whole heart as if in the presence of her God; and I found her, though not a well-informed Christian by any means on doctrinal points, yet well disposed and exceedingly humble; in short, I had great pleasure in putting a token into her hand, at which she continued to look for an instant, and then returned it to me. I expressed surprise, at least by my looks. "I fear," said she, "that I am *unworthy*; for I have not told you that I am thinking of marrying a man whom I cannot love, merely to provide for our family. Is not this a sin?—and can I, with an intention of doing what I know to be wrong, safely communicate?" I assured her that, instead of thinking it a sin, I thought her resolution commendable, particularly as the object of her real affection was beyond its reach; and I mention the circumstance to show that there is often much honour, and even delicacy of feeling, natural as well as religious, under very uncongenial circumstances and appearances. Having satisfied her mind on this subject, I had the pleasure to see her at the communion table, conducting herself with much seeming seriousness of spirit. I could see her shed tears, and formed the very best opinion of her from her conduct throughout.

In a few days or weeks after this, the proclamation lines were put into my hands, and I had the pleasure of uniting her to Captain M'Guffock in due course. They had, however, only been married a few weeks, when an occurrence of a very awkward character threw her and her husband, who was, in fact, an ill-tempered, passionate man, into much perplexity. The captain was absent on a coasting voyage, as usual; and his wife was superintending the washing of some clothes, whilst the sun was setting. It was a lovely evening in the month of July, and the fishing boats were spread out all over the mouth of the Firth, from the East Neuk to the Isle of May, in the same manner in which you see them at present. Mrs. M'Guffock's

mind assumed, notwithstanding the glorious scenery around her, a serious cast, for she could not help recalling many such evenings in which she had rejoiced in company and in unison with her beloved Thomas. She felt and knew that it was wrong to indulge such emotions; but she could not help it. At last, altogether overcome, she threw herself forward on the green turf, and prayed audibly—"O my God, give me strength and grace to forget my own truly beloved Thomas! Alas! he knows not the struggles which I have to exclude him from my sinful meditations. Even suppose he were again to arise from the dead, and appear in all the reality of his youthful being, I must, and would fly from him as from my most dangerous foe." She lifted up her eyes in the twilight, and in the next instant felt herself in the arms of a powerful person, who pressed her in silence to his breast. Amazed and bewildered, she neither screamed nor fainted, but, putting his eager kisses aside, calmly inquired who he was who dared thus to insult her. She had no sooner pronounced the inquiry, than she heard the words, "Thomas—your own Thomas!" pronounced in tones which could not be mistaken. This, indeed, overpowered her; and, with a scream of agony, she sank down dead on the earth. This brought immediate assistance; but she was found lying by herself, and talking wildly about her Thomas Laing. Everybody who heard her concluded that she had either actually seen her lover's ghost, or that her mind had given way under the pressure of regret for her marriage, and that she was now actually a lunatic. For twelve hours she continued to evince the most manifest marks of insanity; but sleep at last soothed and restored her, and she immediately sent for me. I endeavoured to persuade her that it must be all a delusion, and that the imagination oftentimes created such fancies. I gave instances from books which I had read, as well as from a particular friend of my own who

had long been subject to such delusive impressions, and at last she became actually persuaded that there had been no reality in what she had so vividly perceived, and still most distinctly and fearfully recollected. I took occasion then to urge upon her the exceeding sinfulness of allowing any image to come betwixt her and her lawful married husband; and left her restored, if not to her usual serenity, at least to a conviction that she had only been disturbed by a vision.

When her husband returned, I took him aside, and explained my views of the case, and stated my most decided apprehension that some similar impression might return upon her nerves, and that her sisters (her mother being now removed by death) should dwell in the same house with her. To this, however, the captain objected, on the score that, though he was willing to pay a person to take care of them in their own house, he did not deem them proper company, in short, for a *captain's wife*. I disliked the reasoning, and told him so; but he became passionate, and I saw it was useless to contend further. From that day, however, Bill M'Guffock seemed to have become an altered man. Jealousy, or something nearly resembling it, took possession of his heart; and he even ventured to affirm that his wife had a paramour somewhere concealed, with whom, in his long and necessary absences, she associated. He alleged, too, that in her sleep she would repeat the name of her favourite, and in terms of present love and fondness. I now saw that I had not known the depth of "a first love," otherwise I should not have advised this unhappy marriage, all advantageous as it was in a worldly point of view. A sailor's life, however, is one of manifest risk, and in less than a twelvemonth Sarah M'Guffock was a young widow, without incumbrance, and with her rights to her just share of the captain's effects. Her sorrow for the death of her husband was, I believe,

sincere; but I observed that she took an early opportunity of joining her sisters in her old habitation, immediately beneath that still tenanted by the friends of Laing.

Matters were in this situation, when I was surprised one evening, whilst sitting meditating in the manse of Kilrenny, about dusk, with a visit from a tall and well-dressed stranger. He asked me at once if I could give him a private interview for a few minutes, as he had something of importance to communicate. Having taken him into my study, and shut the door, I reached him a chair, and desired him to proceed.

"I had left the parish," said the stranger, "before you were minister of Kilrenny, in the time of worthy Mr. Brown, and therefore you will probably not know even my name. I am Thomas Laing!"

"I did not indeed," said I, "know you, but I have heard much about you; and I know one who has taken but too deep an interest in your fate. But how comes it," added I, beginning to think that I was conversing either with a vision or an impostor—"how comes it that you are here, seemingly alive and well, whilst we have all been assured of your death some years ago?"

The stranger started, and immediately exclaimed—"Dead!—dead!—who said I was dead?"

"Why," said I, "there was a letter came, I think, to your own father, mentioning your death by fever in the West Indies."

"Do I look like a dead man?" said the stranger; but, immediately becoming absent and embarrassed, he sat for a while silent, and then resumed:—"Some one," said he, "has imposed upon my dear Sarah, and for the basest of purposes. I now see it all. My dear girl has been sadly used."

"This is, indeed, strange," said I; "but let me hear how it is that I have the honour of a visit from you at this time and in this place?"

“Oh,” replied Thomas Laing (for it was he in verity),
“I will soon give you the whole story:—

“When I left this, fourteen years ago come the time, I embarked at Greenock, working my way out to New York. As I was an excellent hand at a rope and an oar, I early attracted the captain’s notice, who made some inquiries respecting my place of birth and my views in life. I told him that I was literally “at sea,” having nothing particularly in view—that I had been bred a fisher, and understood sailing and rowing as well as any one on board. The captain seemed to have something in his head, for he nodded to me, saying, ‘Very well, we will see what can be done for you when we arrive at New York.’ When we were off Newfoundland, we were overtaken by a terrible storm, which drove us completely out of our latitude, till, at last, we struck on a sandbank—the sea making for several hours a complete breach over the deck. Many were swept away into the devouring flood; whilst some of us—amongst several others the captain and myself—clung to what remained of the ship’s masts till the storm somewhat abated. We then got the boat launched, and made for land, which we could see looming at some distance ahead. We got, however, entangled amongst currents and breakers; and, within sight of a boat which was making towards us from the shore, we fairly upset—and I remember nothing more till I awoke, in dreadful torment, in some fishermen’s boat. Beside me lay the captain, the rest had perished. When we arrived at the land, we were placed in one of the fishermen’s huts, where we were most kindly treated—assisting, as we did occasionally, in the daily labours of the cod fishery. I displayed so much alertness and skill in this employment, that the factor on the station made me an advantageous offer, if I would remain with them and assist in their labours. With this offer, having no other object distinctly in view, I complied

But my kind and good-hearted captain, possessing less dexterity in this employment, was early shipped at his own request for England. The most of the hands, about two hundred in all, on the station where I remained, were Scotch and Irish, and a merry, jovial set we were. The men had wives and families; and the governor or factor lived in a large slated house, very like your manse, upon a gentle eminence, a little inland. Towards the coast the land is sandy and flat; but in the interior there is much wood, a very rich soil, and excellent fresh water. Where we remained the water was brackish, and constituted the chief inconvenience of our station. The factor or agent, commonly called by the men the governor, used to visit us almost every day, and remained much on board when ships were loading for Europe. One fine summer's day we were all enjoying the luxury of bathing, when, all on a sudden, the shout was raised—'A shark! a shark!' I had just taken my place in the boat, and was still undressed, when I observed one man disappear, being dragged under the water by the sea monster. The factor, who was swimming about in the neighbourhood, seemed to be paralyzed by terror, for he made for the boat, plashing like a dog, with his hands and arms frequently stretched out of the water. I saw his danger, and immediately plunged in to his rescue, which, with some difficulty, I at last effected.

"Poor Pat Moonie was seen no more; nor did the devouring monster reappear. The factor immediately acknowledged his obligations to me, by carrying me home with him, and introducing me to his lady and an only daughter—I think I never beheld a more beautiful creature; but I looked upon her as a being of a different order from myself, and I still thought of my own dear Sally and sweet home at Cellardykes. Through the factor's kindness, I got the management of a boat's crew, with considerable

emolument which belonged to the situation. I then behoved to dress better, at least while on land, than I used to do, and I was an almost daily visitor at Codfield House, the name of the captain's residence. My affairs prospered; I made, and had no way of spending money. The factor was my banker, and his fair daughter wrote out the acknowledgments for her father to sign. One beautiful Sabbath-day, after the factor—who officiated at our small station as clergyman—had read us prayers and a sermon, I took a walk into the interior of the country, where, with a book in her hand, and an accompaniment of Newfoundland dogs, I chanced to meet with Miss Woodburn, the factor's beautiful child. She was only fourteen, but quite grown, and as blooming a piece of womanhood as ever wore kid gloves or black leather. She seemed somewhat embarrassed at my presence, and blushed scarlet, entreating me to prevent one of her dogs from running away with her glove, which he was playfully tossing about in his mouth. The dog would not surrender his charge to any one but to his mistress; and, in the struggle, he bit my hand somewhat severely. You may see the marks of his teeth there still" (holding out his hand while he spoke). "Poor Miss Woodburn knew not what to do first; she immediately dropped the book which she was reading—scolded the offending dog to a distance—took up the glove, which the dog at her bidding had dropped, and wrapped it close and firmly around my bleeding hand; a band of long grass served for thread to make all secure, and in a few days my hand was in a fair way of recovery—but not so my heart; I felt as if I had been all at once transformed into a gentleman—the soft touch of Miss Eliza's fair fingers seemed to have transformed me, skin, flesh, and bones, into another species of being. I shook like an aspen leaf whenever I thought of our interesting interview; and I could observe that Eliza changed colour, and looked out of the window

whenever I entered the room. But, sir, I am too particular, and I will now hasten to a close." I entreated him (said the parson) to go on in his own way, and without any reference to my leisure. He then proceeded:—"Well, sir, from year to year I prospered, and from year to year got more deeply in love with the angel which moved about in my presence. At last our attachment became manifest to the young lady's parent; and, to my great surprise, it was proposed that we should make a voyage to New York, and there be united in matrimony. All this while, sir, I thought of my own dear Sally, and the thought not unfrequently made me miserable; but what was Sally to me now?—perhaps she was dead—perhaps she was married—perhaps—but I could scarcely think it—she had forgot me; and then the blooming rosebud was ever in my presence, and hallowed me, by its superior purity and beauty, into a complete gentleman. Well, married we were at New York, and for several months I was the happiest of men, and my dear wife (I know it) the happiest of women; but the time of her labour approached—and child and mother lie buried in the cemetery at New York, where we had now fixed our residence." (Here poor Thomas wept plentifully, and, after a pause proceeded.)—"I could not reside longer in a place which was so dismally associated in my mind; so, having wound up my worldly affairs, and placed my little fortune—about one thousand pounds—in the bank, I embarked for Europe, along with my father and mother-in-law, who were going home to end their days in the place of their nativity, Belfast, in Ireland. I determined upon landing at the Cove of Cork, to visit once more my native village, and to have at least one interview with Sally. I learned, on my arrival at Largo, that Sally was married to the old captain. I resolved, however, ere I went finally to settle in Belfast, to have one stolen peep at my first love—my own

dear Sally. I came upon her whilst repeating my name in her prayers—I embraced her convulsively—repeated her name twice in her hearing—heard her scream—saw her faint—kissed her fondly again and again—and, strangers appearing, I immediately absconded.”

“This,” said the minister, “explains all;—but go on—I am anxious to hear the conclusion of your somewhat eventful history.”

“Why, I was off immediately for Belfast, where I at present reside with my father-in-law, whose temper, since the loss of his child, has been much altered for the worse. But I am here on a particular errand, in which your kind offices, sir—for I have heard of your goodness of heart—may be of service to me. I observed the death of the old captain in the newspaper, and I am here once more to enjoy an interview with his widow. I wish you, sir, to break the business to her; meanwhile, I will lodge at the Old Inn, Mrs. Laing’s, at Anstruther, and await your return.”

I agreed (continued the parson of Kilrenny) to wait upon the widow; and to see, in fact, how the wind set, in regard to “first love.” I found her, as I expected, neatly clad in her habiliments of widowhood, and employed in making some dresses for a sister’s marriage. I asked and obtained a private interview, when I detailed, as cautiously as I could, the particulars of Thomas Laing’s history. I could observe that her whole frame shook occasionally, and that tears came, again and again, into her eyes. I was present, but a fortnight ago, at their first interview at the inn; and I never saw two human beings evince more real attachment for each other. On their bended knees, and with faces turned towards heaven, did they unite in thanking God that he had permitted them to have another interview with each other in this world of uncertainty and death. It has been since discovered that the letter announcing Laing’s death was a forgery of the old captain,

which has reconciled his widow very much to the idea of shortening her days of mourning. In a word, this evening, and in a few hours, I am going to unite the widower and the widowed, together with a younger sister and a fine young sailor, in the holy bonds of matrimony; and, as a punishment for your giving me all this trouble in narrating this story, I shall insist upon your eating fresh herring, with the fresh-herring Presbytery of St. Andrew's, which meets here at Mrs. Laing's to-day, and afterwards witnessing the double ceremony.

To this I assented, and certainly never spent an evening more agreeably than that which I divided betwixt the merry lads of St. Andrew's Presbytery, and the fair dames and maidens of Cellardykes, who graced the marriage ceremony. Such dancing as there was, and such screaming, and such music, and such laughing; yet, amidst it all, Mr. and Mrs. Laing preserved that decent decorum, which plainly said, "We will not mar the happiness of the young; but we feel the goodness and providence of our God too deeply, to permit us to join in the noisy part of the festivity."

"The fair maid of Cellardykes," with her kind-hearted husband—I may mention, for the satisfaction of my fair readers in particular—may now be seen daily at their own door, and in their own garden, on the face of the steep which overlooks the village. They have already lived three years in complete happiness, and have been blessed with two as fine healthy children as a Cellardykes sun ever rose upon. Mr. Laing has become an elder in the church, and both husband and wife are most exemplary in the discharge of their religious, as well as relative duties. God has blessed them with an ample competence; and sure is the writer of this narrative, that no poor fisherman or woman ever applied to this worthy couple without obtaining relief.

One circumstance more, and my narrative closes. As Mr. Laing was one evening taking a walk along the sea-shore, viewing the boats as they mustered for the herring fishing, he was shot at from behind one of the rocks, and severely wounded in the shoulder—the ball or slug-shot having lodged in the clavicle, and refusing, for some days, to be extracted. The hue-and-cry was immediately raised; but the guilty person was nowhere to be seen. He had escaped in a boat, or had hid himself in a crevice of the rock, or in some private and friendly house in the village. Poor Thomas Laing was carried home to his distracted wife more dead than alive; and Dr. Goodsir being called, disclosed that, in his present state, the lead could not be extracted. Poor Sarah was never a moment from her husband's side, who fevered, and became occasionally delirious—talking incoherently of murder and shipwreck, and Woodburn, and love, and marriage, and Sarah Black. All within his brain was one mad wheel of mixed and confused colours, such as children make when they wheel a stick, dyed white, black, and red, rapidly around. Suspicion, from the first, fell upon the brother of the boy Rob Paterson, whom Laing had killed many years before. Revenge is the most enduring, perhaps, of all the passions, and rather feeds upon itself than decays. Like fame, “it acquires strength by time;” and it was suspected that Dan Paterson, a reckless and a dissipated man, had done the deed. In confirmation of this supposition, Dan was nowhere to be found, and it was strongly suspected that his wife and his son, who returned at midnight with the boat, had set Dan on shore somewhere on the coast, and that he had effected his escape. Death, for some time, seemed every day and hour nearer at hand; but at last the symptoms softened, the fever mitigated, the swelling subsided, and, after much careful and skilful surgery, most admirably conducted by Dr. Goodsir's son, the ball was extracted.

The wound closed without mortification; and, in a week or two, Mr. Laing was not only out of danger, but out of bed, and walking about, as he does to this hour, with his arm in a sling. It was about the period of his recovery, that Dan Paterson was taken as he was skulking about in the west country, apparently looking out for a ship in which to sail to America. He was immediately brought back to Cellardykes, and lodged in Anstruther prison. Mr. Laing would willingly have forborne the prosecution; but the law behoved to have its course. Dan was tried for "maiming with the intention of murder," and was condemned to fourteen years' transportation. This happened in the year 1822, the year of the King's visit to Scotland. Mr. and Mrs. Laing actually waited upon his Majesty King George the Fourth, at the palace of Dalkeith, and, backed by the learned judge and counsel, obtained a commutation of the punishment, from banishment to imprisonment for a limited period. The great argument in his favour was the provocation he had received. Dan Paterson now inhabits a neat cottage in the village, and Mr. Laing has quite set him up with a boat of his own, ready rigged and fitted for use. He has entirely reformed, has become a member of a temperance society, and his wife and family are as happy as the day is long. Mr. and Mrs. Laing are supplied with the very best of fish, and stockings and mittens are manufactured by the Patersons for the little Laings, particularly during boisterous weather, when fishing is out of the question. Thus has a wise Providence made even the wrath of man to praise him. The truth of the above narrative may be tested any day, by waiting upon the Rev. Mr. Dickson, or upon the parties themselves at Braehead of Cellardykes.

PRESCRIPTION;

OR, THE 29TH OF SEPTEMBER.

THE serene calmness and holy inspiration of some of our cottage retreats in Scotland are often the envy of the town-poet or philosopher, who looks upon the sequestered spots as possessing all the beauty and repose of the beatific Beulah, where the feet of the pilgrim found repose, and his spirit rest. The desire arises out of that discontent which, less or more, is the inheritance of man in this sphere; it is the residuum of the worldly feelings which, like the clay that, in inspired hands, gave the power of sight to the blind, opens the eyes to immortality. The wish for retirement belongs to good, if it is not a part of the great principle that inclines us to look far away to purer regions for the rest which is never disturbed, and the joy that knows no abatement. Yet how vain are often our thoughts as we survey the white-washed hut in the valley, covered with honeysuckle and white roses; the plot before the door; the croonin dame on her tripod; the lass with the lint-white locks, singing, in snatches of Nature's own language, her purest feelings, like the swelling of a mountain spring! The heart is not still there, any more than in the crowded mart. The birds whistle, but they die too; the rose blooms, but it is eaten in the heart by the palmer worm; the sun shines, but there is a shade at his back. Alas for mortal aspirations—there is nothing here of one side. Like the two parties who fought for the truth of the two pleas—that the statue was white, or that it was black—we find, after all our labour lost, that one side is of the one colour, and the other of the opposite. These thoughts

arise in us at this moment, as we recollect the little cottage of Homestead, situated in a collateral valley on the Borders. We were born at a stone-cast from it; and, even in the dream of age, see issuing from it, or entering it, a creature who might have stood for Wordsworth's Highland Girl—a slender, gracile thing, retiring and modest; as delicate in her feelings as in the hue of her complexion; her thoughts of her glen and waterfall only natural to her—all others, fearful even to herself, glenting forth through a flushed medium, which equally betrayed the workings of the blood in the transparent veins—a being of young life, elasticity, and sensitiveness, such as, like some modest flower, we find only in certain recesses of the valleys in mountain-lands. Such were you, Alice Scott, when you first darted across our path on the hills. We have said that we see you now through the dream of age; and, holding to the parallel, there is a change o'er the mood of our vision, for we see you again in a form like that of "The Ladye Geraldine"—your mountain russets off; the bandeau that bound the flying locks laid aside; the irritability and flush of the young spirit abated; and, instead of these, the gown of silk, the coif of satin, and the slow and dignified step of conscious worth and superiority. And whence this change?

The young female we have thus apostrophised, was the daughter of Adam Scott, a cottar, who occupied the small cottage of Homestead, under the proprietor of Whitecraigs—a fine property, lying to the south of the cottage; and the mansion of which is yet to be seen by the traveller who seeks the Tweed by the windings of the river Lyne. Old Adam died, and left his widow and daughter to the protection of his superior, Mr. Hayston, who, recollecting the services and stanch qualities of his tenant, did not despise the charge. The small bield was allowed to the mother and daughter, rent free; and some assistance, in addition

to the produce of their hands, enabled them to live as thousands in this country live, whose capability of supporting life might be deemed a problem difficult of solution by those whose only care is how to destroy God's gifts. Nature is as curious in her disposal of qualities as the great genius of chance or convention is of the distribution of means. Literature has worn out the characteristic and gloomy lines of the description of the fair and the good; and the impatience of the mind of the nineteenth century—a mind greedy of caricature, and regardless of written sentiment—may warn us from the portrayal of what people now like better to see than to read or hear of. Away, then, with the usual terms, and let old Dame Scott and her daughter be deemed as of those beings who have interested you in the quiet recesses of humble poverty, where Nature, as if in sport or satire, loves to play fantastic tricks. If you have no living models to go by, call up some of the pages of the thousand volumes that have been multiplied on a subject which has been more spoiled by poetical imagery, than benefited by sober observation.

Within about five years of the death of the husband and father, old Hayston died, and left Whitecraigs to his only son, Hector, who was kind enough to continue the gift of the father to the inmates of Homestead; but he loaded them with a condition, unspoken, yet implied. The young laird and the pretty cottage maiden had foregathered often amidst the romantic scenes on the Lyne; and that which Nature probably intended as a guard and a mean of segregation—the shrinking timidity of her own mountain child, when looked upon by the eye of, to her, aristocracy—only tended to an opposite effect. A poet has compared love to an Eastern bird, which loses all its beauty when it flies, and it is as true as it is a pretty conceit; but if there was any feathered creature whose wings, reflecting, from its monaul tints, the sun in greater splendour, when on the

wing, it would supply as applicable and not less poetical an emblem of the object of the little god's heart-stirrings; and so it seemed to the young laird of Whitecraigs, that, as Alice Scott bounded away over the green hills, or down by the Lyne banks, at his approach, her flight added to the interest which she had already inspired when she had no means of escape. But, as the wildest doe may be caught and tamed, so was she, who was as a white one removed from the herd. The young man possessed attractions beside those of imputed wealth and station; and probably, though we mean not to be severe upon the sex, the process by which his affection had been increased was reversed in its effects upon her, to whom assiduous seeking was as the assiduous retreating had been to him.

Yet all was, we believe, honourable in the intentions of young Hayston; and, as for Alice, she was in the primeval condition of a total unconsciousness of evil. The "one blossom on earth's tree," as the poet has it, was by her yet unplucked, nor knew she how many thousands have had cause to sing—

"I have plucked the one blossom that hangs on earth's tree;
I have lived—I have loved, and die."

Her former timidity was the *à priori* proof of the strength of the feeling that followed, when the sensitiveness of fear gave way to confidence. Town loves are a thing of sorry account: the best of them are a mere preference of the one to the many; and he who is fortunate enough to outshine his rivals, may pride himself in the possession of some superior recommendations which have achieved a triumph. Were he to look better to it, he might detect something, too, in the force of resources. At best, a few hundred pounds will turn the scale; for he is by all that a better man; and the trained eye of town beauties has a strange responsive twinkle in the glare of the one thing needful. In the remote and beautiful parts of a romantic country,

things are otherwise ordered: affection there, is as the mountain flower to the gallipot rose; and it is a mockery to tell us that the difference is only perceptible to those who are weak enough to be romantic. A doughty warrior would recognise and acknowledge the difference, and fight a great deal better too, after he had blubbered over a mountain or glen born love for a creature who would look upon him as the soul of the retreat, and hang on his breast in the outpourings of Nature's feelings. That young Whitecraigs appreciated the triumph he had secured, there can be no reason to doubt. He had been within the drying atmosphere of towns, and had sung and waltzed, probably, with a round hundred of creatures who understood the passion, much as Audrey understood poetry—deeming it honest enough, but yet a composition made up of the elements of side glances, arias, smorzando-sighs, and quadrilles. With Alice Scott on his bosom, the quiet glen as their retreat, the green umbrageous woods their defence, its birds as their musicians, and the wimpling Lyne as the speaking Naiad, he forgot, if he did not despise, the scenes he had left. She flew from him now no longer. The fowler had succeeded to captivate, not intentionally to kill.

Two years passed over in this intercourse. There was no secret about it. The dame was well apprised of their proceeding; and the open frankness of the youth dispelled all the fears of wrong which the innocence of the daughter, undefended by experience, might have scarcely guaranteed to one who, at least, had heard something of the ways of the world. The income from Whitecraigs, somewhere about seven hundred a-year, was more than sufficient for the expenditure of the older Haystons; and Hector, at this time, did not seem inclined to alter the line of life followed by his fathers. He had not spoken of marriage to the mother; but he had not hesitated to breathe into the ear of Alice all that was necessary to lead her to the conclusion,

to which her heart jumped, that she was to be the lady of the stately white mansion that, at one time, had appeared to her as a great temple where humble worshippers of the glen and the wood might not lay their sandals at the doorway. She had entered the vestibule only as an alms-seeker, and trembled to think she might have been observed throwing a side glance into the interior, where pier-glasses might have reflected the form of the russet-clad child of the valley and hill. The tale has been told a thousand times, and the world is not mended by it. The young master pressed her to his bosom, imprinted a kiss, and was away into the mazes of life in the metropolis, whither some affairs, left unsettled by his father, carried him. Six months passed away, and the rents of the succeeding term were collected by Mr. Pringle, the agent of the family, in Peebles. There was no word for poor Alice, though the small allowance was handed in by the agent, who, ignorant of the state of matters between the young couple, informed the mother that the master of Whitecraigs was on the eve of being married to a young lady of some wealth in the metropolis. The statement was heard by the daughter; and what henceforth but that of Thekla's song:—

“The clouds are flying, the woods are sighing—
The maiden is walking the grassy shore;
And as the wave breaks with might, with might,
She singeth aloud through the darksome night;
But a tear is in her troubled eye.”

Alice Scott was changed; yet, who shall tell what that change was? If the slow and even progress of the spirit may defy the eye of the metaphysician, who may describe its moods of disturbance? Poetry is familiar with these things, and we have fair rhymes to tell us of the wanderings, and the lonely musings by mountain streams, and the eye that looks and sees not, and the wasting form, and the words that come like the sounds from deep caves; yet,

after all, they tell us but little, and that little is but to tickle us with the resonance of spoken sentiment, leaving the sad truth as little understood as before. True it was, that Alice Scott did all these things, and more too: the charm of the hills and the water banks was gone: the light spirit that carried her along, as if borne on the winds, was quenched; the songs by which she gladdened the ears of her mother, as she plied her portable handwork on the green, was no more heard mingling its notes with the music of the Lyne; and the face that shone transparently, like painted alabaster, as if part of the light came from within, was as the poet says—

“Like an April morn
Clad in a wintry cloud.”

Nor did additional time seem to possess any power save that of increasing the pain of the heart-stroke. Most of the griefs of mortals have their appointed modes of alleviation—some are complaining griefs, some are talkative, and some sorrows are sociable for selfishness. But the heart-wound of her who has only those scenes of nature which were associated with the image of the unkind one, to wear off the impressions of which, under other hues, they form a part, is a silent mourner. There is enough of a painful eloquence around her, and her voice would be only the small whisper that is lost in the wailings of the storm in the glen. Yet painful as the language is, she courts it in silence, even while it mixes and blends with the poison which consumes her. It was in vain that her mother, who saw with a parental eye the malady which is the best understood by those of her class and age, urged her with kindness to betake herself to her household duties. She was seldom to be prevailed upon to remain within doors; the hill-side, or the bosom of the glen, or the back of the willows by the water-side, were her choice. Ordinary meal times were forgotten or unheeded, where

Nature had renounced her cravings, or given all her energies to the heart.

The next intelligence received at Homestead was that of the marriage of Hector Hayston, and his departure for France. The servants at Whitecraigs were discharged, as if there had been no expectation, for a long period, of the return of the young laird. The supply to the two females was increased, and paid by Mr. Pringle, who, now probably aware of the situation of Alice, delicately avoided any allusion to his employer. Report, however, was busy with her tales; and the absence of the youth was attributed to the workings of conscience or of shame. There was little truth in the report. The object of his first affections might easily have been banished from Whitecraigs, and he who had been guilty of leaving her may be supposed capable of removing her from scenes which could only add to her sorrow. A true solution of his conduct might have been found in the fact, that Hayston was now following his pleasures in the society of his wife's friends—a gay and lavish circle—and did not wish to detract from his enjoyment by adding banishment and destitution to a wrong now irremediable. Little more was heard of him for some time, with the exception of a floating report, that he had borrowed, through his agent, the sum of ten thousand pounds from a Mr. Colville, a neighbouring proprietor, and pledged to him Whitecraigs in security. The circumstance interested greatly the neighbouring proprietors, who shook their heads in significant augury of the probable fate of their young neighbour in the whirlpool of continental life. Yet the allowance to Dame Scott at the next term was regularly paid; and if there was a tear in her eye, as she looked, first at the money, and then at the thin, pallid creature who sat silent at the window, it was not that she dreaded its discontinuance from the result of the extravagance of the giver. The effect of the act of payment of the money

had, on a former occasion, been noticed by Pringle on the conduct of Alice: it was on this occasion repeated. She rose from her seat, looked steadfastly for a moment at the gift as it lay on the table, placed her hand on her forehead, and flitted out of the room. The eye of the agent followed her from the window: her step was hurried, without an object of impulse. She might go—but whither? probably she knew not herself; yet on she sped till she was lost among the trees on the edge of the glen.

Thus longer time passed, but there seemed no change to Alice, save in the continual decrease of the frame, under the pressure of a mind that communed with the past, and only looked to the future as containing some day that would witness the termination of her sorrows. The anglers on the Lyne became familiar with her figure, for they had seen it on the heights, with her garments floating in the breeze, and had come up to her as she sat by the water-side, but they passed on. At the worst she could be but one whose spirit was not settled enough to admit of her according with the ways of honest maidens; and they might regret that the beauty that still lurked amidst the ravages of the disease of the heart, had not been turned to better account. It is thus that one part of mankind surveys another: they form their theory of a condition whose secret nature is only known to its possessor; draw their moral from false premises, formed as a compliment to their own conduct and situation, and pass on to their pleasure.

Yet there occurred an important exception to these remarks:—One day Alice had taken up her seat on the banks of a small pond in front of the house of Whitecraigs. She sat opposite to the front of the dwelling, and seemed to survey its closed windows and deserted appearance, with the long grass growing up through the gravel of the walks—the broken pailings and decayed out-houses; a scene that

might be supposed to harmonize with the feelings of a mind broken and desolate. There might seem even a consanguinity in the causes of the condition of both. The scene might have suited the genius of a Danby. There was no living creature to disturb the silence. The house of faded white, among the dark trees, cheerless and forsaken; the face of Alice Scott emaciated and pale, with the lustre of the loch, shining in the sun, reflected on it, directed towards the habitation of which she should have been mistress; her eyes, which had forgotten the relief of tears, fixed on the scene so pregnant with unavailing reminiscences—with these we would aid the artist.

But the charm was gone, as a voice sounded behind her. She started, and, according to her custom, would have fled as the hare that remembers the snare; but she was detained. A man, advanced in years, poorly clad, with hair well smitten with snow tints, and a staff in his hand, stood beside her, holding her by the skirt of the gown.

“I am weary,” said he; “I have walked from Moffat, and would sit here for a time, if you would speak to me of the scenes and people of these parts.” And the application of his hand again to her gown secured a compliance, dictated more by fear than inclination. She sat, while she trembled. “You are fair,” continued he; “but my experience of sorrow tells me that grief has been busier with your young heart than years. I will not pry into your secrets. To whom does Whitecraigs now belong?”

The name had not been breathed by her to mortal since that day she had heard of the intended marriage. She made an effort to pronounce it, failed, and fixed her eyes on the pond. The stranger gazed on her, waiting for her reply.

“Hector Hayston,” she at length muttered.

“And why has he left so fair a retreat to the desolation that has overtaken it?” rejoined he again. The question

was still more unfortunate. She had no power to reply. Her face was turned from him, and repressed breathings heaved her bosom. "You may tell me, then, if one Dame Scott lives in these parts?" he said again, as he marked her strange manner, and probably augured that his prior question was fraught with pain.

"Yes—yes," she replied, with a sudden start, as if relieved from pain, while she regained her feet; "yonder lives my mother."

The stranger stood with his eyes fixed upon her, as if in deep scrutiny of the inexplicable features of her character and appearance; but he added not a word, till he saw her move as if she wished to be gone.

"You will go with me?" he said.

But the words were scarcely uttered, when she was away through the woods, leaving him to seek his way to the house of her mother, whither, accordingly, he directed his steps, from some prior knowledge he possessed of the locality about which he had been making inquiries. As he went along, he seemed wrapt in meditation—again and again looking back, to endeavour to get another sight of the girl, who was now seated on the edge of the stream, and again seized by some engrossing thought that claimed all the energies of his spirit. On coming up to the door of the cottage, he tapped gently with his long staff; and, upon being required by the dame to enter, he passed into the middle of the floor, and stood and surveyed the house and its inmate.

"I have nothing for you," said the latter; "so you must pass on to those whom God has ordained as the distributors of what the needy require. Alas! I am myself but a beggar."

The words seemed to have been wrung out of her by the meditative mood in which the stranger had found her, and, whether it was that the interest which had been ex-

cited in him by the appearance of the daughter had been increased by the confession of the mother, or that there was some secret cause working in his mind, he passed his hand over his eyes, and for a moment turned away his head.

“I have been both a beggar and a giver in my day,” he replied, as he laid down his hat and staff, and took a chair opposite to the dame; “and I am weary of the one character and of the other. I have got with a curse; and I have given for ingratitude. But I may here give, and you may receive, without either. There is an unoccupied bed; I am weary of wandering, and have enough to pay for rest.”

“That is better than charity,” rejoined the dame—“ay, even the charity of the stranger.”

“And why of the *stranger*, dame?” added he. “I have hitherto thought that the charity of *friends* was that which might be most easily borne. And who may be your benefactor?”

“Hector Hayston of Whitecraigs,” replied she, hanging her head, and drawing a deep breath.

The stranger detected the same symptoms of pain in the mother as those he had observed in the daughter.

“Then forgets he not his cottars in his absence,” he added. “But why has he left a retreat fairer than any I have yet seen throughout a long pilgrimage over many lands?”

“We will not speak of that,” she replied, rising slowly, and going to the window, where she stood for a time in silence.

“You have a daughter, dame,” resumed the man, as he watched the indications of movement in the heart of the mother. “I saw her sitting looking at the mansion of Whitecraigs. I fear she can lend you small aid; yet, if her powers of mind and body were equal to the beauty that has too clearly faded from her cheeks, methinks you

would have had small need to have taken the charity of either friends or strangers."

"Ay, poor Alice! poor Alice!" rejoined the mother, turning suddenly, and applying her hand to something which required not her care at that time—"Ay, poor Alice!" she added.

"Is it a bargain, then," said he, wishing to retreat from a subject that so evidently pained her, "that I may remain here for a time, on your own terms of remuneration?"

"It may be as you say," replied she, again taking her seat; "but only on a condition."

"What is it?" inquired he.

"That you never mention the name of Hector Hayston, or of Whitecraigs, while Alice is by. She harms no one; and I would not see her harmed."

"I perceive," said he, muttering to himself, "that I am not the only one in the world who carries in his bosom a sec. et. But," he continued, in a louder tone, "your condition, dame, shall be fulfilled; and now I may hold myself to be your lodger." And he proceeded to take from the stuffed pockets of his coat some night-clothes of a homely character, and handed them to the dame. "And now," he said, "you may be, now or after, wondering who he may be who has thus come, like a weary bird from the waste that seeks refuge among the sere leaves, to live in the habitation of sorrow. But you must question me not; and farther than my name, which is Wallace, you may know nothing of me till after the 29th day of September—ay, ay," he continued, as if calculating, "the 29th day of September."

The dame started as she heard the mention of the day, looked steadfastly at him, and was silent.

"Yes," he continued, "that day past, and I will once more draw my breath freely in the land of my fathers; and my foot, which has only bowed the head of the

heather-bell in the valley, may yet collect energy enough from my unstrung nerves to press fearlessly the sod of the mountain. How long is it since your husband died?"

"Seven years," replied she.

"Well, short as our acquaintance has yet been," said he, "our words have been only of unpleasant things. Now, I require refreshment; and here is some small pay in advance, to remove the ordinary prejudice against strangers. We shall be better acquainted by times. I will take, now, what is readiest in the house; for you may guess, from my attire, that I have been accustomed to that fare by which the poor contrive to spin out the weary term of their pilgrimage."

So much being arranged, the dame set about preparing a meal; and Mr. Wallace, as he had called himself, proceeded to transform his staff into a fishing-rod, and arrange his other small matters connected with his future residence. When the humble dish was prepared, the dame went out, and, taking her position on a green tumulus that rose between the cottage and the Lyne, stood, and, placing her hands over her eyes, looked down the water. Her eye, accustomed to the search, detected the form of her daughter far down the stream, and, waving her hand to her, she beckoned her home. But she came not; and the two inmates sat down to their repast.

"This shall be for my poor Alice," said the mother, as she laid aside a portion of the frugal fare; "but she will take it at her own time, or perhaps not at all."

"And yet how much she needs it," added the stranger, "her wasted form and pale face too plainly show."

"There is a sad change there, sir," rejoined she. "There was not a fairer or more gentle creature from Tweedscross to Tweedmouth than Alice Scott; nor did ever the foot of light-hearted innocence pass swifter over the hill or down the glen. You have seen her to-day where she is often to

be seen—by the pond opposite the closed-up house of Whitecraigs—and may wonder to hear how one so wasted may still reach the hill-heads; yet there, too, she is sometimes seen. I have struggled sore to make her what she once was; but in vain. She will wander and wander, and return and wander again; nor will this cease till I some day find her dead body among the seggs of the Lyne, or in the lirk of the hill. When I know you better, I may tell you more. At present, I am eating the bread of one who is more connected with this sad subject than I may now confess; and I have never been accounted ungrateful.”

The stranger was moved, and ate his meal in meditative silence. In an hour afterwards, Alice returned to the house, and, as she entered, started as her eye met that of him who had, by his questions, stirred to greater activity the feelings that were already too busy with her heart; but her fears were removed, by his avoidance of the subject which had pained her; and a few hours seemed to have rendered him as indifferent to her as seemed the other objects around her. Some days passed, and the widow would have been as well satisfied with her lodger as he was with her, had it not been that he enjoined secrecy as to his residence in the house—retiring to the spence when any one entered; and if at any time he went along the Lyne in the morning, he avoided those whom he met; and betook himself to private acts in the inner apartment during the day. At times he left the cottage in the evening, and did not return for two days; but whither he went, the inmates knew not. The dame conjectured he had been as far as Peebles; but her reason was merely that he brought newspapers with him, and intelligence of matters transacting there. The secrecy was not suited to the open and simple manners to which she had been accustomed; but she recollected his words, that on the

29th of September, she would know all concerning him. Now these words were connected by a chain of associations that startled her. The 29th of September had been set apart by her deceased husband as a day of prayer. He had never allowed it to pass without an offering of the contrite heart to God; this practice he had continued till his death, and she had witnessed the act repeated for fifteen years. She was no more superstitious than the rest of her class; she was, indeed, probably less so; and her theories, formed for an adequate explanation of the startling coincidence, were probably as philosophical as if they had been formed by reason acting under the astute direction of scepticism. Yet where is the mind, untutored or learned, that can throw away at all times, at all hours—when the heart is in the sunshine of the cheerful day of worldly intercourse, or in the deep shadow of the wing of eternity—all thoughts of all powers save those of natural causes, which are themselves a mystery? We may sport with the subject; but it comes again back on the heart, and we sigh in whispering words of fear, that in the hands of God we are nothing.

One day Mr. Wallace was seated at breakfast; he had been away for two nights; Alice was sitting by the side of the fire, looking into the heart of the red embers, and the mother was superintending the breakfast; he took out a newspaper from his pocket, and, without a word of premonition, read a paragraph in a deep, solemn voice.

“Died at —— Street, London, Maria Knight, wife of Hector Hayston, Esq., of Whitecraigs, in the county of Peebles, in Scotland.”

A peculiar sound struggled in the throat of Alice; but it passed, and she was silent. The mother sat and looked Wallace in the face, to ascertain what construction to put upon the occurrence which he had thus read with an emphasis betokening a greater interest than it might demand

from one, as yet, all but ignorant, as she thought, of the true circumstances of the condition of her daughter. He made no commentary on what he had read; but looking again at the paper, and turning it over, as if searching for some other news, he fixed his eyes on an advertisement in the fourth page. He then read—

“On the 1st day of October next, there will be exposed to public roup and sale, within the Town-Hall of Peebles, by virtue of the powers of sale contained in a mortgage granted by Hector Hayston, Esq., of Whitecraigs, in favour of George Colville of Haughton, all and hail the lands and estate of Whitecraigs, situated in the parish of ——, and shire of Peebles, with the mansion-house, offices, &c.”

He then laid down the paper, and, looking the widow full in the face—

“The day of sale of Whitecraigs,” said he, “is the *second* day after the 29th of September. It would have been too much had it been on that day itself.”

No reply was made to his remark. The announcement called up in the mind of the dame more than she could express; but that which concerned more closely herself, was too apparently veiled with no mystery. The sale of Whitecraigs was the ejection of herself and daughter from Homestead; and she knew not whither she and her daughter were now to be driven, to seek refuge and sustenance from a world from which she had been so long estranged.

“All things come to a termination,” she said. “For many years I have lived here, wife and widow; and if I have felt sorrow, I have also enjoyed. The world is wide; and if I may be obliged to ask and to receive charity, the God who moves the hand to give it, may not again—now that His purpose may be served by my contrition—select that of the destroyer of my child. But there is another that must be taken from these haunts;” and, turning to

Alice, whose face was still directed to the fire, she gazed on her hapless daughter, while the tear stole down her cheeks.

Wallace's eye was fixed on the couple. He seemed to understand the allusion of the mother, which indicated plainly enough, that though the hills and glens of Whitecraigs had been the scene of the ruin of her daughter's peace, she anticipated still more fatal consequences from taking her away from them. Meanwhile, Alice, who had listened to and understood all, arose from her seat.

"I will never leave Whitecraigs, mother," she said; and bent her steps towards the door.

"Let her follow her fancy," said Wallace. Then relapsing into a fit of musing, he added—"the 29th of September of this year will soon be of the time that is. For twenty years I have looked forward to that day—under a burning sun, far from my native land, I have sighed for it—in the midnight hour I have counted the years and days that were between. Every anniversary was devoted to the God who has chastened the heart of the sinner; and there was need, when that heart was full of the thoughts inspired by that day, and penitence came on the wings of terror. Now it approaches; and I have not miscalculated the benefits it may pour on other heads than mine."

"Alas!" said the widow, as she cast her eye through the window after her daughter, "there is no appointed day for the termination of the sorrows of that poor creature. To the broken-hearted, one day as another, sunshine or shower, is the same. But what hand shall bear Alice Scott from Whitecraigs?"

"Perhaps none," replied Wallace, as, taking up the newspaper, he retired to an inner apartment, where he usually spent the day. Some hours passed; and, in the afternoon, Mr. Pringle, while passing, took occasion to call at Homestead, and informed the widow that it would be

her duty to look out for another habitation, as Whitecraigs was to be sold by the creditor, Mr. Colville, whose object in granting the loan was, if possible, to take advantage of the difficulties into which extravagance had plunged the young proprietor, and to bring the property into the market, that he might purchase it as an appanage of the old estate of Haughton, from which it had been disjoined. He represented it as a cruel proceeding, and that its cruelty was enhanced by the circumstance of the sale being advertised in the same paper which contained the intelligence of the death of Hector's young wife. Another listener might have replied that God's ways are just; but Dame Scott, if she thought at the time of her daughter, considered also that Hayston had supported her for many years.

"Good dame," added the agent, "it might have been well for my young friend if he had remained at Whitecraigs. I never saw the wife he married, and has just lost in the bloom of youth; but she must have been fair indeed, if she was fairer than she whom he left. Yet Hector's better principles did not, I am satisfied, entirely forsake him. The disinclination he has shown to visit his paternal property, was the result of a clinging remembrance of her he left mourning in the midst of its glens; nor do I wonder at it, for even I have turned aside to avoid the sight of Alice Scott. Misfortunes, however, are sometimes mercies; and the change of residence you will be now driven to, may aid in the cure of a disease that is only fed by these scenes of Whitecraigs."

He here paused, and, putting his hand in his pocket, took out some money.

"This may be the last gift," he said, as he presented it to her, "that Hector Hayston may ever send you. These are his words. His fortunes are ruined, his wife is dead, and, worse than all, his peace of mind is fled."

“Heaven have mercy on him!” replied the widow “One word of reproach has never escaped the lips of me or my daughter. I have suffered in this cottage without murmuring, and the glens and hollows of Whitecraigs have alone heard the complainings of Alice Scott. She will cling to these places to the last; but were the windows of the deserted house again opened, with strange faces there, and maybe the lights of the entertainments of the happy shining through them, she might feel less pleasure in sitting by the pond from which she now so often surveys the deserted mansion. This last gift, sir, moves my tears—yea, for all I and mine have suffered from Hector Hayston.”

The agent had performed his duty, and departed with the promise that he would, of his own accord, endeavour to prevail upon some of his employers to grant her a cottage, if the purchaser of Whitecraigs should resist an appeal for her to remain. He had no sooner gone, than the stranger Wallace, who had heard the conversation, entered. He asked her how much money Hector had sent as his last gift; and, on being informed—

“That young man,” he said, “has fallen a victim to the allurements of a town life. The story of your daughter has been known to me; but I have avoided the mention of the name of Hayston, which could only have yielded pain without an amelioration of its cause. That gift speaks to me volumes. Even fashion has not sterilized the heart of that young man. He has erred—he may have transgressed—but for all, all, there is a 29th of September!”

The allusion he thus made was as inscrutable as ever. Again she reflected upon her husband’s conduct upon that day of the year; and again, as she had done a hundred times, searched the face of the speaker. But she abstained from question; and the day passed, and others came, till the eventful morning was ushered in by sunshine. Wallace

was up by times; and his prayers were heard directed to the Throne of Mercy, in thanks and heart-expressed contrition. In the forenoon he went forth with freedom, climbed the hills, and conversed with the anglers he met on the Lyne. He seemed as if relieved from some weighty burden; and the dame, who had carefully watched his motions, waited anxiously for the secret. He had not, however, pledged himself to reveal it on that day. He had only said that all would be made known some time after the day had passed; and, accordingly, he made no declaration. Yet, at bedtime, he was again engaged in prayers, and even during the night he was heard muttering expressions of thanksgiving to the Author of the day, and what the day bringeth.

On the following morning, he announced his intention of going to Peebles, whither he was supposed to have gone before; but now his manner of going was changed. He purposed taking the coach, which, as it passed within some miles of Whitecraigs, he intended to wait for, and on departing—

“You will not hear of me till to-morrow night,” he said. “I can now face man; would that I could with the same confidence hold up my countenance to God. Alice Scott,” he continued, as he looked to the girl, “I will not forget you in my absence. Your day of sorrow has been long; but there may yet be a 29th of September even to you.”

And, taking the maiden kindly in his arms, he whispered some words in her ear, in which the magic syllables of a name she trembled to hear were mixed. Her eyes exhibited a momentary brightness, a deep sigh heaved her bosom, and again her head declined, with a whisper on her lips—“Never, O never!” In a moment after, he was gone; and the widow was left to ascertain from Alice what he had said, to bring again, even for a moment, the blood to her cheek.

On the day after, there was a crowd of people in the Town-Hall of Peebles, and the auctioneer was reading aloud the articles of roup of the lands of Whitecraigs. Mr. Colville was there in high hopes; but there were others too, who seemed inclined to disappoint them. The property was set up at the price of fifteen thousand pounds, and that sum was soon offered by the holder of the mortgage. Other bodes quickly followed, and a competition commenced, which soon raised the price to eighteen thousand, at which it seemed to be destined to be given to Haughton. The other competitors appeared timid; and several declared themselves done, one by one, until no one was expected to advance a pound higher. All was silence, save for the voice of the auctioneer; and he had already begun his ominous once, twice, when a voice which had not yet been heard, cried—"Eighteen thousand two hundred." The hammer was suspended, and all eyes turned to view the doughty assailant, who would, at the end of the day, vanquish the champion who had as yet retained the field. Those eyes recognised in the bidder a man poorly clothed, and more like an alms-seeker than the purchaser of an estate—no other was that man than Mr. Wallace. The auctioneer looked at him; others looked and wondered; and Haughton gloomed, as he advanced another hundred; and that was soon followed by a hundred more, which led to a competition that seemed to be embittered on the one part by pride and contempt, and on the other by determination. Hundred upon hundred followed in rapid succession, till Haughton gave up in despair, and a shout rung through the hall as the hammer fell, and the estate was declared the property of the humble stranger, whom no one knew, and whom no one would have considered worth more than the clothes he carried on his back. A certificate of a banker at Peebles—that he held in his hands funds, belonging to the purchaser, of greater amount than

the price—satisfied the judge of the roup; and the party were divided in circles, conversing on the strange turn which had been given to the sale of Whitecraigs.

On the same night, Wallace returned to Homestead, and sat down composedly to the humble meal that had been prepared for him by the widow. Alice was in her usual seat; and the placidity of manner which distinguished them from ordinary sufferers, spoke their usual obedience to the Divine will.

“This day the property of Whitecraigs has changed masters!” said he.

“And who has purchased it?” inquired the mother.

“He who is now sitting before you!” replied he.

Alice turned her head to look at him; the mother sat mute with surprise; while he rose and fastened the door.

“It is even so,” he continued, as he again sat down; “David Scott, the brother of your husband, and the uncle of Alice, has this day purchased Whitecraigs.”

A faint scream from the mother followed this announcement, and, recovering herself, she again fixed her eyes on the stranger.

“It is true,” continued he; “I am the brother of your deceased husband. For two years after you were married to Adam, you would, doubtless, hear him speak of me, as then engaged in a calling of which I may now be ashamed, for I was one of the most daring smugglers on the Solway. The 29th of September, 17—, dawned upon me, yet with hands unsullied in the blood of man; but the sun of that day set upon me as proscribed by God and my country. My name was read on the house walls, and execration followed my steps, as I flew from cave to cave. Yet who could have told that that day in which my evil spirit wrought its greatest triumph over good, was that whose evening shades closed upon a repentant soul!”

He paused, and placed his hand on his brow.

"These things are to me as an old dream," replied the widow, looking round her, as if in search of memorials of stationary space. "My husband never afterwards mentioned your name, save to inform me that you had died in the West Indies; yet now I see the import of his devotion, in the coming round of the day that shamed the honest family to whom he belonged."

"And it was to save that shame, and to secure my safety under my assumed name, that, after I flew to the islands of the west, I got intelligence of my death sent to Scotland. What other than the issue of this day must have been in the view of the great Disposer of events, when, in addition to the grace He poured on the heart of the sinner, He invested the arm that had been lifted against His creatures with the prosperity that filled my coffers! But, alas! though I may have reason to trust to the forgiveness of Heaven, that of man I may never expect."

"And punishment still awaits you?" rejoined she.

"No, no!" he cried, as he rose and placed his foot firmly on the floor. "I am free—the heart may hate me, the tongue may scorn me, the hand may point at me, but it dare not strike. On the 29th of September I was no longer amenable to the laws for the crime which drove me to foreign lands: twenty years free the culprit from the vengeance of man; the last day of that period was the 29th of September—it is past; and now God is my only judge." He again paused. "But I must live still as David Wallace. The name of Scott shall not be sullied by me. As David Wallace I have made my fortune, and as David Wallace made my supplications to Heaven. By the same name I have bought Whitecraigs, and by that name I shall make it over to one who may yet retrieve the honour of our humble house—to Alice, who should, through other means, have been mistress. Come to your natural

protector, Alice, and tell him if you will consent to be the lady of Whitecraigs."

The girl, on whom the ordinary occurrences of life now seldom made any impression, had listened attentively to the extraordinary facts and intentions thus evolved; and, at his bidding, rose and stood by his side. He took her hand, and looked into her face.

"I knew," said he, "that I was pledged not to mention a certain name while you were by; and I kept my word, with the exception of the whisper I stole into your ear on the day I set out for Peebles. But things are now changed. The rights of Whitecraigs are now in the act of being made out in your name. Within a month you will be mistress of that mansion, and of those green dells and hills you have loved to wander among in joy and in sorrow. Now, will you answer me a question?"

"I will!" she replied.

"What would be your answer to Hector Hayston—who is now no longer a husband, and no longer rich—were he to come to Whitecraigs and make amends for all that is by and gone? Would you receive him kindly, or turn him from the door of the house of his fathers?"

The question was too sudden, or too touchingly devised. She looked for a moment in his face, burst into tears, and hid her face in his breast.

"Try her poor heart not thus!" cried the mother "Time, that as yet has done nothing but made ravages, may now, when things are so changed, work miracles. Do not press the question. A woman and a mother knows better than you can do what are now her feelings. The answer is not asked—Alice, your uncle has taken back his question!"

"I have—I have!" replied he, as he pressed her to his breast. "Look up, my dear Alice. I have, in my pride and power, been hasty, and thought I could rule the heart

of woman as I have done my own, even in its rebellion against God. I have yet all to learn of those secret workings of the spirit, in all save repentance. I never myself knew what it was to love, far less what it is to love and be forsaken. No more—no more. I will not again touch those strings.”

And, rising hurriedly, he consigned the maid to her mother, and went out, to afford her time to collect again her thoughts. During the following week the furniture of Whitecraigs was disposed of by Mr. Pringle, for behoof of the other creditors of Hayston, and purchased by the uncle, who took another journey to Peebles, for the purpose of negotiating the sale, and making further preparations for obtaining entry. In a fortnight after, the keys were sent to Homestead by a messenger, while the making up of the titles was in the course of progress. It was no part of the intention of Wallace to reside in the mansion-house: his object was still secrecy; and, though the form and character of the transaction might lead ultimately to a discovery, he cared not. By the prescription of the crime he had committed, he was free from punishment; while, by retaining his name, and living ostensibly in a humble condition, he had a chance of escaping a detection of his true character, at the same time that he might, by humility and good services, render himself more acceptable to that Great Power whose servant he now considered himself to be.

On the twenty-first day of October, the house of Whitecraigs was again open. Servants had been procured from Peebles; the fires were again burning; the wreaths of smoke again ascended from among the trees; and life and living action were taking the place of desertedness. On the forenoon of that day, Wallace took the two females from Homestead, and conducted them, hanging on his arms, to their new place of residence. To speak of feelings,

where a change comprehended an entire revolution of a life of habit, thought, and sentiment, would be as vain as unintelligible. From that day, when the uncle had put the trying question to his niece, a change might have been detected working a gradual influence on her appearance and conduct. Might we say that hope had again lighted her taper within the recesses where all had been so long dreary darkness! The change would not authorize an affirmative—it would have startled the ear that might have feared and yet loved the sounds. One not less versed in human nature might be safer in the construction derived from the new objects, new duties, new desires, new thoughts, from all the thousand things that act on the mind in this wonderful scene of man's existence; but would he be truer to the nature of the heart that has once loved? We may be contented with a mean, where extremes shoot into the darkness of our mysterious nature. Alice Scott took in gradually the interests of her new sphere; did not despise the apparel suited to it; did not reject the manners that adorned it; did not turn a deaf ear or a dead eye to the eloquent ministers that lay around amidst the beauties of Whitecraigs and hailed her as mistress, where she was once a servant, if not a beggar.

Meanwhile the house of Homestead was enlarged, to fit it as a residence for the uncle. Mr. Pringle was continued agent for the proprietress of Whitecraigs; and, while many, doubtless, speculated on a thousand theories as to these strange occurrences, we may not deny to Hector Hayston, wherever he was, or in whatever circumstances, some interest in what concerned him so nearly as the disposal of his estate, and the fortune of her by whom his first affections had been awakened. Neither shall we say that Wallace and Pringle had not, too, their secret views and understandings, and that the latter was not silent where the interests of his old employer called for

confidence. In all which we may be justified by the fact that, one day, the agent of Whitecraigs introduced to the bachelor of Homestead a young man: it was the former proprietor of Whitecraigs.

"It is natural, Mr. Wallace," said Mr. Pringle, "that one should wish to revisit the scenes of his youth—especially," he added, with a smile, "when these have been one's own property, come from prior generations, and lost by the thoughtlessness of youth."

"It is," replied Wallace, renouncing his usual gravity, "even though there should be no one there who might claim the hand of old friendship. But this young man has only, as yet, seen the hill-tops of his father's lands; and these claim no seclusion from the eye of the traveller. He might wish, with greater ardency, to see the bed where his mother lay when she bore him, or the cradle (which may still be in the house) where she rocked him to sleep."

"God be merciful to me!" replied the youth, as he turned away his head. "This man touches strings whose vibrations harrow me. Sir," he added, "were you ever yourself in the situation of him whose feelings you have thus, from good motives, quickened so painfully?"

"What Whitecraigs and she who lives now in the house yonder were or are to you, Scotland and my kindred were to me; but the house where I was born knows me not, and the bed and the cradle do not own me. But Alice Scott recognised me as a fellow-creature, whatever more I say not; and even that, from one so good, and, even yet, so beautiful—is something to live for. No more. I know all. Will you risk a meeting?"

"Mr. Pringle will answer for me," replied he, as he turned, with a full heart, to the window.

"And I will answer for Mr. Pringle," said Wallace.

"But who will answer for *her*?" rejoined the other.

“Stay there,” said Wallace. “I will return in a few minutes.”

And, bending his steps to Whitecraigs House, he was, for a time, engaged with Alice and her mother. He again returned to Homestead; and, in a few minutes after, the three were walking towards the mansion. The eye of the young man glanced furtively from side to side, as if to catch glimpses of old features which had become strange to him; but in the direction of the house he seemed to have no power to look—lagging behind, and displaying an anxiety to be concealed, by the bodies of the others, from the view of the windows. On arriving at the house, Wallace and Pringle went into an apartment where the mother was seated. Hector stood in the passage: he feared that Alice was there, and would not enter.

“Think you,” whispered Wallace, quickly returning to him, “that I, whom you accused of touching tender chords, am so little acquainted with human nature as to admit of witnesses to your meeting with Alice Scott? There, the green parlour in the west wing,” he continued, pointing up the inside stair to a room well known to the youth. “If you cannot effect it, who may try? Go—go!”

“I cannot—I cannot!” he replied, in deep tones. “My feet will not carry me. That room was my mother’s favourite parlour. A thousand associations are busy with me. And now, who sits there?”

“Come, come!” said Pringle, as he came forth, in consequence of hearing Hayston’s irresolution. “What did you expect on coming here? Alice to come and fly to you with open arms?”

“No, sir; to reject me with a wave of disdain!” replied the youth. “I am smitten from within, and confidence has left me. Let me see her mother first. My cruelty to her has been mixed with kindness, and she may give me some heart.”

And he turned to the apartment where the mother sat.

"Your confidence will not be restored by anything the mother can say!" rejoined Pringle, who was getting alarmed for the success of his efforts. "Alice is now mistress here, and must be won by contrition, and a prayer for forgiveness."

"Ho!" interjected Wallace. "To what tends this mummerly? Must I take you by the hand, and lead you to one who, for years, has seen you in every flitting shade of the hills, and heard you in every note of the sighing winds of the valley?"

"To hate me as I deserve to be hated!" replied Hayston, still irresolute. "None of you can give me any ground for hope, and seem to push me on to experience a rejection which may seal my misery for ever!"

Wallace smiled in silence, beckoned Pringle into the room beside the mother, and taking Hayston by the arm, with a show of humour that accorded but indifferently with the real anguish of doubt and dismay by which the young man's mind was occupied, forced him on to the first step of the inside stair.

"You are now fairly committed!" said he, smiling; "to retreat, is ruin; to advance, happiness, and love, and peace."

And he retreated to the room where Pringle was, leaving the youth to the strength or weakness of his own resolution. His tread was now heard, slow and hesitating, on the stair. Some time elapsed before the sound of the opening door was heard; and that it remained for a time open, held by the doubtful hand, might also have been observed. At last it was shut; and quick steps on the floor indicated that the first look had not been fraught with rejection.

The party below were, meanwhile, speculating on the result of the meeting. Even the mother was not certain

that it would, at first, be attended with success. Alice had yielded no consent; and it was only from the mother's construction of her looks, that she had given her authority for the interview.

"All is now decided, for good or evil," said Wallace. "Go up stairs, and bring us a report of the state of affairs."

The mother obeyed; and, after a considerable time, returned, with her eyes swimming in tears.

"Is it so?" said her friend. "Is it really so? Has all my labour been fruitless?"

"No," replied she; "but I could not stand the sight. I found her lying on the breast of Hector, sobbing out the sorrows of years. Her eyes have been long dry. The heart is at last opened."

"Too good a sight for me to lose," replied her friend. "For twenty years I have only known the tears of penitence: I will now experience those that flow from the happiness of others."

And, with these words, he hurried up stairs. We would follow, but that we are aware of the danger of treading ground almost forbidden to inspiration. Within two hours afterwards, Hector Hayston and Alice Scott were again among the glens of Whitecraigs, seeking out those places where, before, they used to breathe the accents of a first affection. The one had been true to the end; and the other had been false only to learn the beauty of truth. We have given these details from a true record, and have derived pleasure from the recollections they have awakened; but we fairly admit, that we would yield one half of what we have experienced of the good, to have marked that day the workings of the retrieved spirit in the eyes, and speech, and manners of Alice Scott. These are nature's true magic. The drooping flower that is all but dead in the dry, parched soil, raises its head, takes on

fresh colours, and gives forth fresh odours, as the spring showers fall on its withered leaves. Oh! there is a magic there that escapes not even the eye of dull labour, retiring home sick of all but the repose he needs. But the process in the frame that is the temple of beauty, worth, intelligence, sensibility, rearing all in loveliness afresh, out of what was deemed the ruins only of what is the greatest and best of God's works—to see this, and to feel it, is to rejoice that we are placed in a world that, with all its elements of vice and sorrow, is yet a place where the good and the virtuous may find something analogous to that for which the spirit pants in other worlds.

Yet, though we saw it not, we have enough of the conception, through fancy, to be thankful for the gift even of the *ideal* of the good; and here we are satisfied that we have more. Hector Hayston and Alice Scott were married. David Wallace's history was long concealed, but curiosity finally triumphed; yet with no effect calculated to impair the equanimity of a mind which repentance, and a reliance on God's grace, had long rendered independent of the opinions of men. He had wrought for evil, and good came of it; and he lived long to see, in the house of Whitecraigs, its master, mistress, and children, the benefits of the prescription which the 29th of September effected—a principle of the law of Scotland that was long deemed inconsistent with the good of the land, but now more properly considered as being no less in unison with the feelings of man than it is with divine mercy.

'THE COUNTESS OF WISTONBURY.

IN the summer of 1836 I had occasion to make a journey into Wiltshire, in England. As the business that called me there, although of sufficient importance to me, would have no interest whatever for the reader, I will readily be excused, I dare say, from saying of what nature that business was. It will more concern him, from its connection with the sequel, to know that my residence, while in England, was in a certain beautiful little village at the southern extremity of the shire above named, and that mine host, during my stay there, was the worthy landlord of the White Hart Inn, as intelligent and well-informed a man as it has often been my good fortune to meet with. The nature of the business which made me a guest of Michael Jones, left me a great deal more spare time than I knew well what to do with. It hung heavy upon my hands; and my good host, perceiving this, suggested a little excursion, which, he said, he thought would dispose of one day, at any rate, agreeably enough.

"I would recommend you, sir," he said, "to pay a visit to Oxton Hall, the seat of the Earl of Wistonbury.* It is one of the finest residences in England; and, as the family are not there just now, you may see the whole house, both inside and outside. If you think of it, I will give you a line to the butler, a very old friend of mine, and he will be glad to show you all that's worth seeing about the place."

"How far distant is it?" I inquired.

* Under this name we choose, for obvious reasons, to conceal the real one.—*Ed.*

“Oh, not more than three miles and a half—little more than an hour’s easy walk,” replied mine host.

“Excellent!” said I; “thank you for the hint, landlord. Let me have the introduction to the butler you spoke about, and I’ll set off directly.”

In less than five minutes, a card, addressed to Mr. John Grafton, butler, Oxton Hall, was put into my hands, and in two minutes more I was on my way to the ancient seat of the Earls of Wistonbury. The directions given me as to my route, carefully noted on my part, brought me, in little more than an hour, to a spacious and noble gateway, secured by a magnificent gate of cast-iron. This I at once recognised, from the description given me by Mr. Jones, to be the principal entrance to Oxton Hall. Satisfied that it was so, I unhesitatingly entered—and the house of one of the proudest of England’s aristocracy stood before me, in all its lordly magnificence. A spacious lawn, of the brightest and most beautiful verdure, dotted over with noble oaks, and tenanted by some scores of fallow-deer, stretched far and wide on every side. In the centre of this splendid park—such a park as England alone can exhibit—arose the mansion-house, an ancient and stately pile, of great extent and lofty structure.

Having found the person to whose civilities I was recommended by mine host of the White Hart—a mild and pleasant-looking old man, of about seventy years of age—I put my credentials into his hands. On reading it, the old man looked at me smilingly, and said that he would have much pleasure in obliging his good friend Mr. Jones, by showing me all that was worth seeing both in and about the house; and many things both curious and rare, and, I may add, both costly and splendid, did I see ere another hour had passed away; but fearing the reader’s patience would scarcely stand the trial of a description of them, I refrain from the experiment, and proceed to say,

that, just as our survey of the house was concluded, my cicerone, as if suddenly recollecting himself, said—

“By-the-by, sir, perhaps you would like to see the picture gallery, although it is hardly worth seeing just now—most of the pictures having been removed to our house in Grosvenor Square last winter; and, being in this denuded state, I never think of showing it to visitors. There are, however, a few portraits of different members of the family still left, and these you may see if you have any curiosity regarding them.”

Such curiosity I avowed I felt, and was immediately conducted into the presence of a number of the pictorial ancestry of the illustrious house of Wistonbury. The greater part of the pictures had been removed, as my conductor had informed me; but a few still remained scattered along the lofty walls of the gallery.

“That,” said my cicerone, pointing to a grim warrior, clad from head to heel in a panoply of steel,—“that is Henry, first Earl of Wistonbury, who fell in Palestine during the holy wars; and this,” directing my attention to another picture, “is the grandfather of the present Earl.”

“A very handsome and pleasant-looking young man,” said I, struck with the forcible representation of these qualities which the painting exhibited.

“Ay,” replied the old man, “and as good as he was handsome. He is the pride of the house; and the country around yet rings with his name, associated with all that is kind and charitable.”

“And who is this lovely creature?” said I, now pointing in my turn to the portrait of a young female of the most exquisite beauty—the face strikingly resembling some of the best executed likenesses of the unfortunate Queen Mary—which hung beside that of the Good Earl of Wistonbury, as the nobleman of whom my cicerone had just spoken was called throughout the country

"That lady, sir," replied the latter, "was his wife—the Countess of Wistonbury. She was one of the most beautiful women of her time; and, like her husband, was beloved by all around her, for the gentleness of her manners and benevolence of her disposition."

"But what's this?" said I, advancing a little nearer the picture, to examine something in her attire that puzzled me. "A Scotch plaid!" I exclaimed in considerable surprise, on ascertaining that this was the article of dress which had perplexed me. "Pray, what has the Scotch plaid to do here? How happens it that we find a Countess of Wistonbury arrayed in the costume of Caledonia?"

"Why, sir, the reason is good—perfectly satisfactory," replied Mr. Grafton, smilingly. "She was a native of that country."

"Indeed!" said I. "A countrywoman of mine! Of what family?" added I.

My conductor smiled.

"Truly," said he, after a pause, "that is a question easier put than answered."

"What!" said I, "was she not of some distinguished house?"

"By no means, sir," replied Mr. Grafton. "She was a person of the humblest birth and station; but this did not hinder her from becoming Countess of Wistonbury, nor from being one of the best as well as most beautiful that ever bore the title."

"Ah, ha!" said I to myself, "here's a story for the 'Tales of the Borders.'" I did not say this to Mr. Grafton, however; but to him I did say—"There must be some interesting story connected with this lady. The history of her singular good fortune must be curious, and well worth hearing."

"Why, it certainly is," replied my conductor, with the air of one who, while he cannot but acknowledge that there

is interest in a certain piece of information which he possesses, is yet so familiar with it himself, has owned it so long, and communicated it so often, that his feelings seem to belie his words—the former remaining unmoved by the tale which the latter unfolds. “There is certainly something curious in the Countess’s story,” said Mr. Grafton; “and, now that we have seen everything that is worth seeing, if you will come with me to my little refectory, I will tell you all about it over a tankard of fine old ale and a slice of cold round.”

Need I say, good reader, that I at once and gladly accepted an invitation that so happily combined the intellectual and the sensual? You will give me credit for more sense; and the following story will prove at once that your good opinion is not misplaced, that I must have been an attentive listener, and, lastly, that I must be blessed with a pretty retentive memory. I relate the story in my own way, but without taking the slightest liberty with any single one of the details given me by my informant, who, from having been upwards of forty-five years in the service of the Earls of Wistonbury, and, during the greater part of that time their principal and most confidential domestic, was minutely and accurately informed regarding every remarkable event that had occurred in the family for several generations back.

“But, before we leave this part of the house,” resumed Mr. Grafton, “be so good as step with me a moment into this small room here, till I show you a certain little article that cuts some figure in the story which I shall shortly tell you.”

Saying this, he led the way into the small apartment he alluded to, and, conducting me towards a handsome ebony or blackwood cabinet that occupied one end of the room, he threw open its little folding doors, and exhibited to me, not some rich or rare curiosity, as I had expected, but s

small, plain, very plain—or I should, perhaps, rather say very coarse—country-looking, blue-painted chest.

“Do you see that little chest, sir?” said Mr. Grafton, smilingly.

“I do,” said I; “and it seems a very homely article to be so splendidly entombed, and so carefully kept.”

“Yet,” replied Mr. Grafton, “homely as it is, and small as is its intrinsic value, that is one of the heir-looms of the family, and one of the most fondly-cherished of them all.”

“Indeed!” said I, in some surprise. “Then I am very sure it cannot be for its marketable worth. It wouldn’t bring sixpence.”

“I verily believe it would not,” replied Mr. Grafton. “Yet the Earl of Wistonbury would not part with that little chest for a good round sum, I warrant ye.”

“Pray, explain, my good sir.”

“I will. That little, blue-painted chest contained all the worldly wealth—a few articles of female dress—of the lady whose portrait you were just now so much admiring, when she became Countess of Wistonbury.”

“Why, then,” said I, “that is proof that riches, at any rate, had nothing to do with her promotion to that high rank.”

“They certainly had not,” replied my aged friend. “But all this you will learn more particularly in the story which I shall tell you presently. You will then learn, also, how the little, blue-painted chest comes to figure in the history of a countess.”

Saying this, Mr. Grafton shut the doors of the cabinet, when we left the apartment, and, in a few minutes after, I found myself in what my worthy old host called his refectory. This was a snug little room, most comfortably furnished, and in which I observed a very large quantity of silver plate,—being, I presumed, the depository of that

portion of the family's wealth. My good old friend now rung his bell, when a female servant appeared.

"Let's have summut to eat, Betsy," said the old man; and never was order more promptly or more effectively obeyed.

In an instant the table, which occupied the centre of the floor, absolutely creaked under the load of good things with which it was encumbered. The "slice of cold round," I found, was but a *nomme de guerre* with the old man, and meant everything in the edible way that was choice and savoury. To this conclusion I came from seeing the table before me covered with a great variety of good things, amongst which rose, conspicuous in the centre, a huge venison pasty. When the *loading* of the table was completed, and the servant had retired—

"Now," said the old man, looking at me with a significant smile, and at the same time drawing a bunch of small keys from his pocket, from which he carefully singled out one, "since Betsy has done her part so well, let me see if I can't do mine as creditably."

Saying this, he opened what I thought a sly-looking little cupboard, and brought forth from its mysterious recess an aristocratic-looking bottle, sealed with black wax, and whose shoulders were still thickly coated with sawdust. Handling this venerable bottle with a lightness and delicacy of touch which a long practice only could have given, and with a degree of reverence which an *à priori* knowledge of its contents only could have inspired, my worthy host tenderly brushed off its coating of sawdust, gently inserted the screw, drew the cork, with a calm, cautious, steady pull, and, in the next moment, had filled up two brimmers of the finest old port that the cellars of Oxton Hall could produce. Having done ample justice to the good things before us—

"Now, my good sir, the story, the story, if you please," said I.

“Oh, to be sure,” replied my kind host, smiling. “The story you shall have. But first let us take another glass of wine, to inspire me with fortitude to begin so long a story, and you with patience to listen to it.”

The procedure thus recommended having been complied with, the good old man immediately began:—

“About a hundred and thirteen years since,” he said, “there lived in the neighbourhood of one of the principal cities in Scotland, a farmer of the name of Flowerdew. He was a man of respectable character, and of sober and industrious habits. His family consisted only of himself, his wife, and an only child—a daughter, named Jessy. Gentle and affectionate, of the most winning manners, and surpassingly beautiful in form and feature, Jessy was not only the darling of her father, but the favourite character of the neighbourhood in which she lived. All yielded the homage of admiration to her supreme loveliness, and of the tenderest esteem to her worth.

For many years, Jessy’s father contrived, notwithstanding of an enormous rent, to keep pace with the world, and eventually to raise himself a little above it; but, in despite of all his industry and all his prudence, reverses came. A succession of bad crops was followed by a series of losses of various kinds, and James Flowerdew found himself a ruined man.

‘It’s not for myself I care,’ said the honest man, when speaking one day with his wife of the misfortunes which had overwhelmed them—‘it’s for our pair bit lassie, guid-wife. God help her! I thought to have left her independent; but it’s been ordained otherwise, and we must submit. But what’s to become of her I know not. Being brocht up a little abune the common, she cannot be asked to enter into the service of any o’ our neebors; yet, I see nae other way o’t. It must come to that in the lang run.’

'I suppose it must, guidman—I suppose it must,' replied his wife, raising the corner of her apron to her eye, and then bursting into tears. 'My puir, dear, gentle lassie,' she exclaimed, 'it's a sad change to her; but I ken she'll meet it cheerfully, and without repining. But, guidman, if to service she must go, and I fancy there's little doot o' that, wouldna it be better if we could get her into the service of some respectable family in the toon, than to put her wi' ony o' our neebors, where she might be reminded o' her fall, as they will call it?'

'It's a good thought, Lizzy,' replied her husband, musingly, as he gazed in sadness on the fire that burned before him. 'It's a good thought,' he said. 'She will be there unknown, and her feelings saved from the taunts of callous impertinence. I will think of it,' added Flowerdew. 'In the meantime, guidwife, prepare Jessy, the best way you can, for the change of situation in life which she is about to meet with. I canna do it. It would break my heart a'thegither.'

This painful task Mrs. Flowerdew undertook; and, as she expected, found her daughter not only reconciled to the step which was proposed for her, but eager and anxious to be put in a way of doing for herself, and, as she fondly hoped and affectionately said, of aiding her parents.

Shortly after this, the ruin which had overtaken James Flowerdew began to present itself in its most instant and most distressing shapes. Arrestments were laid on his funds in all quarters. Visits of messengers were frequent, almost daily; and his whole stock and crop were sequestered by the landlord, and a day for the sale fixed. This last was a sight from which Flowerdew anxiously wished to save his daughter, and he meant to do so, if he could, by finding her 'a place' previous to the day of sale.

The duty of looking out for a situation for Jessy in towr

Flowerdew took upon himself, from the circumstance of his having been in the habit for many years of supplying a number of respectable families with the produce of his farm, which he generally delivered himself, his simple character and industrious habits not permitting him to see any degradation in driving his own cart on these occasions. Flowerdew had thus formed a personal acquaintance with many families of the better class, which he thought might be useful to him in his present views.

Amongst the oldest and most respected of his customers was a learned professor, whom, to avoid what might be an inconvenient identification of circumstances, we shall call Lockerby. With this gentleman Flowerdew resolved to begin his inquiries respecting a situation for his daughter. He did so, and on being introduced to him, explained the purpose of his visit.

‘Dear me, Mr. Flowerdew!’ said the worthy professor, in surprise at the application, ‘I thought—I all along thought, that your circumstances would entitle your daughter, whose modesty of demeanour and great beauty of person I have had frequent opportunities of admiring—she having called here frequently, as you know, on various occasions connected with our little traffic—I say, I thought your circumstances would entitle your daughter to look for something higher than the situation of a domestic servant.’

‘I once thought so myself, professor,’ replied Mr. Flowerdew, with a tear standing in his eye; ‘but it has turned out otherwise. The truth is, that I have lately met with such reverses as have entirely ruined me. I am about to be ejected from my farm, and must betake myself to daily labour for a subsistence. In this explanation you will see the reason why I apply to you for a situation in your family for my daughter.’

‘Too clearly—too clearly,’ replied the worthy professor

sincerely grieving for the misfortunes of a man whom he had long known, and whose uprightness of conduct and character he had long appreciated. 'I am seriously distressed, Mr. Flowerdew,' he added, 'to learn all this—seriously distressed, indeed; but, in the meantime, let us consult Mrs. Lockerby on the subject of your present visit.' And he rang the bell, and desired the servant who answered it, to request his wife to come to him. She came, and on being informed of Mr. Flowerdew's application in behalf of his daughter, at once agreed to receive her into her service; adding, that she might, if she chose, enter on her duties immediately. It was finally arranged that Jessy should take possession of her situation on the following day.

Highly gratified at having got admission for his daughter into so worthy and respectable a family, Flowerdew returned home with a lighter heart than he had possessed for some time before. He felt that his Jessy was now, in a manner, provided for; and that, although the situation was a humble one, and far short of what he had once expected for her, it was yet a creditable one, and one presenting no mean field for the exercise of some of the best qualities which a woman can possess.

Equally pleased with her father at the opening that had been found for her, the gentle girl lost no time in making such preparations as the impending change in her position in life rendered necessary. Part of these preparations, all cheerfully performed, consisted in packing a small trunk with her clothes, and in other procedures of a similar kind. In this employment her mother endeavoured to assist her, but was too much affected by the sadness of the task to afford any very efficient aid, although her daughter did all she could, by assuming a light-heartedness which she could not altogether feel, to assuage the grief to which her mother was every moment giving way.

‘Why grieve yourself in that way, mother?’ she would say, pausing in her operations, and flinging her arms around her parent’s neck. ‘I assure you I am happy at the prospect of being put in a way of doing for myself; I consider it no hardship—not in the least. I will take a pride in discharging my new duties faithfully and diligently; and I hope that, even in the humble sphere in which I am about to move, I shall contrive to make myself both esteemed and respected.’

‘*That* I dinna doubt—that I dinna doubt, my dear lassie,’ replied her mother; ‘but, oh, it goes to my heart to see you gaun into the service o’ ithers. I never expected to see the day. Oh, this is a sad change that’s come over us a’!’ And again the poor woman burst into a paroxysm of grief.

‘Mother,’ said the girl, ‘you will dishearten me if you go on in this way.’ Then smiling through the tears of affection that glistened on her eye, and assuming a tone of affected cheerfulness, ‘Come now, dear mother, do drop this desponding tone. There’s better days in store for us yet. We’ll get above all this by-and-by. In the meantime it is our duty, as Christians, to submit to the destiny that has been decreed us with patience and resignation. Come, mother, I’ll sing you the song you used always to like so well to hear me sing.’ And, without waiting for any remark in reply, or pausing in her employment, the girl immediately began, in a voice whose richness of tone and deep pathos possessed the most thrilling power:—

A cheerfu’ heart’s been always mine,
 Whatever might betide me, O!
 In fowl or fair, in shade or shine,
 I’ve aye had that to guide me, O!

When luck cam chappin’ at my door,
 Wi’ right goodwill I cheered him, O!
 And whan misfortune cam, I swore
 The ne’er a bit I feared him, O!’

'O lassie, lassie!' exclaimed Jessy's mother, here interrupting her, and now smiling as she spoke—'how can ye think o' singing at such a time? But God lang vouchsafe ye sae light and cheerfu' a heart! It's a great blessing, Jessy, and canna be prized too highly.'

'I'm aware of it, mother,' replied her daughter, 'and am, I trust, thankful for it. I dinna see, after a', that anything should seriously distress us—but guilt. If we keep free o' *that*, what hae we to fear? A'ither mischances will mend, or if they dinna, they'll at least smooth doon wi' time.'

'But why are ye no puttin' up your silk gown, Jessy?' here interposed her mother, abruptly; seeing her daughter laying aside the article of dress she referred to, as if she did not intend it should have a place in the little chest she was packing.

'The silk gown, mother, I'll no tak wi' me,' replied Jessy, smiling; 'I'll leave't at hame till better times come roun'. It would hardly become my station now, mother, to be gaun flaunting about in silks.'

'Too true, Jessy,' said her mother with a sigh. 'It may be as weel, as ye say, to leave't at hame for a wee, till times mend wi' us at ony rate, although God only knows when that may be, if ever.'

'I'll keep it for my wedding gown, mother,' said Jessy, laughingly, and with an intention of counteracting the depressing tendency of her inadvertent remarks on the propriety of her leaving her silk gown behind. 'I'll keep it for my wedding dress, mother,' she said, 'although it's mair than likely that a plainer attire will be mair suitable for that occasion too.'

'Nae sayin', Jessy,' replied her mother. 'Ye'll maybe get a canny laird yet, that can ride to market wi' siller spurs on his boots and gowd lace on his hat.'

'Far less will please me, mither,' replied Jessy, blush-

ing and laughing at the same time. 'I never, even in our best days, looked so high, and it would ill become me to do so now.'

With such conversation as this did mother and daughter endeavour to divert their minds from dwelling on the painful reflection which the latter's occupation was so well calculated to excite.

An early hour of the following morning saw Jessy Flowerdew seated in a little cart, well lined with straw by her doting father, who proposed driving her himself into the city. A *small, blue-painted chest*, a bandbox, and one or two small bundles, formed the whole of her travelling accompaniments. She herself was wrapped in a scarlet mantle, and wore on her head a light straw bonnet, of tasteful shape, and admirably adapted to the complexion and contour of the fine countenance which it gracefully enclosed.

After a delay of a few minutes—for the cart in which Jessy was seated was still standing at the door—her father, dressed in his Sunday's suit, came out of the house, stepped up to the horse's head, took the reins in his hand, and gently put in motion the little humble conveyance which was to bear his daughter away from the home of her childhood, and to place her in the house of the stranger. Unable to sustain the agony of a last parting, Jessy's mother had not come out of the house to see her daughter start on her journey; but she was seen, when the cart had proceeded a little way, standing at the door, with her apron at her eyes, looking after it with an expression of the most heartfelt sorrow.

'There's my mother, father,' said Jessy, in a choking voice, on getting a sight of the former in the affecting attitude above described—but she could add no more. In the next instant her face was buried in her handkerchief. Her father turned round on her calling his attention to her

mother, but instantly, and without saying a word, resumed the silent, plodding pace which the circumstance had for a moment interrupted.

In little more than an hour the humble equipage, whose progress we have been tracing, entered the city. Humble, however, as that equipage was, it did not prevent the passers-by from marking the singular beauty of her by whom it was occupied. Many were they who looked round, and stood and gazed in admiration after the little cart and its occupant, as they rattled along the 'stony street.' Their further progress, however, was now a short one. In a few minutes Flowerdew and his daughter found themselves at the professor's door. The former now tenderly lifted out Jessy from the cart—for her sylph-like form, so light and slender, was nothing in the arms of the robust farmer—and placed her in safety on the flag-stones. Her little trunk and bandbox were next taken out by the same friendly hand, and deposited beside her. This done, Flowerdew rapped at the professor's door. It was opened. The father and daughter entered; and, in an hour after—long before which her father had left her—the latter was engaged in the duties of her new situation.

Days, weeks, and months, as they will always do, now passed away, but they still found Jessy in the service of her first employers, whose esteem she had gained by the gentleness of her nature, the modesty of her demeanour, and the extreme propriety of her conduct.

At the time of her first entering into the service of Professor Lockerby, Jessy Flowerdew had just completed her sixteenth year. The charms of her person had not then attained their full perfection. But now that two years more had passed over her head—for this interval must be understood to have elapsed before we resume our tale—her face and figure had attained the zenith of their beauty, a beauty that struck every beholder, and

in every beholder excited feelings of unqualified admiration.

It was about the end of two years after Jessy's advent into the family of the professor, that the latter one morning, raising his head from a letter which he had just been reading, and, turning to the former, who was in the act of removing the breakfast equipage, said—

‘Jessy, my girl, will you be so good as put the little parlour and bedroom up stairs in the best order you can, as I expect a young gentleman to-morrow, who is to become a boarder with us.’

Jessy courtseyed her acquiescence in the order just given her, and retired from the apartment to fulfil it.

On the following day a travelling carriage, whose panels were adorned with a coronet, drove up to the door of Professor Lockerby. From this carriage descended a young man, apparently between nineteen and twenty years of age, of the most prepossessing appearance. His countenance was pale, but bore an expression of extreme mildness and benevolence. His figure was tall and slender, but handsomely formed; while his whole manner and bearing bespoke the man of high birth and breeding.

On descending from his carriage, the young man was received by the professor with the most respectful deference—too respectful it seemed to be for the taste of him to whom it was addressed, for he instantly broke through the cold formality of the meeting, by grasping the professor's hand, and shaking it with the heartiest and most cordial goodwill, saying while he did so—

‘I hope I see you well, professor.’

‘In perfect health, I thank you, my lord,’ replied the professor. ‘I hope you left your good lady mother, the countess, well.’

‘Quite well—I'm obliged to you, professor—as lively

and stirring, and active as ever. Hot and hasty, and a little queenly in her style now and then, as you know, but still the open heart and the open hand of the Wistonburys.'

'I have the honour of knowing the countess well, my lord,' replied the professor, 'and can bear testimony to the nobleness of her nature and disposition. I have known many, many instances of it.'

With such conversation as this, the professor and his noble boarder—for such was the young man whom we have just introduced to the reader—entered the house. Who this young man was, and what was his object in taking up his abode with Professor Lockerby, we will explain in a few words, although such explanation is rendered in part nearly unnecessary by the conversation just recorded between him and the professor. It may not be amiss, however, to say, in more distinct terms, that he was the Earl of Wistonbury, a rank which he had attained just a year before, by the sudden and premature death of his father, who died in the forty-fifth year of his age. Since his accession to the title of his ancestors, the young earl had continued to live in retirement with his mother, a woman of a noble, elevated, and generous soul, well becoming her high lineage—for she, too, was descended of one of the noblest families in England—but in whose temper there was occasionally made visible a dash of the leaven of aristocracy.

On her son, the young earl, her only surviving child, she doted with all the affection of the fondest and tenderest of mothers; and well worthy was that son of all the love she could bestow. His was one of those natures which no earthly elevation can corrupt, no factitious system deprive of its innate simplicity.

The promotion of the young earl to the head of his illustrious house, was, however, a premature one in more respects than one. One of these was to be found in the

circumstance of the young man's being found unprepared—at least so he judged himself—in the matter of education, to fill with credit the high station to which he was so unexpectedly called. His education, in truth, had been rather neglected; and it was to make up for this neglect, to recover his lost ground with all the speed possible, that he was now come to reside for a few months with Professor Lockerby, who had once acted as tutor in his father's family to a brother who had died young.

Such, then, was the professor's boarder, and such was the purpose for which he became so.

The favourable impression which the youthful earl's first appearance had made, suffered no diminution by length of acquaintance. Mild and unpresuming, he won the love of all who came in contact with him. The little personal services he required, he always solicited, never commanded; and what he could with any propriety do himself, he always did, without seeking other assistance.

A quiet and unostentatious inmate of the professor's, time rolled rapidly, but gently and imperceptibly, over the head of the young earl, until a single week only intervened between the moment referred to, and the period fixed on for his return to Oxton Hall.

Thus, nearly six months had elapsed, not a very long period, but one in which much may be accomplished, and in which many a change may take place. And by such features were the six months marked, which the young Earl of Wistonbury had spent in the house of Professor Lockerby. In that time, by dint of unrelaxing assiduity and intense application, he had acquired a respectable knowledge of both Latin and Greek, and in that time, too, he had taken a step which was to affect the whole tenor of his after life, and to make him either happy or miserable, as it had been fortunately or unfortunately made. What that step was we shall divulge, through precisely the same

singular process by which it actually came to the knowledge of the other parties interested.

One evening, at the period to which we a short while since alluded—namely, about a week previous to the expiry of the proposed term of the earl's residence with Professor Lockerby—as Jessy Flowerdew was about to remove the tea equipage from the table of the little parlour in which the professor and his noble pupil usually conducted their studies, the latter suddenly rose from his seat, and, looking at their fair handmaiden with a serious countenance, said—

‘Jessy, my love, you must not perform this service again, nor any other of a similar kind. You are now my wife—you are now Countess of Wistonbury.’

We leave it to the reader to imagine, after his own surprise has a little subsided, what was that of the worthy professor, on hearing his noble pupil make so extraordinary, so astounding a declaration—a declaration not less remarkable for its import, than for the occasion on which, and the manner in which it was made.

On recovering from his astonishment, ‘My lord,’ said the good professor, with a grave and stern countenance, ‘be good enough to inform me what this extraordinary conduct means? What can have been your motive, my lord, for using the highly improper and most unguarded language which I have just now heard you utter?’

The young earl, with the greatest calmness and deference of manner, approached the professor, laid his hand upon his heart, and, with a graceful inclination, said, slowly and emphatically—

‘Upon my honour, sir, she *is* my wife!’

‘What, my lord!’ exclaimed the still more and more amazed professor—and now starting from his chair in his excitement—‘do you repeat your most unbecoming and incredible assertion?’

'I do, sir,' replied the earl, in the same calm and respectful manner. 'I do repeat it, and say, before God, that Jessy Flowerdew is the lawfully married wife of the Earl of Wistonbury.'

'Well, my lord, well,' said the professor, in angry agitation, 'I know what is my duty in this most extraordinary case. It is to give instant notice to the countess, your mother, of what I must call, my lord, the extremely rash and unadvised step you have taken.'

To this threat and rebuke, the earl replied, with the utmost composure and politeness of manner—'I was not unprepared, sir, for your resentment on this occasion. Neither do I take it in the least amiss. You merely do your duty when you tell me I have forgotten mine. But the step I have taken, sir, allow me to say, although it may appear unadvised, has not been so in reality. I have weighed well the consequences, and am quite prepared to abide them.'

'Be it so, my lord, be it so,' replied the professor. 'I have only now to remark that, as you say you were prepared for *my* resentment, I hope you are also prepared for your mother's, my lord—a matter of much more serious moment.'

'My mother, sir, I will take in my own hands,' replied the earl; 'she can resent, but she can also forgive.'

'I have no more to say, my lord, no more,' rejoined Mr. Lockerby; 'the matter must now be put into the hands of those who have a better right to judge of its propriety than I have. I shall presume on no further remark on the subject.'

'Come, sir,' said the earl, smiling and extending his hand to the professor, 'let this, if you please, be no cause for difference between us. I propose that we allow the matter to lie in abeyance until my mother has been appealed to; she being the only person, you know, who has

a right to be displeased with my proceeding, or whose wishes I was called upon to consult in this matter.'

'Excuse me, my lord,' replied the worthy professor; 'but I must positively decline all interchange of courtesies which may, by any possibility, be construed into an over-looking of this very extraordinary affair.'

'Well, well, my good sir,' said the earl, smiling, and still maintaining the equanimity of his temper, 'judge of me as charitably as you can. In the morning, we shall meet, I trust, better friends.' Saying this, he took up one of the candles which were on the table before him, bade the professor a polite and respectful good night, and retired to his own apartment.

The earl had no sooner withdrawn than Mr. Lockerby, after collecting himself a little, commenced inditing a letter to the Countess Dowager of Wistonbury, apprising her of what had just occurred. In speaking, however, of the 'degrading' connection which her son had made, the honest man's sense of justice compelled him to add a qualifying explanation of the term which he had employed—'degrading, I mean,' he said, '*in point of wealth, rank, and accomplishments*; for, in all other respects, in conduct and character, in temper and disposition, and, above all, in personal appearance—for she is certainly eminently beautiful—I must admit that her superior may not easily be found.'

The letter that contained these remarks, with the other information connected with it, the professor despatched on the same night on which it was written; and, having done this, awaited with what composure and fortitude he could command, the dreadful explosion of aristocratic wrath and indignation, which, he had no doubt, would speedily follow.

Leaving matters in this extraordinary position in the house of Professor Lockerby we shall shift the scene, for

a moment, to the Countess Dowager of Wistonbury's sitting apartment in Oxton Hall; and we shall choose the moment when her favourite footman, Jacob Asterley, has entered her presence, after his return from a call at the post-office in the neighbouring village; the time being the second day after the occurrence just previously related—namely, the despatch to Oxton Hall of Professor Lockerby's letter.

'Well, Jacob, any letters for me to-day?' said the countess, on the entrance of that worthy official.

'One, my lady, from Scotland,' replied the servant, deferentially, and, at the same time, opening the bag in which the letters were usually carried to and from the post-house.

'Ah! from the earl,' said the countess.

'No, my lady, I rather think not. The address is not in his lordship's handwriting.'

'Oh! the good Professor Lockerby,' said the countess, contemplating for a moment the address of the letter in question, which was now in her ladyship's hands. 'I hope nothing unpleasant has occurred to my son.' And while she spoke, she hurriedly broke the seal, and, in the next instant, was intently engaged in perusing the intelligence which it had secured from the prying curiosity of parties whom it did not concern.

It would take a much abler pen than that now employed in tracing these lines, to convey anything like an adequate idea of the mingled expression of amazement, indignation, and grief exhibited on the countenance, and in every act and attitude of the proud Countess of Wistonbury, on reading the story of her son's degradation. The flush of haughty resentment was succeeded by the sudden paleness of despair; and in frequent alternation did these strong expressions of varied feeling flit across the fine countenance—still fine, although it had looked on fifty summers—of

the heart-stricken mother, as she proceeded in her perusal of the fatal document. On completing the perusal, the countess threw herself in silent distraction on a sofa, and, still holding the open letter in her hand, sank into a maze of wild and wandering thoughts. These, however, seemed at length to concentrate in one decisive and sudden resolution. Starting from the reclining posture into which she had thrown herself, she advanced towards the bell-pull, rung furiously, and, when the servant entered to know what were her commands—

‘Order the travelling carriage instantly, Jacob,’ she said—‘instantly, instantly; and let four of my best horses be put in the harness. What do you stare at, fool?’ she added, irritated at the look of astonishment which the inexplicable violence of her manner had called into the countenance of her trusty domestic. ‘Do as you are ordered, directly.’ The man bowed and withdrew; and in pursuance of the commands he had received, proceeded to the stables.

‘Here’s a start, Thomas! he said, addressing a jolly-looking fellow, who was busily employed in brushing up some harness; the travelling carriage directly, and four of your best horses for my lady.’

‘Why, what the devil’s the matter now?’ replied Thomas, pausing in his operations; ‘where’s the old girl a-going to?’

‘Not knowing, can’t say,’ replied Jacob; ‘but she’s in a woundy fuss, I warrant you. Never seed her in such a quandary in my life. Something’s wrong somewhere, I guess.’

‘Well, well, all’s one to me,’ said Thomas, with philosophical indifference; but it looks like a long start, wherever it may be to; so I’ll get my traps in order.’ And this duty was so expeditiously performed, that, in less than fifteen minutes, the very handsome travelling carriage of

the Earl of Wistonbury, drawn by four spanking bays, flashed up to the door of Oxton Hall. In an instant after, it was occupied by the dowager countess, and in another, was rattling away for Scotland, at the utmost speed of the noble animals by which it was drawn.

Changing here, once more, the scene of our story, we return to the house of Professor Lockerby. There matters continued in that ominous state of quiescence, that significant and portentous calm, that precedes the bursting of the storm. Between the professor and the young earl, not a word more had passed on the subject of the latter's extraordinary declaration. Neither had made the slightest subsequent allusion to it, but continued their studies precisely as they had done before; although, perhaps, a degree of restraint—a consciousness of some point of difference between them—might now be discerned in their correspondence. Both, in short, seemed to have tacitly agreed to abide the result of the professor's letter to the countess, before taking any other step, or expressing any other feeling, on the subject to which that letter related. The anticipated crisis which the professor and his noble pupil were thus composedly awaiting, soon arrived. On the third day after that remarkable one on which the young Earl of Wistonbury had avowed the humble daughter of an humble Scotch farmer to be his wife, a carriage and four, which, we need scarcely say, was the same we saw start from Oxton Hall, drove furiously up to the door of Professor Lockerby. The horses' flanks sent forth clouds of smoke; their mouths and fore-shoulders were covered with foam; and the carriage itself was almost encased in mud. Everything, in short, told of a long and rapid journey. And it was so. Night and day, without one hour's intermission, had that carriage prosecuted its journey. In an instant after, the carriage stopped; its steps were down, and, bridling with high and lofty indignation, the Dowager Countess of Wistonbury

descended, and, ere any one of the professor's family were aware of her arrival, she had entered the house, the door being accidentally open, and was calling loudly for 'her boy.'

'Where is my son?' she exclaimed, as she made her way into the interior of the house: 'where is the Earl of Wistonbury?'

In a moment after the Earl of Wistonbury, who had heard and instantly recognized his mother's voice, was before her, and was about to rush into her arms, when she haughtily thrust him back, saying—

'Degraded, spiritless boy, dare not too approach me! You have blotted the noblest, the proudest scutcheon of England. Where is Professor Lockerby?'

The professor was by her side before she had completed the sentence, when, seeing her agitation—

'My good lady,' he said, in his most persuasive tone, 'do allow me to entreat of you to be composed, and to have the honour of conducting you up stairs.'

'Anywhere!—anywhere, professor!' exclaimed the countess; 'but, alas! go where I will, I cannot escape the misery of my own thoughts, nor the disgrace which my unworthy son has brought upon my head.'

Without making any reply to this outburst of passionate feeling, the professor took the countess respectfully by the hand, and silently conducted her to his drawing-room. With stately step the countess entered, and walked slowly to the further end of the apartment; this gained, she turned round, and, when she had done so, a sight awaited her for which she was but little prepared. This was her son and *Jessy Flowerdew*, kneeling side by side, and, by their attitude, eloquently imploring her forgiveness. It was just one of those sights best calculated to work on the nobler nature of the Countess of Wistonbury, and to call up the finer feelings of her generous heart.

For some seconds she looked at the kneeling pair in silent astonishment; her eye, however, chiefly fixed on the beautiful countenance of Jessy Flowerdew, pale with terror and emotion, and wet with tears. Having gazed for some time on this extraordinary sight, without betraying the slightest symptom of the feelings beyond that of surprise, with which it had inspired her, the countess slowly advanced towards the kneeling couple. She still, however, uttered no word, and discovered no emotion; but a sudden change had come over her proud spirit. That spirit was now laid, and its place occupied by all the generous impulses of her nature. Keeping her eye steadily fixed on the kneeling fair one before her, she approached her, paused a moment, extended her hand, placed it on the ivory forehead of Jessy Flowerdew, gently laid back her rich auburn hair, and, as she did so, said, in a tremulous, but emphatic voice—

‘You *are*, indeed, a lovely girl! God bless you! Alfred, my son, rise,’ she added, in a low, but calm and solemn tone; ‘I forgive you.’ And she extended her hand towards him. The earl seized it, kissed it affectionately, and bathed it with his tears.

‘Rise, my lady—rise, my fair Countess of Wistonbury,’ she now said, and herself aiding in the act she commanded, ‘I acknowledge you as my daughter, and we must now see to fitting you to the high station to which my son’s favour has promoted you, and of which, I trust, you will prove as worthy in point of conduct as you assuredly already are in that of personal beauty. God bless you both! And may every happiness that the conjugal state affords, be yours! Professor,’ she added, and now turning round to that gentleman, ‘you will think this weakness—a mother’s weakness—and perhaps it is so—but I would myself fain attribute it to a more worthy feeling, and, if I know my own heart, it is so. But let that pass.

I *am* reconciled to the step my son has taken, and reverently leave it to God, and fearlessly to man, to judge of the motives by which I have been influenced. I trust they are such as to merit the approbation of both.'

Surprised, and greatly affected by the unexpected turn which matters had taken, so contrary to what he had anticipated, the worthy professor had listened to these expressions of the countess with averted head, and making the most ingenious use of the handkerchief which he held to his face that he could, to conceal the real purpose for which he employed it. When she had done—

'Madam,' he said, with great agitation and confusion of manner, and still busily plying the handkerchief in its pretended vocation—'Madam, I—I—I am surprised—much affected, I assure you—much affected, my lady—with this striking instance of what a noble and generous nature is capable. I was by no means prepared for it. It does you infinite honour, my lady—infinite honour; and will, I trust, in its result, be productive of all that happiness to you which your magnanimous conduct so eminently deserves.'

'I trust I have acted rightly, professor,' was the brief reply of the countess, as she again turned to the young couple, who were now standing on the floor beside her, 'I hope I have; and, if my heart does not deceive me, I am sure I have.'

'You are warranted, my lady, in the confidence you express in the uprightness, the generosity of your conduct on this very remarkable occasion—perfectly warranted,' replied the professor. 'It is an unexampled instance of greatness, of liberality of mind, and as such I must always look on it.'

Thus, then, terminated this extraordinary scene. It was subsequently arranged that the marriage of the earl should, in the meantime, be kept as secret as possible, and that

the young countess should, in the interim, be sent for a year or two to one of the most celebrated seminaries of female education in England, under an assumed name, and that, when she should have acquired the attainments and the polish befitting her high station, she should be produced to the world as the Countess of Wistonbury.

Acting upon this plan of proceedings, the same carriage that brought down the earl's mother, bore away, on the following day, together with that lady, the young earl and his bride; the latter, to commence her educational noviciate in England; the former, to while away the time as he best could until that noviciate should expire, a period which he proposed to render less irksome by a tour on the continent.

About two years after the occurrence of the events just related—it might be more, perhaps nearly three—Oxton Hall presented a scene of prodigious confusion and bustle. Little carts of provender were daily seen making frequent visits to the house. Huge old grates, in deserted kitchens, that had not been in use for a century before, were cleared of their rubbish, and glowing with blazing fires, at which enormous roasts were solemnly revolving. Menials were running to and fro in all directions, and a crowd of powdered and richly-liveried lackeys bustled backwards and forwards through the gorgeous apartments, loaded with silver plate, and bearing huge baskets of wine. Everything at Oxton Hall, in short, betokened preparations for a splendid fête—and such, in truth, was the case. To this fête all the nobility and gentry, within a circuit of ten to fifteen miles were invited; and such an affair it promised to be, altogether, as had not been seen at Oxton Hall since the marriage of the last earl—a period of nearly thirty years. None of those invited knew, or could guess, what was the particular reason for so extensive a merry-

making. Its scale, they learned, was most magnificent, and the invitations unprecedentedly numerous.

The whole affair was thus somewhat of a puzzle to the good people who were to figure as guests at the impending fête; but they comforted themselves with the reflection that they would know all about it by and by. In the meantime, the day appointed for the celebration of the proposed festival at Oxton Hall arrived; and, amongst the other preparations which more markedly characterized it, was the appearance of several long tables extended on the lawn in front of the house, and which were intended for the accommodation of the earl's tenantry, who were also invited to share in the coming festivities. Towards the afternoon of the day alluded to, carriages and vehicles of all descriptions, and of various degrees of elegance, were seen, in seemingly endless numbers, streaming along the spacious and well-gravelled walks that led, by many a graceful curve, through the surrounding lawn, to the noble portals of Oxton Hall. These, by turns, drew up in front of the principal entrance to the house, and delivered their several cargoes of lords and ladies, knights and squires, all honourable personages, and of high degree. An inferior description of equipages, again, and occupied by persons of a different class, sturdy yeomen and their wives and daughters, found their way, or rather were guided as they came, to a different destination, but with no difference in the hospitality of their reception. All were alike welcome to Oxton Hall on this auspicious day. By and by the hour of dinner came, and, when it did, it exhibited a splendid scene in the magnificent dining-room of the Earl of Wistonbury. In this dining-room were assembled a party of at least a hundred-and-fifty ladies and gentlemen, all in their best attire. Down the middle of the spacious apartment ran a table of ample length and breadth, and capable of accommodating with ease even the formidable

array by which it was shortly to be surrounded. On this spacious board glittered as much wealth, in the shape of silver plate, as would have bought a barony, while everything around showed that it was still but a small portion of the riches of its noble owner. At the further end of the lordly hall, in an elevated recess or interior balcony, were stationed a band of musicians, to contribute the choicest specimens of the art to the hilarity of the evening. Altogether the scene was one of the most imposing that can well be conceived, an effect which was not a little heightened by the antique character of the noble apartment in which it was exhibited, one of whose most striking features was a large oriel window, filled with the most beautifully stained glass, which threw its subdued and sombre light on the magnificent scene beneath. Hitherto the young earl had not been seen by any of the company; his mother, the countess-dowager, having discharged the duties of hospitality in receiving the guests. Many were the inquiries made for the absent lord of the mansion; but these were all answered evasively, although always concluded with the assurance that he would appear in good time.

Satisfied with this assurance, the subject was no further pressed at the moment; but, as the dinner hour approached, and the earl had not yet presented himself, considerable curiosity and impatience began to be manifested amongst the assembled guests. These feelings increased every moment, and had attained their height, when the party found themselves called on to take their seats at table, and yet no earl had appeared. The general surprise was further excited on its being observed that the countess-dowager did not, as usual, take the chair at the head of the table, as was expected, but placed herself on its right. The chair at the foot of the table remained also yet unoccupied; and great was the wonder what all this could

mean. It was now soon to be explained. Just as the party had taken their seats, a folding-door, at the further end of the hall, flew open, and the young Earl of Wistonbury entered, leading by the hand a young female of exceeding beauty, attired in a dress of the most dazzling splendour, over which was gracefully thrown a Scottish plaid. Bowing slightly, but with a graceful and cordial expression, and smiling affably as he advanced, the earl conducted his fair charge to the head of the table, where, after a pause of a few seconds, which he purposely made in order to afford his guests an opportunity of marking the extreme loveliness of the lady whom he had thus so unexpectedly introduced to them—an opportunity which was not thrown away, as was evident from the murmur of admiration that ran round the brilliant assembly—the earl thus shortly addressed his wondering guests—

‘Permit me, my friends,’ he said, ‘to introduce to you the Countess of Wistonbury!’

‘A shout of applause from the gentlemen, and a waving of handkerchiefs by the ladies, hailed the pleasing and unexpected intelligence—an homage whose duration and intensity was increased by the singularly graceful manner with which it was received and acknowledged by her to whom it was paid. Nothing could be more captivating than the modest, winning sweetness of her smile, nothing more pleasing to behold than the gentle grace of her every motion. On all present the impression was that she was a woman of birth, education, and high breeding, and nothing in the part she subsequently acted tended in the slightest degree to affect this idea. The young and lovely countess conducted herself throughout the whole of this eventful evening, as she did throughout the remainder of her life, with the most perfect propriety; and thus evinced that the pains taken to fit Jessy Flowerdew for the high station to which a singular good fortune

had called her, was very far from having been taken in vain.

At the conclusion of the banquet, the earl entreated the indulgence of the company for an absence for himself and the countess of a quarter of an hour. This being of course readily acquiesced in, the earl and his beauteous young wife were seen, arm and arm, on the lawn, going towards the tables at which his tenantry were enjoying his hospitality. Here he went through precisely the same ceremony of introduction with that which we have described as having taken place in the banquet-hall; and here it was greeted with the same enthusiasm, and acknowledged by the countess with the same grace and propriety. This proceeding over, the earl and his young bride returned to their party, when one of the most joyous evenings followed that the banqueting-room of Oxtou Hall had ever witnessed. There is only now to add, that Jessy Flowerdew's subsequent conduct as Countess of Wistonbury proved her in every respect worthy of the high place to which she had been elevated. A mildness and gentleness of disposition, and a winning modesty of demeanour, which all the wealth and state with which she was surrounded could not in the slightest degree impair, distinguished her through life; and no less distinguished was she by the generosity and benevolence of her nature, a nature which her change of destiny was wholly unable to pervert."

Such, then, good reader, is the history of the lady whose portrait, in which she appears habited in a Scottish plaid, adorns, with others, the walls of the picture gallery of Oxtou Hall, in Wiltshire.

MIDSIDE MAGGY;

OR,

THE BANNOCK O' TOLLISHILL.

“Every bannock had its maik, but the bannock o' Tollishill.”

Scottish Proverb.

BELIKE, gentle reader, thou hast often heard the proverb quoted above, that “Every bannock had its maik, but the bannock o' Tollishill.” The saying hath its origin in a romantic tradition of the Lammermoors, which I shall relate to thee. Tollishill is the name of a sheep-farm in Berwickshire, situated in the parish of Lauder. Formerly, it was divided into three farms, which were occupied by different tenants; and, by way of distinguishing it from the others, that in which dwelt the subjects of our present story was generally called Midside, and our heroine obtained the appellation of Midside Maggy. Tollishill was the property of John, second Earl, and afterwards Duke of Lauderdale—a personage whom I shall more than once, in these tales, have occasion to bring before mine readers, and whose character posterity hath small cause to hold in veneration. Yet it is a black character, indeed, in which there is not to be found one streak of sunshine; and the story of the “Bannock of Tollishill” referreth to such a streak in the history of John, the Lord of Thirlestane.

Time hath numbered somewhat more than a hundred and ninety years since Thomas Hardie became tenant of the principal farm of Tollishill. Now, that the reader may picture Thomas Hardie as he was, and as tradition hath described him, he or she must imagine a tall, strong, and

fresh-coloured man of fifty; a few hairs of grey mingling with his brown locks; a countenance expressive of much good nature and some intelligence; while a Lowland bonnet was drawn over his brow. The other parts of his dress were of coarse, grey, homespun cloth, manufactured in Earlston; and across his shoulders, in summer as well as in winter, he wore the mountain plaid. His principles assimilated to those held by the men of the covenant; but Thomas, though a native of the hills, was not without the worldly prudence which is considered as being more immediately the characteristic of the buying and selling children of society. His landlord was no favourer of the Covenant; and, though Thomas wished well to the cause, he did not see the necessity for making his laird, the Lord of Lauderdale, his enemy for its sake. He, therefore, judged it wise to remain a neutral spectator of the religious and political struggles of the period.

But Thomas was a bachelor. Half a century had he been in the world, and the eyes of no woman had had power to throw a spark into his heart. In his single, solitary state, he was happy, or he thought himself happy; and that is much the same thing. But an accident occurred which led him first to believe, and eventually to feel, that he was but a solitary and comfortless moorland farmer, toiling for he knew not what, and laying up treasure he knew not for whom. Yea, and while others had their wives spinning, carding, knitting, and smiling before them, and their bairns running laughing and sporting round about them, he was but a poor deserted creature, with nobody to care for, or to care for him. Every person had some object to strive for and to make them strive but Thomas Hardie; or, to use his own words, he was "just in the situation o' a tewhit that has lost its mate—*te-wheet! te-wheet!* it cried, flapping its wings impatiently and forlornly—and *te-wheet! te-wheet!* answered vacant echo frae the dreary glens."

Thomas had been to Morpeth disposing of a part of his hirsels, and he had found a much better market for them than he anticipated. He returned, therefore, with a heavy purse, which generally hath a tendency to create a light and merry heart; and he arrived at Westruther, and went into a hostel, where, three or four times in the year, he was in the habit of spending a cheerful evening with his friends. He had called for a quegh of the landlady's best, and he sat down at his ease with the liquor before him, for he had but a short way to travel. He also pulled out his tobacco-box and his pipe, and began to inhale the fumes of what, up to that period, was almost a forbidden weed. But we question much if the royal book of James the Sixth of Scotland and First of England, which he published against the use of tobacco, ever found its way into the Lammermoors, though the Indian weed did; therefore, Thomas Hardie sat enjoying his glass and his pipe, unconscious or regardless of the fulminations which he who was king in his boyhood, had published against the latter. But he had not sat long, when a fair maiden, an acquaintance of "mine hostess," entered the hostelry, and began to assist her in the cutting out or fashioning of a crimson kirtle. Her voice fell upon the ears of Thomas like the "music of sweet sounds." He had never heard a voice before that not only fell softly on his ear, but left a lingering murmur in his heart. She, too, was a young thing of not more than eighteen. If ever hair might be called "gowden," it was hers. It was a light and shining bronze, where the prevalence of the golden hue gave a colour to the whole. Her face was a thing of beauty, over which health spread its roseate hue, yet softly, as though the westling winds had caused the leaves of the blushing rose to kiss her cheeks, and leave their delicate hues and impression behind them. She was of a middle stature, and her figure was such, although arrayed in

homely garments, as would have commanded the worship of a connoisseur of grace and symmetry. But beyond all that kindled a flame within the hitherto obdurate heart of Thomas, was the witching influence of her smile. For a full hour he sat with his eyes fixed upon her; save at intervals, when he withdrew them to look into the unwonted agitation of his own breast, and examine the cause.

“Amongst the daughters of women,” thought he unto himself—for he had a sprinkling of the language of the age about him—“none have I seen so beautiful. Her cheeks bloom bonnier than the heather on Tollishill, and her bosom seems saft as the new-shorn fleece. Her smile is like a blink o’ sunshine, and would mak summer to those on whom it fell a’ the year round.”

He also discovered, for the first time, that “Tollishill was a dull place, especially in the winter season.” When, therefore, the fair damsel had arrayed the fashion of the kirtle and departed, without once having seemed to observe Thomas, he said unto the goodwife of the hostelry—“And wha, noo, if it be a fair question, may that bonnie lassie be?”

“She is indeed a bonnie lassie,” answered the landlady, “and a guid lassie, too; and I hae nae doot but, as ye are a single man, Maister Hardie, yer question is fair enough. Her name is Margaret Lylestone, and she is the only bairn o’ a puir infirm widow that cam to live here some twa or three years syne. They cam frae south owre some way, and I am sure they hae seen better days. We thocht at first that the auld woman had been a Catholic; but I suppose that isna the case, though they certainly are baith o’ them strong Episcopawlians, and in nae way favourable to the preachers or the word o’ the Covenant; but I maun say for Maggie, that she is a bonny, sweet-tempered, and obleegin lassie—though, puir thing, her mother has brocht her up in a wrang way.”

Many days had not passed ere Thomas Hardie, arrayed in his Sunday habiliments, paid another visit to Westruther; and he cautiously asked of the goodwife of the hostel many questions concerning Margaret; and although she jeered him, and said that "Maggy would ne'er think o' a grey-haired carle like him," he brooded over the fond fancy; and although on this visit he saw her not, he returned to Tollishill, thinking of her as his bride. It was a difficult thing for a man of fifty, who had been the companion of solitude from his youth upwards, and who had lived in single blessedness amidst the silence of the hills, without feeling the workings of the heart, or being subjected to the influence of its passions—I say, it was indeed difficult for such a one to declare, in the ear of a blooming maiden of eighteen, the tale of his first affections. But an opportunity arrived which enabled him to disembosom the burden that pressed upon his heart.

It has been mentioned that Margaret Lyleston and her mother were poor; and the latter, who had long been bowed down with infirmities, was supported by the industry of her daughter. They had also a cow, which was permitted to graze upon the hills without fee or reward; and, with the milk which it produced, and the cheese they manufactured, together with the poor earnings of Margaret, positive want was long kept from them. But the old woman became more and more infirm—the hand of death seemed stretching over her. She required nourishment which Margaret could not procure for her; and, that it might be procured—that her mother might live and not die—the fair maiden sent the cow to Kelso to be sold, from whence the seller was to bring with him the restoratives that her parent required.

Now, it so was that Thomas Hardie, the tenant of Tollishill, was in Kelso market when the cow of Widow Lylestone was offered for sale; and, as it possessed the

characteristic marks of a good milcher, he inquired to whom it belonged. On being answered, he turned round for a few moments, and stood thoughtful; but again turning to the individual who had been intrusted to dispose of it, he inquired—

“And wherefore is she selling it?”

“Really, Maister Hardie,” replied the other, “I could not positively say, but I hae little doot it is for want—absolute necessity. The auld woman’s very frail and very ill—I hae to tak a’ sort o’ things oot to her the nicht frae the doctor’s, after selling the cow, and it’s no in the power o’ things that her dochter, industrious as she is, should be able to get them for her otherwise.”

Thomas again turned aside, and drew his sleeve across his eyes. Having inquired the price sought for the cow, he handed the money to the seller, and gave the animal in charge to one of his herdsmen. He left the market earlier than usual, and directed his servant that the cow should be taken to Westruther.

It was drawing towards gloaming before Thomas approached the habitation of the widow; and, before he could summon courage to enter it for the first time, he sauntered for several minutes, backward and forward on the moor, by the side of the Blackadder, which there silently wends its way, as a dull and simple burn, through the moss. He felt all the awkwardness of an old man struggling beneath the influence of a young feeling. He thought of what he should say, how he should act, and how he would be received. At length he had composed a short introductory and explanatory speech which pleased him. He thought it contained both feeling and delicacy (according to his notions of the latter) in their proper proportions, and after repeating it three or four times over by the side of the Blackadder, he proceeded towards the cottage, still repeating it to himself as he went. But,

when he raised his hand and knocked at the door, his heart gave a similar knock upon his bosom, as though it mimicked him; and every idea, every word of the introductory speech which he had studied and repeated again and again, short though it was, was knocked from his memory. The door was opened by Margaret, who invited him to enter. She was beautiful as when he first beheld her—he thought more beautiful—for she now spoke to him. Her mother sat in an arm-chair, by the side of the peat fire, and was supported by pillows. He took off his bonnet, and performed an awkward but his best salutation.

“I beg your pardon,” said he, hesitatingly, “for the liberty I have taken in calling upon you. But—I was in Kelso the day—and”——He paused, and turned his bonnet once or twice in his hands. “And,” he resumed, “I observed, or rather, I should say, I learned that ye intended to sell your cow; but I also heard that ye was very ill, and”——Here he made another pause. “I say I heard that ye was very ill, and I thocht it would be a hardship for ye to part wi’ crummie, and especially at a time when ye are sure to stand maist in need o’ every help. So I bought the cow—but, as I say, it would be a very great hardship for ye to be without the milk, and what the cheese may bring, at a time like this; and, therefore, I hae ordered her to be brocht back to ye, and ane o’ my men will bring her hame presently. Never consider the cow as mine, for a bachelor farmer like me can better afford to want the siller, than ye can to want yer cow; and I micht hae spent it far mair foolishly, and wi’ less satisfaction. Indeed, if ye only but think that good I’ve done, I’m mair than paid.”

“Maister Hardie,” said the widow, “what have I, a stranger widow woman, done to deserve this kindness at your hands? Or how is it in the power o’ words for me to thank ye? HE who provideth for the widow and the fatherless will not permit you to go unrewarded, though I

cannot. O Margaret, hinny," added she, "thank our benefactor as we ought to thank him, for I cannot."

Fair Margaret's thanks were a flood of tears.

"Oh, dinna greet!" said Thomas; "I would ten times ower rather no hae bocht the cow, but hae lost the siller, than I would hae been the cause o' a single tear rowin' doun yer bonny cheeks."

"O sir," answered the widow, "but they are tears o' gratitude that distress my bairn, and nae tears are mair precious."

I might tell how Thomas sat down by the peat fire between the widow and her daughter, and how he took the hand of the latter, and entreated her to dry up her tears, saying that his chief happiness would be to be thought their friend, and to deserve their esteem. The cow was brought back to the widow's, and Thomas returned to Tollishill with his herdsman. But, from that night, he became almost a daily visitor at the house of Mrs. Lylestone. He provided whatever she required—all that was ordered for her. He spoke not of love to Margaret, but he wooed her through his kindness to her mother. It was, perhaps, the most direct avenue to her affections. Yet it was not because Thomas thought so that he pursued this course, but because he wanted confidence to make his appeal in a manner more formal or direct.

The widow lingered many months; and all that lay within the power of human means he caused to be done for her, to restore her to health and strength, or at least to smooth her dying pillow. But the last was all that could be done. Where death spreadeth the shadow of his wing, there is no escape from sinking beneath the baneful influence of its shade. Mrs. Lylestone, finding that the hour of her departure drew near, took the hand of her benefactor, and when she had thanked him for all the kindness which he had shown towards her, she added—

“But, O sir, there is one thing that makes the hand of death heavy. When the sod is cauld upon my breast, who will look after my puir orphan—my bonny fatherless and motherless Margaret? Where will she find a hame?”

“O mem,” said Thomas, “if the like o’ me durst say it, she needna hae far to gang, to find a hame and a heart too. Would she only be mine, I would be her protector—a’ that I have should be hers.”

A gleam of joy brightened in the eye of the dying widow.

“Margaret!” she exclaimed, faintly; and Margaret laid her face upon the bed, and wept. “O my bairn! my puir bairn!” continued her mother, “shall I see ye protected and provided for before I am ‘where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest,’ which canna be lang noo?”

Thomas groaned—tears glistened in his eyes—he held his breath in suspense. The moment of trial, of condemnation or acquittal, of happiness or misery, had arrived. With an eager impatience he waited to hear her answer. But Margaret’s heart was prepared for his proposal. He had first touched it with gratitude—he had obtained her esteem; and where these sentiments prevail in the bosom of a woman whose affections have not been bestowed upon another, love is not far distant—if it be not between them, and a part of both.

“Did ever I disobey you, mother?” sobbed Margaret, raising her parent’s hand to her lips.

“No, my bairn, no!” answered the widow. And raising herself in the bed, she took her daughter’s hand and placed it in the hand of Thomas Hardie.

“Oh!” said he, “is this possible? Does my bonny Margaret really consent to make me the happiest man on earth? Shall I hae a gem at Tollishill that I wadna exchange for a monarch’s diadem?”

It is sufficient to say that the young and lovely Margaret Lylestone became Mrs. Hardie of Tollishill; or, as she was generally called, "*Midside Maggie*." Her mother died within three months after their marriage, but died in peace, having, as she said, "seen her dear bairn blessed wi' a leal and a kind guidman, and ane that was weel to do."

For two years after their marriage, and not a happier couple than Thomas and Midside Maggie was to be found on all the long Lammermoors, in the Merse, nor yet in the broad Lothians. They saw the broom and the heather bloom in their season, and they heard the mavis sing before their dwelling; yea, they beheld the snow falling on the mountains, and the drift sweeping down the glens; but while the former delighted, the latter harmed them not, and from all they drew mutual joy and happiness. Thomas said that "Maggy was a matchless wife;" and she that "he was a kind, kind husband."

But the third winter was one of terror among the hills. It was near the new year; the snow began to fall on a Saturday, and when the following Friday came, the storm had not ceased. It was accompanied by frost and a fierce wind, and the drift swept and whirled like awful pillars of alabaster, down the hills, and along the glens—

"Sweeping the flocks and herds."

Fearful was the wrath of the tempest on the Lammermoors. Many farmers suffered severely, but none more severely than Thomas Hardie of Tollishill. Hundreds of his sheep had perished in a single night. He was brought from prosperity to the brink of adversity.

But another winter came round. It commenced with a severity scarce inferior to that which had preceded it, and again scores of his sheep were buried in the snow. But February had not passed, and scarce had the sun entered what is represented as the astronomical sign of the *two fish*, in the heavens, when the genial influence of spring fell with

almost summer warmth upon the earth. During the night the dews came heavily on the ground, and the sun sucked it up in a vapour. But the herbage grew rapidly, and the flocks ate of it greedily, and licked the dew ere the sun rose to dry it up. It brought the murrain amongst them; they died by hundreds; and those that even fattened, but did not die, no man would purchase; or, if purchased, it was only upon the understanding that the money should be returned if the animals were found unsound. These misfortunes were too much for Thomas Hardie. Within two years he found himself a ruined man. But he grieved not for the loss of his flocks, nor yet for his own sake, but for that of his fair young wife, whom he loved as the apple of his eye. Many, when they heard of his misfortunes, said that they were sorry for bonny Midside Maggy.

But, worst of all, the rent-day of Thomas Hardie drew near; and for the first time since he had held a farm, he was unable to meet his landlord with his money in his hand. Margaret beheld the agony of his spirit, and she knew its cause. She put on her Sunday hood and kirtle; and professing to her husband that she wished to go to Lauder, she took her way to Thirlestane Castle, the residence of their proud landlord, before whom every tenant in arrear trembled. With a shaking hand she knocked at the hall door, and after much perseverance and entreaty, was admitted into the presence of the haughty earl. She curtsied low before him.

“Well, what want ye, my bonny lass?” said Lauderdale, eyeing her significantly.

“May it please yer lordship,” replied Margaret, “I am the wife o’ yer tenant, Thomas Hardie o’ Tollishill; an’ a guid tenant he has been to yer lordship for twenty years and mair, as yer lordship maun weel ken.”

“He has been my tenant for more than twenty years,

say ye?" interrupted Lauderdale; "and ye say ye are his wife: why, looking on thy bonny face, I should say that the heather hasna bloomed twenty times on the knowes o' Tollishill since thy mother bore thee. Yet ye say ye are his wife! Beshrew me, but Thomas Hardie is a man o' taste. Arena ye his daughter?"

"No, my lord; his first, his only, an' his lawfu' wife—an' I would only say, that to ye an' yer faither before ye, for mair than twenty years, he has paid his rent regularly an' faithfully; but the seasons hae visited us sairly, very sairly, for twa years successively, my lord, an' the drift has destroyed, an' the rot rooted oot oor flocks, sae that we are hardly able to haud up oor heads amang oor neebors, and to meet yer lordship at yer rent-day is oot o' oor power; therefore hae I come to ye to implore ye, that we may hae time to gather oor feet, an' to gie yer lordship an' every man his due, when it is in oor power."

"Hear me, guidwife," rejoined the earl; "were I to listen to such stories as yours, I might have every farmer's wife on my estates coming whimpering and whinging, till I was left to shake a purse with naething in't, and allowing others the benefit o' my lands. But it is not every day that a face like yours comes in the shape o' sorrow before me; and, for ae kiss o' your cherry mou', (and ye may take my compliments to your auld man for his taste,) ye shall have a discharge for your half-year's rent, and see if that may set your husband on his feet again."

"Na, yer lordship, na!" replied Margaret; "it would ill become ony woman in my situation in life, an' especially a married ane, to be daffin with sic as yer lordship. I am the wife o' Thomas Hardie, wha is a guid guidman to me, an' I cam here this day to entreat ye to deal kindly wi' him in the day o' his misfortune."

"Troth," replied Lauderdale—who could feel the force of virtue in others, though he did not always practise it

in his own person—"I hae heard o' the blossom o' Tollishill before, an' a bonny flower ye are to blossom in an auld man's bower; but I find ye modest as ye are bonny, an' upon one condition will I grant yer request. Ye hae tauld me o' yer hirsels being buried wi' the drift, an' that the snaw has covered the May primrose on Leader braes; now it is Martinmas, an' if in June ye bring me a snowball, not only shall ye be quit o' yer back rent, but ye shall sit free in Tollishill till Martinmas next. But see that in June ye bring me the snowball or the rent."

Margaret made her obeisance before the earl, and, thanking him, withdrew. But she feared the coming of June; for to raise the rent even then she well knew would be a thing impossible, and she thought also it would be equally so to preserve a snow-ball beneath the melting sun of June. Though young, she had too much prudence and honesty to keep a secret from her husband; it was her maxim, and it was a good one, that "there ought to be no secrets between a man and his wife, which the one would conceal from the other." She therefore told him of her journey to Thirlestane, and of all that had passed between her and the earl. Thomas kissed her cheek, and called her his "bonny, artless Maggy;" but he had no more hope of seeing a snowball in June than she had, and he said, "the bargain was like the bargain o' a crafty Lauderdale."

Again the winter storms howled upon the Lammermoors, and the snow lay deep upon the hills. Thomas and his herdsmen were busied in exertions to preserve the remainder of his flocks; but, one day, when the westling winds breathed with a thawing influence upon the snow-clad hills, Margaret went forth to where there was a small, deep, and shadowed ravine by the side of the Leader. In it the rivulet formed a pool, and seemed to sleep, and there the grey trout loved to lie at ease; for a high dark

rock, over which the brushwood grew, overhung it, and the rays of the sun fell not upon it. In the rock, and near the side of the stream, was a deep cavity, and Margaret formed a snowball on the brae top, and she rolled it slowly down into the shadowed glen, till it attained the magnitude of an avalanche in miniature. She trode upon it, and pressed it firmly together, till it obtained almost the hardness and consistency of ice. She rolled it far into the cavity, and blocked up the mouth of the aperture, so that neither light nor air might penetrate the strange coffer in which she had deposited the equally strange rent of Tollis-hill. Verily, common as ice-houses are in our day, let not Midside Maggy be deprived of the merit of their invention.

I have said that it was her maxim to keep no secret from her husband; but, as it is said there is no rule without an exception, even so it was in the case of Margaret, and there was one secret which she communicated not to Thomas, and that was—the secret of the hidden snowball.

But June came, and Thomas Hardie was a sorrowful man. He had in no measure overcome the calamities of former seasons, and he was still unprepared with his rent. Margaret shared not his sorrow, but strove to cheer him, and said—

“We shall hae a snawba’ in June, though I climb to the top o’ Cheviot for it.”

“O my bonny lassie,” replied he—and he could see the summit of Cheviot from his farm—“dinna deceive yersel’ wi’ what could only be words spoken in jest; but, at ony rate, I perceive there has been nae snaw on Cheviot for a month past.”

Now, not a week had passed, but Margaret had visited the aperture in the ravine, where the snowball was concealed, not through idle curiosity, to perceive whether it had melted away, but more effectually to stop up every

crevice that might have been made in the materials with which she had blocked up the mouth of the cavity.

But the third day of the dreadful month had not passed, when a messenger arrived at Tollishill from Thirlestane with the abrupt mandate—" *June has come!*"

"And we shall be at Thirlestane the morn," answered Margaret.

"O my doo," said Thomas, "what nonsense are ye talking!—that isna like ye, Margaret; I'll be in Greenlaw Jail the morn; and oor bits o' things in the hoose, and oor flocks, will be seized by the harpies o' the law—and the only thing that distresses me is, what is to come o' you hinny."

"Dinna dree the death ye'll never dee," said Margaret affectionately; "we shall see, if we be spared, what the morn will bring."

"The fortitude o' yer mind, Margaret," said Thomas, taking her hand; and he intended to have said more, to have finished a sentence in admiration of her worth, but his heart filled, and he was silent.

On the following morning, Margaret said unto him—

"Now, Thomas, if ye are ready, we'll gang to Thirlestane. It is aye waur to expect or think o' an evil than to face it."

"Margaret, dear," said he, "I canna comprehend ye—wherefore should I thrust my head into the lion's den? It will soon enough seek me in my path."

Nevertheless, she said unto him, "Come," and bade him be of good heart; and he rose and accompanied her. But she conducted him to the deep ravine, where the waters seem to sleep and no sunbeam ever falls; and, as she removed the earth and the stones, with which she had blocked up the mouth of the cavity in the rock, he stood wondering. She entered the aperture, and rolled forth the firm mass of snow, which was yet too large to be lifted by hands. When Thomas saw this, he smiled and

wept at the same instant, and he pressed his wife's cheek to his bosom, and said—

“Great has been the care o' my poor Margaret; but it is o' no avail; for, though ye hae proved mair than a match for the seasons, the proposal was but a jest o' Lauderdale.”

“What is a man but his word?” replied Margaret; “and him a nobleman too.”

“Nobility are but men,” answered Thomas, “and seldom better men than ither folk. Believe me, if we were to gang afore him wi' a snawba' in oor hands, we should only get lauched at for our pains.”

“It was his ain agreement,” added she; “and, at ony rate, we can be naething the waur for seeing if he will abide by it.”

Breaking the snowy mass, she rolled up a portion of it in a napkin, and they went towards Thirlestane together; though often did Thomas stop by the way and say—

“Margaret, dear, I'm perfectly ashamed to gang upon this business; as sure as I am standing here, as I have tauld ye, we will only get oorselves lauched at.”

“I would rather be lauched at,” added she, “than despised for breaking my word; and, if oor laird break his noo, wha wadna despise him?”

Harmonious as their wedded life had hitherto been, there was what might well nigh be called bickerings between them on the road; for Thomas felt or believed that she was leading him on a fool's errand. But they arrived at the castle of Thirlestane, and were ushered into the mansion of its proud lord.

“Ha!” said the earl, as they entered, “bonny Midside Maggy and her auld guidman! Well, what bring ye?—the rents o' Tollishill, or their equivalent?” Thomas looked at his young wife, for he saw nothing to give him hope on the countenance of Lauderdale, and he

thought that he pronounced the word "*equivalent*" with a sneer.

"I bring ye snaw in June, my lord," replied Margaret, "agreeably to the terms o' yer bargain; and I'm sorry, for your sake and oors, that it hasna yet been in oor power to bring gowd instead o't."

Loud laughed the earl as Margaret unrolled the huge snowball before him; and Thomas thought unto himself, 'I said how it would be.' But Lauderdale, calling for his writing materials, sat down and wrote, and he placed in the hands of Thomas a discharge, not only for his back rent, but for all that should otherwise be due at the ensuing Martinmas.

Thomas Hardie bowed and bowed again before the earl, low and yet lower, awkwardly and still moré awkwardly, and he endeavoured to thank him, but his tongue faltered in the performance of its office. He could have taken his hand in his and wrung it fervently, leaving his fingers to express what his tongue could not; but his laird was an earl, and there was a necessary distance to be observed between an earl and a Lammermoor farmer.

"Thank not me, goodman," said Lauderdale, "but thank the modesty and discretion o' yer winsome wife."

Margaret was silent; but gratitude for the kindness which the earl had shown unto her husband and herself took deep root in her heart. Gratitude, indeed, formed the predominating principle in her character, and fitted her even for acts of heroism.

The unexpected and unwonted generosity of the earl had enabled Thomas Hardie to overcome the losses with which the fury of the seasons had overwhelmed him, and he prospered beyond any farmer on the hills. But, while he prospered, the Earl of Lauderdale, in his turn, was overtaken by adversity. The stormy times of the civil war raged, and it is well known with what devotedness Lau-

dale followed the fortunes of the king. When the Commonwealth began, he was made prisoner, conveyed to London, and confined in the Tower. There, nine years of captivity crept slowly and gloomily over him; but they neither taught him mercy to others nor to moderate his ambition, as was manifested when power and prosperity again cast their beams upon him. But he now lingered in the Tower, without prospect or hope of release, living upon the bare sustenance of a prisoner, while his tenants dwelt on his estates, and did as they pleased with his rents, as though they should not again behold the face of a landlord.

But Midside Maggy grieved for the fate of him whose generosity had brought prosperity, such as they had never known before, to herself and to her husband; and, in the fulness of her gratitude, she was ever planning schemes for his deliverance; and she urged upon her husband that it was their duty to attempt to deliver their benefactor from captivity, as he had delivered them from the iron grasp of ruin, when misfortune lay heavily on them. Now, as duty as the rent-day came, from the Martinmas to which the snowball had been his discharge, Thomas Hardie faithfully and punctually locked away his rent to the last farthing, that he might deliver it into the hands of his laird, should he again be permitted to claim his own; but he saw not in what way they could attempt his deliverance, as his wife proposed.

“Thomas,” said she, “there are ten lang years o’ rent due, and we hae the siller locked away. It is o’ nae use to us, for it isna oors; but it may be o’ use to him. It would enable him to fare better in his prison, and maybe to put a handfu’ o’ gowd into the hands o’ his keepers, and thereby to escape abroad, and it wad furnish him wi’ the means o’ living when he was abroad. Remember his kindness to us, and think that there is nae sin equal to the sin o’ ingratitude.”

"But," added Thomas, "in what way could we get the money to him? for, if we were to send it, it would never reach him, and, as a prisoner, he wouldna be allooed to receive it."

"Let us tak it to him oorsels, then," said Margaret.

"Tak it oorsels!" exclaimed Thomas, in amazement, "a' the way to London! It is oot o' the question a'thegither, Margaret. We wad be robbed o' every plack before we got half-way; or, if we were even there, hoo, in a' the world, do ye think we could get it to him, or that we would be allooed to see him?"

"Leave that to me," was her reply; "only say ye will gang, and a' that shall be accomplished. There is nae obstacle in the way but the want o' yer consent. But the debt, and the ingratitude o' it thegither, hang heavy upon my heart."

Thomas at length yielded to the importunities of his wife, and agreed that they should make a pilgrimage to London, to pay his rent to his captive laird; though how they were to carry the gold in safety, through an unsettled country, a distance of more than three hundred miles, was a difficulty he could not overcome. But Margaret removed his fears; she desired him to count out the gold, and place it before her; and when he had done so, she went to the meal-tub and took out a quantity of pease and of barley meal mixed, sufficient to knead a goodly fadge or bannock; and, when she had kneaded it, and rolled it out, she took the golden pieces and pressed them into the paste of the embryo bannock, and again she doubled it together, and again rolled it out, and kneaded into it the remainder of the gold. She then fashioned it into a thick bannock, and placing it on the hearth, covered it with the red ashes of the peats.

Thomas sat marvelling, as the formation of the singular purse proceeded, and when he beheld the operation com-

pleted, and the bannock placed upon the hearth to bake, he only exclaimed—"Weel, woman's ingenuity dings a'! I wadna hae thocht o' the like o' that, had I lived a thousand years! O Margaret, hinny, but ye are a strange ane."

"Hoots," replied she, "I'm sure ye nicht easily hae imagined that it was the safest plan we could hae thocht upon to carry the siller in safety; for I am sure there isna a thief between the Tweed and Lon'on toun, that would covet or carry awa a bear bannock."

"Troth, my doo, and I believe ye're richt," replied Thomas; "but wha could hae thocht o' sic an expedient? Sure there never was a bannock baked like the bannock o' Tollishill."

On the third day after this, an old man and a fair lad, before the sun had yet risen, were observed crossing the English Border. They alternately carried a wallet across their shoulders, which contained a few articles of apparel and a bannock. They were dressed as shepherds, and passengers turned and gazed on them as they passed along; for the beauty of the youth's countenance excited their admiration. Never had Lowlan bonnet covered so fair a brow. The elder stranger was Thomas Hardie, and the youth none other than his Midside Maggy.

I will not follow them through the stages of their long and weary journey, nor dwell upon the perils and adventures they encountered by the way. But, on the third week after they had left Tollishill, and when they were beyond the town called Stevenage, and almost within sight of the metropolis, they were met by an elderly military-looking man, who, struck with the lovely countenance of the seeming youth, their dress, and way-worn appearance, accosted them, saying—"Good morrow, strangers; ye seem to have travelled far. Is this fair youth your son, old man?"

"He is a gay sib frænd," answered Thomas.

"And whence come ye?" continued the stranger.

"Frae Leader Haughs, on the bonny Borders o' the north countrie," replied Margaret.

"And whence go ye?" resumed the other.

"First tell me wha ye may be that are sae inquisitive," interrupted Thomas, in a tone which betrayed something like impatience.

"Some call me George Monk," replied the stranger mildly, "others, Honest George. I am a general in the Parliamentary army." Thomas reverentially raised his hand to his bonnet, and bowed his head.

"Then pardon me, sir," added Margaret, "and if ye indeed be the guid and gallant general, sma' offence will ye tak at onything that may be said amiss by a country laddie. We are tenants o' the Lord o' Lauderdale, whom ye now keep in captivity; and, though we mayna think as he thinks, yet we never faund him but a guid landlord; and little guid, in my opinion, it can do ony body to keep him, as he has been noo for nine years, caged up like a bird. Therefore, though oor ain business that has brocht us up to London should fail, I winna regret the journey, since it has afforded me an opportunity o' seein yer Excellency, and solicitin yer interest, which maun be pooferfu' in behalf o' oor laird, and that ye would release him frae his prison, and, if he nichtna remain in this countrie, obtain permission for him to gang abroad."

"Ye plead fairly and honestly for yer laird, fair youth," returned the general; "yet, though he is no man to be trusted, I needs say he hath had his portion of captivity measured out abundantly; and, since ye have minded me of him, ere a week go round I will think of what may be done for Lauderdale." Other questions were asked and answered—some truly, and some evasively; and Thomas and Margaret blessing Honest George

in their hearts, went on their way rejoicing at having met him.

On arriving in London, she laid aside the shepherd's garb in which she had journeyed, and resumed her wonted apparel. On the second day after their arrival, she went out upon Tower-hill, dressed as a Scottish peasant girl, with a basket on her arm; and in the basket were a few ballads, and the bannock of Tollishill. She affected silliness, and, acting the part of a wandering minstrel, went singing her ballads towards the gate of the Tower. Thomas followed her at a distance. Her appearance interested the guard; and as she stood singing before the gate—"What want ye, pretty face?" inquired the officer of the guard. "Your alms, if you please," said she, smiling innocently, "and to sing a bonny Scotch sang to the Laird o' Lauderdale."

The officer and the sentinels laughed; and, after she had sung them another song or two, she was permitted to enter the gate, and a soldier pointed out to her the room in which Lauderdale was confined. On arriving before the grated windows of his prison, she raised her eyes towards them, and began to sing "*Leader Haughs*." The wild, sweet melody of his native land, drew Lauderdale to the windows of his prison-house, and in the countenance of the minstrel he remembered the lovely features of Midside Maggy. He requested permission of the keeper that she should be admitted to his presence; and his request was complied with.

"Bless thee, sweet face!" said the earl, as she was admitted into his prison; and you have not forgotten the snowball in June?" And he took her hand to raise it to his lips.

"Hooly, hooly, my guid lord," said she, withdrawing her hand; "my fingers were made for nae sic purpose—Thomas Hardie is here"—and she laid her hand upon her fair bosom—"though now standing withoot the yett o' the

Tower." Lauderdale again wondered, and, with a look of mingled curiosity and confusion, inquired—"Wherefore do ye come—and why do ye seek me?" "I brocht ye a snaw-ba' before," said she, "for yer rent—I bring ye a bannock noo." And she took the bannock from the basket and placed it before him.

"Woman," added he, "are ye really as demented as I thocht ye but feigned to be, when ye sang before the window."

"The proof o' the bannock," replied Margaret, "will be in the breakin' o't."

"Then, goodwife, it will not be easily proved," said he—and he took the bannock, and, with some difficulty, broke it over his knee; but, when he beheld the golden coins that were kneaded through it, for the first, perhaps the last and only time in his existence, the Earl of Lauderdale burst into tears and exclaimed—"Well, every bannock has its maik, but the bannock o' Tollishill! Yet, kind as ye hae been, the gold is useless to ane that groans in hopeless captivity."

"Yours has been a long captivity," said Margaret; "but it is not hopeless; and, if honest General Monk is to be trusted, from what he tauld me not three days by-gane, before a week gae roond, ye will be at liberty to go abroad, and there the bannock o' Tollishill may be o' use."

The wonder of Lauderdale increased, and he replied—"Monk will keep his word—but what mean ye of him?"

And she related to him the interview they had had with the general by the way. Lauderdale took her hand, a ray of hope and joy spread over his face, and he added—

"Never shall ye rue the bakin' o' the bannock, if auld times come back again."

Margaret left the tower, singing as she had entered it, and joined her husband, whom she found leaning over the railing around the moat, and anxiously waiting her return.

They spent a few days more in London, to rest and to gaze upon its wonders, and again set out upon their journey to Tollishill. General Monk remembered his promise; within a week, the Earl of Lauderdale was liberated, with permission to go abroad, and there, as Margaret had intimated, he found the bannock of Tollishill of service.

A few more years passed round, during which old Thomas Hardie still prospered; but, during those years, the Commonwealth came to an end, the king was recalled, and with him, as one of his chief favourites, returned the Earl of Lauderdale. And, when he arrived in Scotland, clothed with power, whatever else he forgot, he remembered the bannock of Tollishill. Arrayed in what might have passed as royal state, and attended by fifty of his followers, he rode to the dwelling of Thomas Hardie and Midside Maggy; and when they came forth to meet him, he dismounted and drew forth a costly silver girdle of strange workmanship, and fastened it round her jimp waist, saying—"Wear this, for now it is my turn to be grateful, and for your husband's life, and your life, and the life of the generation after ye" (for they had children), "ye shall sit rent free on the lands ye now farm. For, truly, every bannock had its maik but the bannock o' Tollishill."

Thomas and Margaret felt their hearts too full to express their thanks; and ere they could speak, the earl, mounting his horse, rode towards Thirlestane; and his followers, waving their bonnets, shouted—"Long live Midside Maggy, queen of Tollishill."

Such is the story of "The Bannock o' Tollishill;" and it is only necessary to add, for the information of the curious, that I believe the silver girdle may be seen until this day, in the neighbourhood of Tollishill, and in the possession of a descendant of Midside Maggy, to whom it was given.

WILSON'S
TALES OF THE BORDERS
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE WIFE OR THE WUDDY.

“There was a criminal in a cart
Agoing to be hanged—
Reprieve to him was granted;
The crowd and cart did stand,
To see if he would marry a wife,
Or, otherwise, choose to die!
‘Oh, why should I torment my life?’
The victim did reply;
‘The bargain’s bad in every part—
But a wife’s the worst!—drive on the cart.’”

HONEST Sir John Falstaff talketh of “minions of the moon:” and, truth to tell, two or three hundred years ago, nowhere was such an order of knighthood more prevalent than upon the Borders. Not only did the Scottish and English Borderers make their forays across the Tweed and the ideal line, but rival chieftains, though of the same nation, considered themselves at liberty to make inroads upon the property of each other. The laws of *meum* and *tuum* they were unable to comprehend. Theirs was the strong man’s world, and with them *might* was *right*. But to proceed with our story. About the beginning of the seventeenth century, one of the boldest knights upon the Borders was William Scott, the young laird of Harden. His favourite residence was Oak-

wood Tower, a place of great strength, situated on the banks of the Ettrick. The motto of his family was "*Reparabit cornua Phæbe*," which being interpreted by his countrymen, in their vernacular idiom, ran thus—"We'll hae moonlight again." Now, the young laird was one who considered it his chief honour to give effect to both the spirit and the letter of his family motto. Permitting us again to refer to honest Falstaff, it implied that they were "gentlemen of the night;" and he was not one who would loll upon his pillow when his "avocation" called him to the foray.

It was drawing towards midnight, in the month of October, when the leaves in the forest had become brown and yellow, and with a hard sound rustled upon each other, that young Scott called together his retainers, and addressing them, said—"Look ye, friends, is it not a crying sin and a national shame to see things going a-glee as they are doing? There seems hardly such a thing as manhood left upon the Borders. A bit scratch with a pen upon parchment is becoming of more effect than a stroke with the sword. A bairn now stands as good a chance to hold and to have, as an armed man that has a hand to take and to defend. Such a state o' things was only made for those who are ower lazy to ride by night, and ower cowardly to fight. Never shall it be said that I, William Scott of Harden, was one who either submitted or conformed to it. Give me the good, old, manly law, that 'they shall keep who can,' and wi' my honest sword will I maintain my right against every enemy. Now, there is our natural and lawful adversary, auld Sir Gideon Murray o' Elibank, carries his head as high as though he were first cousin to a king, or the sole lord o' Ettrick Forest. More than once has he slighted me in a way which it wasna for a Scott to bear; and weel do I ken that he has the will, and wants but the power, to harry us o' house and ha'. But, by my troth, he shall pay a dear reckoning for a' the insults he has

offered to the Scotts o' Harden. Now, every Murray among them has a weel-stocked mailing, and their kine are weel-favoured; to-night the moon is laughing cannily through the clouds:—therefore, what say ye, neighbours—will ye ride wi' me to Elibank? and, before morning, every man o' them shall have a toom byre."

"Hurra!" shouted they, "for the young laird! He is a true Scott from head to heel! Ride on, and we will follow ye! Hurra!—the moon glents ower the hills to guide us to the spoils o' Elibank! To-night we shall bring langsyne back again."

There were twenty of them, stout and bold men, mounted upon light and active horses—some armed with firelocks, and others with Jeddart staves; while, in addition to such weapons, every man had a good sword by his side. At their head was the fearless young laird; and, at a brisk pace, they set off towards Elibank. Mothers and maidens ran to their cottage doors, and looked after them with foreboding hearts when they rode along; for it was a saying amongst them, that "when young Willie Scott o' Harden set his foot in the stirrup at night, there were to be swords drawn before morning." They knew, also, the feud between him and the house of Elibank, and as well did they know that the Murrays were a resolute and a sturdy race.

Morn had not dawned when they arrived at the scene where their booty lay. Not a Murray was abroad; and to the extreme they carried the threat of the young laird into execution, of making "toom byres." By scores and by hundreds, they collected together, into one immense herd, horned cattle and sheep, and they drove them before them through the forest towards Oakwood Tower. The laird, in order to repel any rescue that might be attempted, brought up the rear, and, in the joy of his heart, he sang, and, at times, cried aloud, "There will be dry breakfasts in Elibank before the sun gets oot, but a merry meal at Oakwood afore

he gangs down. An entire bullock shall be roasted, and wives and bairns shall eat o' it."

"I humbly beg your pardon, Maister William," said an old retainer, named Simon Scott, and who traced a distant relationship to the family; "I respectfully ask your pardon; but I have been in your faither's family for forty years, and never was backward in the hoor o' danger, or in a ploy like this; but ye will just alloo me to observe, sir, that wilfu' waste maks wofu' want, and I see nae occasion whatever for roasting a bullock. It would be as bad as oor neebors on the ither side o' the Tweed, wha are roast, roastin', or bakin' in the oven, every day o' the week, and makin' a stane weight o' meat no gang sae far as twa or three pounds wad hae dune. Therefore, sir, if ye will tak my advice, if we are to hae a feast, there will be nae roastin' in the way. There was a fine sharp frost the other nicht, and I observed the rime lying upon the kail; so that baith greens and savoys will be as tender as a weel-boiled three-month-auld chicken; and I say, therefore, let the beef be boiled, and let them hae ladlefu's o' kail, and ye will find, sir, that instead o' a hail bullock, even if ye intend to feast auld and young, male and female, upon the lands o' Oakwood, a quarter o' a bullock will be amply sufficient, and the rest can be sauted down for winter's provisions. Ye ken, sir, that the Murrays winna let us lichtly slip for this nicht's wark; and it is aye safest, as the saying is, to lay by for a sair fit."

"Well argued, good Simon," said the young laird; "but your economy is ill-timed. After a night's work such as this there is surely some licence for gilravishing. I say it—and who dare contradict me?—to-night there is not one belonging to the house of Harden, be they old or young, who shall not eat of roast meat, and drink of the best."

"Weel, sir," replied Simon, "wi' reverence be it spoken, but I would beg to say that ye are wrang. Folk that ance

get a liking for dainties tak ill wi' plainer fare again; and, moreover, sir, in a' my experience, I never kened dainty bits and hardihood to go hand in hand; but, on the contrary, luxuries mak men effeminate, and discontented into the bargain."

The altercation between the old retainer and his young master ran farther; but it was suddenly interrupted by the deep-mouthed baying of a sleuth-hound; and its threatening howls were followed by a loud cry, as if from fifty voices, of—"To-night for Sir Gideon and the house of Elibank!"

But here we pause to say that Sir Gideon Murray of Elibank was a man whose name was a sound of terror to all who were his enemies. As a foe, he was fierce, resolute, unforgiving. He had never been known to turn his back upon a foe, or forgive an injury. He knew the meaning of justice in its severest sense, but not of compassion; he was a stranger to the attribute of mercy, and the life of the man who had injured him, he regarded as little as the life of the worm which he might tread beneath his heel upon his path. He was a man of middle age; and had three daughters, none of whom were what the world calls beautiful; but, on the contrary, they were what even the dependents upon his estates described as "very ordinary-looking young women."

Such was Sir Gideon Murray of Elibank; and, although the young laird of Harden conceived that he had come upon him as "a thief in the night"—and some of my readers, from the transaction recorded, may be somewhat apt to take the scriptural quotation in a literal sense—yet I would say, as old Satchel sings of the Borderers of those days, they were men—

"Somewhat unruly, and very ill to tame.

I would have none think that I call them thieves;

For, if I did, it would be arrant lies."

But, stealthily as the young master of Harden had made his preparations for the foray, old Sir Gideon had got timely notice of it; and hence it was, that not a Murray seemed astir when they took the cattle from the byres, and drove them towards Oakwood. But, through the moonlight, there were eyes beheld every step they took—their every movement was watched and traced; and amongst those who watched was the stern old knight, with fifty followers at his back.

“Quiet! quiet!” he again and again, in deep murmurs, uttered to his dependents, throwing back his hand, and speaking in a deep and earnest whisper, that awed even the slow but ferocious sleuth-hound that accompanied them, and caused it to crouch back to his feet. In a yet deeper whisper, he added, encouragingly—“Patience, my merry men!—bide your time!—ye shall hae work before long go by.”

When, therefore, the young laird and his followers began to disperse in the thickest of the forest, as they drove the cattle before them, Sir Gideon suddenly exclaimed—“Now for the onset!” And, at the sound of his voice, the sleuth-hound howled loud and savagely.

“We are followed!—Halt! halt!—to arms! to arms!” cried the heir of Harden.

Three or four were left in charge of the now somewhat scattered herd of cattle, and to drive them to a distance; while the rest of the party spurred back their horses as rapidly as the tangled pass in the forest would permit, to the spot from whence the voice of their young leader proceeded. They arrived speedily, but they arrived too late. In a moment, and with no signal save the baying of the hound, old Sir Gideon and his armed company had burst upon young Scott and Old Simon, and ere the former could cry for assistance, they had surrounded them.

“Willie Scott! ye rash laddie!” cried Sir Gideon—“yield

quietly, or a thief's death shall ye die; and in the very forest through which ye have this night driven my cattle, the corbies and you shall become acquaint—or, at least, if ye see not them, they shall see you and feel you too."

"Brag on, ye auld greybeard," exclaimed the youth, but while a Scott o' Harden has a finger to wag, no power on earth shall make his tongue say 'I am conquered!' So come on!—do your best—do your worst—here is the hand and the sword to meet ye!—and were ye ten to one, ye shall find that Willie Scott isna the lad to turn his back, though ten full-grown Murrays stand before his face."

"By my sooth, then, callant," cried the old knight, "and it was small mercy, after what ye hae done, that I intended to show ye; and after what ye hae said, it shall be less that I will grant ye. Sae come on lads, and now to humble the Hardens."

"Arm! every Scott to arms!" again shouted the young laird; "and now, Sir Gideon, if ye will measure weapons, and leave your *weel-faured* daughters as a legacy to the world, be it sae. But there are lads among your clan o' whom they would hae been glad, and who, belike in *pity*, might hae offered them their hands, but who will this night mak a bride o' the green sward! Sae come on, Sir Gideon, and on you and yours be the consequence!"

"Before sunrise," returned Sir Gideon, "and the winsome laird o' Harden shall boast less vauntingly, and rue that he had broke his jeers upon an auld man. Touch me, sir, but not my bairns."

The conflict began, and on each side the strife was bloody and desperate. Bold men grasped each other by the throat, and they held their swords to each other's breasts, scowling one upon another with the ferocity of contending tigers, ere each gave the deadly plunge which was to hurl both into eternity. The report of fire-arms, the clash of swords, the clang of shields, with the neighing of maddened horses, the

lowing of affrighted cattle, the howl of the sleuth-hounds, and the angry voices of fierce men, mingled wildly together, and, in one fearful and discordant echo, rang through the forest. This wild sound was followed by the low melancholy groans of the dying. But, as I have already stated, the Scotts, and the cattle which they drove before them, were scattered, and ere those who were in advance could arrive to the rescue of their friends in the rear, the latter were slain, wounded, or overpowered. They also fought against fearful odds. The young laird himself had his sword broken in his grasp, and his horse was struck dead beneath him. He was instantly surrounded and made prisoner by the Murrays; and, at the same time, old Simon fell into their hands.

The few remaining retainers of the house of Harden gave way when they found their leader a captive, and they fled, leaving the cattle behind them. Sir Gideon Murray, therefore, recovered all that had been taken from him; and though he had captured but two prisoners, the one was the chief, and the other his principal adviser and second in command. The old knight, therefore, commanded that they should be bound with cords together, and in such rueful plight led to his castle at Elibank. It was noon before they reached it, and Lady Murray came forth to welcome her husband, and congratulate him upon his success. But when she beheld the heir of Harden a captive, and thought of how little mercy was to be expected from Sir Gideon when once aroused, she remembered that she was a mother, and that one of her children might one day be situated as their prisoner then was.

The young laird, with his aged kinsman and dependent, were thrust into a dark room; and he who locked them up informed them that the next day their bodies would be hung up on the nearest tree.

“My life and lang fasting!” exclaimed Simon, “ye surely

wouldna be speaking o' sic a thing as hanging to an auld man like me. If we were to be shot or beheaded—though I would like neither the ane nor the ither—it wouldna be a thing in particular to be complained o'; but to be hanged like a dog is so disgracefu' and unchristian-like, that I would rather die ten times in a day, than feel a hempen cravat about my neck ance. And, moreover, I must say that hanging is not treating my dear young maister and kinsman as he ocht to be treated. His birth, his rank, and the memory o' his ancestors and mine, demand mair respect; and therefore, I say, gae tell your maister, that, if he is determined that we are to die—though I have no ambition to cut my breath before my time—that I think, as a gentleman, it is his duty to see that we die the death o' gentlemen.

“Silence, Simon,” cried the young laird; “let Murray hang us in his bedchamber if he will. No matter what manner o' death we die, provided only that we die like men. Let him hang us if he dare, and the disgrace be his that is coward enough so to make an end of his enemy.

“O sir,” said Simon, “but that is poor comfort to a man that has to leave a small family behind him

“Simon! are you afraid to die?” cried the captive laird, in a tone of rebuke.

“No, your honour,” said Simon—“that is, I am no more afraid to die than other men are, or ought to be—but only ye'll observe, sir, that I have no ambition—not, as I may say, to draw my last breath upon a wuddy, but to have it very unnaturally stopped. Begging your pardon, but you are a young man, while I have a wife and family that would be left to mourn for me!—and O sir! the wife and the bits o' bairns press unco sairly upon a man's heart, when death tries to come in the way between him and them. In exploits like that in which we were last night engaged, and also in battles abroad, I have faced danger in every shape a hundred

times—yet, sir, to be shot in a moment, as it were, or to be run through the body, and to die honourably on the field, is a very different thing from deliberately walking up a ladder to the branch o' a tree, from which we are never to come down in life again. And mair than that, if we had been o' Johnny Faa's gang, they couldna hae treated us mair disrespectfully than to condemn us to the death that they have decreed for us."

"Providing ye die bravely, Simon," said the young laird, "it is little matter what manner o' death ye die; and as for your wife and weans, fear not; my faither's house will provide for them. For, though I fall now, there will be other heirs left to the estate o' Harden."

While the prisoners thus conversed in the place of their confinement, Lady Murray spoke unto her husband, saying—"And what, Sir Gideon, if it be a fair question, may ye intend to do wi' the braw young laird o' Harden, now that he is in your power?"

He drew her gently by the arm towards the window, and pointing towards a tree which grew at the distance of a few yards, he said—"Do ye see yonder branch o' the elm tree that is waving in the wind? To-morrow, young Scott and his kinsman shall swing there together, or hereafter say that I am no Murray."

"O guidman!" said she, "it is because I was terrified that ye would be doing the like o' that, that caused me to ask the question. Now, I must say, Sir Gideon, whatever ye may think, that ye are not only acting cruelly, but foolishly."

"I care naething about the cruelty," cried he; "what mercy did ever a Scott among them show to me or to mine? Lady Murray, the ball is at my foot, and I will kick it, though I deprive Scott o' Harden o' a head. And what mean ye, dame, by saying I act foolishly?"

"Only this, guidman," said she—"that ye hae three

daughters to marry, whom the world doesna consider to be ower weel-faured, and it isna every day that ye hae a husband for ane o' them in your hand."

"Sooth!" cried he, "and for once in your life ye are right, guidwife—there is mair wisdom in that remark than I would hae gien ye credit for. To-morrow, the birkie o' Harden shall have his choicc—either upon the instant to marry our daughter, Meikle-mouthed Meg, or strap for it."

"Weel, Sir Gideon," added she, "to make him marry Meg will be mair purpose-like than to cut off the head and the hope of an auld house, in the very flower o' his youth; and there is nae doubt as to the choice he will mak, for there is an unco difference between them."

"Dinna be ower sure," continued the knight; "there is nae saying what his choice may be. There is both pluck and a spirit o' contradiction in the callant, and I wouldna be in the least surprised if he preferred the wuddy. I ken, had I been in his place, what my choice would hae been."

"I daresay, Sir Gideon," replied the old lady, who was jocose at the idea of seeing one of her daughters wed, "I daresay I could guess what that choice would hae been."

"And what, in your wisdom," said he sharply, "do ye think it would hae been—the wife or the wuddy?"

"O Gideon! Gideon!" said she, good-humouredly, and shaking her head, "weel do ye ken that your choice would hae been a wife."

"There ye are wrang," cried he; "I would rather die a death that was before me, than marry a wife I had never seen. But go ye and prepare Meg for becoming a bride the morn, and I shall see what the intended bridegroom says to the proposal."

In obedience to his commands, she went to an apartment

in which their eldest daughter Agnes, but commonly called "Meikle-mouthed Meg," then sat, twirling a distaff. The old dame sat down by her daughter's side, and, after a few observations respecting the weather, and the quality of the lint she was then torturing into threads, she said—"Weel, I'm just thinking, Meggie, that ye mak me an auld woman. Ye would be six-and-twenty past at last Lammas."

"So I believe, mother!" said Meggie; and a sigh, or a very deep and long-drawn breath, followed her words.

"Dear me!" continued the old lady, "young men maun be growing very scarce. I wanted four months and five days o' being nineteen when I married your faither, and I had refused at least six offers before I took him!"

"Ay, mother," replied the maiden; "but ye had a weel-faured face—there lay the difference! Heigho!"

"Heigho!" responded her mother, as in pleasant raillery—"what is the lassie heighoing at? Certes, if ye get a guidman before ye be six and twenty, ye may think yoursel' a very fortunate woman."

"Yes," added the maiden; "but I see sma' prospect o' that. I doubt ye will see the Ettrick running through the 'dowie dells o' Yarrow,' before ye hear tell o' an offer being made to me."

"Hoot, hoot!—dinna say sae, bairn," added her mother; "there is nae saying what may betide ye yet. Ye think ye winna be married before ye are six and twenty; but, truly, my dear, there has mony a mair unlikely ship come to land. Now, what wad ye think o' the young laird o' Harden?"

"Mother! mother!" said Agnes, "wherefore do ye mock me? I never saw ye do that before. My faither has ta'en William Scott a prisoner; and, from what I hae heard, he will hang him in the morning. Ye ken what a man my faither is—when he says a thing he will do it; and

how can you jest about the young man, when his very existence is reduced to a matter o' minutes and moments. Though, rather than my faither should tak his life, if I could save him, he should take mine.

"Weel said, my bairn," replied the old woman; "but dinna ye be put about concerning what will never come to pass. I doubtna that, before morning, ye will find young Scott o' Harden at your feet, and begging o' you to save his life, by giving him your hand and troth, and becoming his wife: and then, ye ken, your faither couldna, for shame, hang or do any harm to his ain son-in-law."

"O mother! mother!" replied Agnes, "it will never be in my power to save him; for what ye hae said he will never think o'; and even if I were his wife, I question if my faither would pardon him, though I should beg it upon my knees."

"Oh, your faither's no sae ill as that, Meggie, my doo," said the old lady. "Mark my words—if Willie Scott consent to marry you, ye will henceforth find him and your faither hand and glove."

While this conversation between Lady Murray and her daughter took place, Sir Gideon entered the room where his prisoners were confined, and, addressing the young laird, said—"Now, ye rank marauder, though death is the very least that ye deserve or can expect from my hands, yet I will gie ye a chance for your life, and ye shall choose between a wife and the wuddy. To-morrow morning, ye shall either marry my daughter Meg, or swing from the branch o' the nearest tree, and the bauldest Scott upon the Borders shanna tak ye down, until ye drop away, bone by bone, a fleshless skeleton."

"Good save us! most honourable and good Sir Gideon!" suddenly interrupted Simon, in a tone which bespoke his horror; "but ye certainly dinna intend to make an anatomy o' me too; or surely, when my honoured maister marries

Miss Murray (as I hope and trust he will), ye will alloo me to dance at their wedding, instead o' dancing in the air, and keeping time to the music o' the souging wind. And, O maister! for my sake, for your ain sake, and especially out o' regard to my sma' and helpless family, consent to marry the lassie, though she isna extraordinar' weel-faured; for I am sure that, rather than die a dog's death, swinging from a tree, I would marry twenty wives, though they were a' as auld as the hills, as ugly as a starless midnight, and had tongues like trumpets."

"Peace, Simon!" cried the young laird, impatiently; "if ye hae turned coward, keep the sound o' yer fears within yer ain teeth. And ye, Sir Gideon," added he, turning towards the old knight, "in your amazing mercy and generosity, would spare my life, upon condition that I should marry your *bonny* daughter Meg! Look ye, sir—I am Scott o' Harden, and ye are Murray o' Elibank; there is no love lost between us; chance has placed my life in your hands—take it, for I wouldna marry your daughter though ye should gie me life, and a' the lands o' Elibank into the bargain. I fear as little to meet death as I do to tell you to your teeth that, had ye fallen into my hands, I would have hung ye wi' as little ceremony as I would bring a whip across the back o' a disobedient hound. Therefore, ye are welcome to do the same by me. Ye have taken what ye thought to be a sure mode o' getting a husband for ane o' your *winsome* daughters; but, in the present instance, it has proved a wrong one, auld man. Do your worst, and there will be Scotts enow left to revenge the death o' the laird o' Harden."

"There, then, is my thumb, young braggart," exclaimed Sir Gideon, "that I winna hinder ye in your choice; for to-morrow ye shall be exalted as Haman was; and let those revenge your death who dare."

"Maister!—dear maister!" cried Simon, wringing his

hands, "will ye sacrifice me also, and break the hearts o' my puir wife and family! O sir, accept o' Sir Gideon's proposal, and marry his dochter."

"Silence! ye milk-livered slave!" cried the young laird. "Do ye pretend to bear the name o' Scott, and yet tremble like an ash leaf at the thought o' death!"

"Ye will excuse me, sir," retorted Simon, "but I tremble at no such thing; only, as I have already remarked, I have no particular ambition for being honoured wi' the exaltation o' the halter; and, moreover, I see no cause why a man should die unnecessarily, or where death can be avoided. Sir Gideon," added he, "humble prisoner as I at this moment am, and in your power, I leave it to you if ever ye saw ony thing in my conduct in the field o' battle (and ye have seen me there) that could justify ony ane in calling me either milk-livered or a coward? But, sir, I consider it would be altogether unjustifiable to deprive ane o' life, which is always precious, merely because my maister is stubborn, and winna marry your daughter. But, oh, sir, I am not a very auld man yet, and if ye will set me at liberty, though I am now a married man, in the event o' my ever becoming a widower, I gie ye my solemn promise that I will marry ony o' your dochters that ye please!"

"Audacious idiot!" exclaimed the old knight, raising his hand and striking poor Simon to the ground.

"Sir Gideon Murray!" cried the young laird fiercely, "are ye such a base knave as to strike a fettered prisoner! Shame fa' ye, man! where is the pride o' the Murrays now?"

Sir Gideon evidently felt the rebuke, and, withdrawing from the apartment, said, as he departed—"Remember that when the sun-dial shall to-morrow note the hour of twelve, so surely shall ye be brought forth—and a wife shall be your wuddy's doom."

“Leave me!” cried the youth impatiently, “and the gallows be it—my choice is made. Till my last hour trouble me not again.”

“Sir! sir!” cried Simon, “I beg, I pray that ye will alter your determination. There is surely naething so awful in the idea o’ marriage, even though your wife should have a face not particularly weel-favoured. Ye dinna ken, sir, but that the young woman’s looks are her worst fault; and, indeed, I hae heard her spoken o’ as a lassie o’ great sense and discretion, and as having an excellent temper; and, oh, sir, if ye kened as weel what it is to be married as I do, ye would think that a good temper was a recommendation far before beauty.”

“Hold thy fool’s tongue, Simon,” cried the laird; ‘would ye disgrace the family wi’ which ye make it your boast to be connected, when in the power and presence o’ its enemies? Do as ye see me do—die and defy them.”

It was drawing towards midnight, when the prison-door was opened, and the sentinel who stood watch over it admitted a female dressed as a domestic.

“What want ye, or whom seek ye, maiden?” inquired the laird.

“I come,” answered she mildly, “to speak wi’ the laird o’ Harden, and to ask if he has any dying commands that a poor lassie could fulfil for him.”

“Dying commands!” responded Simon; “oh, are those no awful words!—and can ye still be foolhardy enough to say ye winna marry?”

“Who sent ye, maiden?—or who are ye?” continued the laird.

“A despised lassie, sir,” answered she, “and an attendant upon Sir Gideon’s lady, in whom ye hae a true and steadfast friend; though I doubt that, as ye hae refused poor Meg, her intercession will avail ye little.”

“And wherefore has Lady Murray sent you here?” he continued.

“Just, sir, because she is a mother, and has a mother’s heart; and, as ye hae a mother and sisters who will now be mourning for ye at Oakwood, she thought that, belike, ye would hae something to say that ye would wish to hae communicated to them; and, if it be sae, I am come to offer to be your messenger.”

“Maiden!” said he, with emotion, “speak not of my poor mother, or you will unman me, and I would wish to die as becomes my father’s son.”

“That’s right, hinny,” whispered Simon; “speak to him about his mother again—talk about her sorrow, poor lady, and her tears, and distraction, and mourning—and I hae little doubt but that we shall get him to marry Meg, or do onything else, and I shall get back to my family after a’.”

“What is it that ye whisper, Simon, in the maiden’s ear?” inquired the laird, sternly.

“Oh, naething, sir—naething, I assure ye,” answered Simon, falteringly; “I was only saying that, if ye sent her ower to Oakwood wi’ a message to your poor, honoured, wretched mother, that she would inquire for my poor widow, Janet, and my bits o’ bairns, and that she would tell them that nothing troubled me upon my death-bed—no, no, not my death-bed, but—I declare I am ashamed to think o’t!—I was saying that I was simply telling her to inform my wife and bairns, that nothing distracted me in the hour o’ death but the thought o’ being parted from them.”

Without noticing the evasive reply of his dependent and fellow-prisoner, the laird, addressing the intruder, said—
“Ye speak as a kind and considerate lassie. I would like to send a scrape o’ a pen to my poor mother, and, if ye will be its bearer, she will reward ye.”

“And, belike,” she replied, “ye would like to hear if the good lady has an answer back, or to learn how she bore the tidings o’ your unhappy fate.”

“Before you could return,” said he, “the time appointed by my adversary for my execution will be past, and I shall feel for my mother’s sorrows with the sympathy of a disembodied spirit.”

“But,” added she, “if you would like to hear from your poor mother, or, belike, to see her—for there may be family matters that ye would wish to have arranged—I think, through the influence of my lady, Sir Gideon could be prevailed upon to grant ye a respite for three or four days; and, as he isna a man that keeps his passion long, perhaps by that time he may be disposed to save your life upon terms that would be more acceptable.”

“No, maiden,” he replied; “he is my enemy; and from him I wish no terms—no clemency. Let him fulfil his purpose—I will die; but my death shall be revenged; and tell my mother that it was my latest injunction that she should command every follower of our house to avenge her son’s death, while there is a Murray left in all Scotland to repent the deed o’ the knight o’ Elibank.”

“Oh, sweet young ma’am, or mistress!” cried Simon; “bear the lady no such message; but rather, as ye hae said, try if it be possible to get your own good lady to persuade Sir Gideon to spare our lives for a few days; and, as ye say, the edge o’ the auld knight’s revenge may be blunted by that time, or, perhaps, my worthy young maister may be brought to see things in a clearer light, and, perhaps, to marry Miss Margaret, by which means our lives may be spared. For it is certainly the height o’ madness in him to sacrifice my life and his own, rather than marry her before he has seen her.”

“Simon,” interrupted the laird, “the maiden has spoken kindly; let her endeavour to procure a respite—a reprieve

for you. In your death my enemy can have no gratification; but for me—leave me to myself.”

“O sir,” replied Simon, “ye wrong me—ye mistake my meaning a’thegither. If you are to die, I will die also; but do ye no think it would be as valorous, and mair rational, at least to see and hear the young leddy before ye determine to die rather than to marry her?”

“And hae ye,” said the maiden, addressing the laird, “preferred the gallows to poor Meg without even seeing her?”

“If I haena seen her I hae heard o’ her,” said he; “and by all accounts her countenance isna ane that ony man would desire to see accompanying him through the world like a shadow at his oxter.”

“Belike,” said the maiden, “she has been represented to you worse than she looks like—if ye saw her, ye might change your opinion; and, perhaps, after a’, that she isna bonny is a’ that any one can say against her.”

“Wheesht, lassie!” said he; “I winna be forced to onything. A Scott may be led, but he winna drive. I have nae wish to see the face o’ your young mistress, for I winna hae her. But you speak as one that has a feeling heart, and before I trust ye wi’ my last letter to my poor mother, I should like to have a glance at your face, and by your countenance I shall judge whether or not it will be safe to trust ye.”

“I doubt, sir,” replied she, throwing back the hood that covered her head, “ye will see as little in my features as ye expect to find in my young mistress’s to recommend me; but, sir, you ought to remember that jewels are often encrusted in coarser metals, and ye will often find a delicious kernel within an unsightly shell.”

“Ye speak sweetly, and as sensibly as sweet,” said he, raising the flickering lamp, which burned before them upon a small table, and gazing upon her countenance;

“and I will now tell ye, lassie, that if your features be not beautiful, there is honesty and kindness written upon every line o’ them; and though ye are a dependent in the house o’ my enemy, I will trust ye. Try if I can obtain writing materials to address a few lines to my mother, and I will confide in you to deliver them.”

“Ye may confide in me,” rejoined she, “and the writing materials which ye desire I hae brought wi’ me. Write, and not only shall your letter be faithfully delivered, but, as ye hae confided in me, I will venture to say that your life shall be spared until ye receive her answer; for I may say that what I request, Lady Murray will try to see performed. And if I can find any means in my power by which ye can escape, it shall not be lang that ye will remain a prisoner.”

“Thank ye!—doubly thank ye!” cried Simon; “ye are a good and a kind creature; and though my maister refuses to marry your mistress, yet, had I been single, I would hae married you. But, oh, when ye go wi’ the letter to his mother, my honoured lady, will ye just go away down to a bit white house which lies by the river side, about a mile and a half aboon Selkirk, and there ye will find my poor wife and bairns—or rather, I should say, my unhappy widow and my orphans—and tell them—oh, tell my wife—that I never kened how dear she was to me till now; but that, if she marries again, my ghost will haunt her night and day; and tell also the bairns that, above everything, I charge them to be good to their mother.”

The young laird sat down, and, writing a letter to his mother, intrusted it to the hands of the stranger girl. He raised her hand to his lips as she withdrew, and a tear trickled down his cheeks as he thanked her.

It was early on the following morning that Meikle-mouthed Meg, as she was called, requested an interview

with her father, which being granted, after respectfully rendering obeisance before him, she said—"So, faither, I understand that it is your pleasure that I shall this day become the wife o' young Scott o' Harden. I think, sir, that it is due to the daughter o' a Murray o' Elibank, that she should be courted before she gies her hand. The young man has never seen me; he kens naething concerning me; an' never will yer dochter disgrace ye by gieing her hand to a man who only accepted it to save his neck from a hempen cord. Faither, if it be your command that I am to marry him, I will an' must marry him; but, before I just make a venture upon him for better for worse, an' for life, I wad like to hae some sma' acquaintance wi' him, to see what sort o' a lad he is, and what kind o' temper he has; and therefore, faither, I humbly crave that ye will put off the death or the marriage for a week at least, that I may hae an opportunity o' judging for mysel' how far it would be prudent or becoming in me to consent to be his wife."

"Gie me your hand, Meg," cried the old knight; "I didna think ye had as muckle spirit and gumption in ye as to say what ye hae said. But your request is useless; for he has already, point blank, refused to hae ye; an' there is naething left for him, but, before sunset, to strike his heels against the bark o' the auld elm tree."

"Say not that, faither," said she—"let me at least hae four days to become acquainted wi' him; and if in that time he doesna mak a request to you to marry me without ony dowry, then will I say that I look even waur than I get the name o' doing."

"He shall have four days, Meg," cried the old knight; "for your sake he will have them; but if, at the end o' four days, he shall refuse to take ye, he shall hang before this window, and his poor half-crazed companion shall bear him company."

With this assurance Agnes, or, as she was called, Meg left her father, and bethought her of how she might save the prisoners and secure a husband.

The mother of the laird sat in the midst of her daughters, mourning for him, and looking from the window of the tower, as though, in every form that appeared in the distance, she expected to see him, or at least to gather tidings regarding him, when information was brought to her that he was the prisoner of Murray of Elibank.

"Then," cried she, and wept, "the days o' my winsome Willie are numbered, and his death is determined on; for often has Sir Gideon declared he would gie a' the lands o' Elibank for his head. My Willie is my only son, my first-born, and my heart's hope and treasure; and, oh, if I lose him now, if I shall never again hear his kindly voice say '*mother!*' nor stroke down his yellow hair—wi' him that has made me sonless I shall hae a day o' lang and fearfu' reckoning; cauld shall be the hearth-stane in the house o' many a Murray, and loud their lamentation."

Her daughters wept with her for their brother's fate; but they wist not how to comfort her; and, while they sat mingling their tears together, it was announced to them that a humble maiden, bearing a message from the captive laird, desired to speak with her.

"Show her in!—take me to her!" cried the mother, impatiently. "Where is she?—what does she say?—or what does my Willie say?" And the maiden who has been mentioned as having visited the laird in his prison, was ushered into her presence.

"Come to me, lassie—come and tell me a'," cried the old lady; "what message does Willie Scott send to his heart-broken mother?"

"He has sent you this bit packet, ma'am," replied the

bearer; "and I shall be right glad to take back to him whatever answer ye may hae to send."

"And wha are ye, young woman?" inquired the lady, "that speaks sae kindly to a mother, an' takes an interest in the fate o' my Willie?"

"A despised lassie," was the reply; "but ane that would risk her ain life to save either yours or his."

"Bless you for the words!" replied Lady Scott, as she broke the seal of her son's letter, and read:—

"My mother, my honoured mother,—Fate has delivered me into the power of Murray of Elibank, the enemy of our house. He has doomed me to death, and I die to-morrow; but sit not down to mourn for me, and uselessly to wring the hands and tear the hair; but rouse every Scott upon the Borders to rise up and be my avenger. If ye bewail the loss o' a son, let them spare o' the Murrays neither son nor daughter. Rouse ye, and let a mother's vengeance nerve your arm! Poor Simon o' Yarrow-foot is to be my companion in death, and he whines to meet his fate with the weakness of a woman, and yearns a perpetual yearning for his wife and bairns. On that account I forgie him the want o' heart and determination which he manifests; but see ye to them, and take care that they be provided for. As for me, I shall meet my doom wi' disdain for my enemy in my eyes and on my tongue. Even in death he shall feel that I despise him; and a proof o' this I have given him already; for he has offered to save my life, providing I would marry his daughter, Meikle-mouthed Meg. But I have scorned his proposal."—

"Ye were right, Willie! ye were right, lad!" exclaimed his mother, while the letter shook in her hand; but, suddenly bursting into tears, she continued—"No, no! my bairn was wrong—very wrong. Life is precious, and at all times desirable; and, for his poor mother's sake, he ought to have married the lassie, whate'er she may be like."

And, turning to the bearer of the letter, she inquired—
“And what like may the leddy be, the marrying o’ whom
would save my Willie’s life?”

“Ye have nae doubt heard, my leddy,” replied the stranger, “that she isna what the world considers to be a likely lass—though, take her as she is, and ye might find a hantle worse wives than poor Meg would make; and, as to her features, I may say that she looks much the same as I do; and if she doesna appear better, she at least doesna look ony waur.”

“Then, if she be as ye say, and look as ye say,” continued the lady, “my poor headstrong Willie ought to marry her. But, oh! weel do I ken that in everything he is just his father ower again, and ye might as weel think o’ moving the Eildon hills as force him to onything.”

She perused the concluding part o’ her son’s letter, in which he spoke enthusiastically of the kindness shown him by the fair messenger, and of the promise she had made to liberate him if possible. “And if she does,” he added, “whatever be her parentage, on the day that I should be free, she should be my wife, though I have preferred death to the hand o’ Sir Gideon’s *comely* daughter.”

“Lassie,” said the lady, weeping as she spoke, “my poor Willie talks a deal o’ the kindness ye have shown him in the hour o’ his distress, and for that kindness his mother’s heart thanks ye. But do you not think that it is possible that I could accompany ye to Elibank? and, if ye can devise no means for him to escape, perhaps, if ye could get me admitted into his presence, when he saw his poor distressed mother upon her knees before him, his heart would saften, and he would marry Sir Gideon’s daughter, ill-featured though she may be.”

“My leddy,” answered the stranger maiden, “it is little that I can promise, and less that I can do; but if ye desire

to see yer son, I think I could answer for accomplishing yer request; an' though nae guid might come oot o't, I could also say that I wad see ye safe back again."

Within an hour, Lady Scott, disguised as a peasant, and carrying a basket on her arm, set out for Elibank, accompanied by the fair stranger.

Leaving them upon their melancholy journey, we shall return to the young laird. From the windows of his prison-house, he beheld the sun rise which was to be the last on which he was to look. He heard the sentinels, who kept watch over him, relieve each other; he heard them pacing to and fro before the grated door, and as the sun rose towards the south, proclaiming the approach of noon, the agitation of Simon increased. He sat in a corner of the prison, and strove to pray; and, as the footsteps of the sentinels quickened, he groaned in the bitterness of his spirit. At length the loud booming of the gong announced that the dial-plate upon the turret marked the hour of twelve. Simon clasped his hands together. "Maister! maister!" he cried, "our hour is come, an' one word from yer lips could save us baith, an' ye winna speak it. The very holding oot o' yer hand could do it, but ye are stubborn even unto death."

"Simon," said the laird, "I hae left it as an injunction upon my mother, that yer wife an' weans be provided for—she will fulfil my request. Therefore, be ye content. Die like a man, an' dinna disgrace both yourself an' me."

"O sir! I winna disgrace, or in any manner dishonour ye," said Simon—"only I do not see the smallest necessity for us to die, and especially when both our lives could be saved by yer doing yerself a good turn."

While he spoke, the sound of the sentinels' footsteps, pacing to and fro, ceased. The prison-door was opened; Simon fell upon his knees—the laird looked towards the intruder proudly.

"Your lives are spared for another day," said a voice, "that the laird o' Harden may have time to reflect upon the proposal that has been made to him. But let him not hope that he will find mercy upon other terms; or that, refusing them for another day, his life will be prolonged."

The door was again closed, and the bolts were drawn. The spirit of Sir Gideon was too proud and impatient to spare the lives of his prisoners for four days, as he had promised to his daughter to do, and he now resolved that they should die upon the following day.

The sun had again set, and the dim lamp shed around its fitful and shadowy lights from the table of the prison-room, when the maiden, who had carried the letter to the laird's mother, again entered.

"This is kind, very kind, gentle maiden," said he; "would that I could reward ye! An' hoo fares it with my puir mother?—what answer does she send?"

"An' oh, ma'am, or mistress!" cried Simon, "hoo fares it wi' my dear wife an' bairns? I hope ye told them all that I desired ye to say. Hoo did she bear the news o' being made a widow? An' what did she say to my injunction that she was never to marry again?"

"Ye talk wildly, man," said the maiden, addressing Simon; it wasna in my power to carry yer commands to yer wife; but, I trust, it will be longer than ye expect before she will be a widow, or hae it in her power to marry again?"

"O ye angel! ye perfect picture!" cried Simon, "what is that which I hear ye say? Do ye really mean to tell me that I stand a chance o' being saved, an' that I shall see my wife an' bairns again?"

"Even so," said she; "but whether ye do or do not, rests with yer master."

"Speak not o' that, sweet maiden," said the laird:

“but tell me, what says my mother? How does she bear the fate o’ her son; an’ hoo does she promise to avenge my death?”

“She is as one whose heart-strings are torn asunder,” was the reply, “and who refuses to be comforted; but she wad rather hae another dochter than lose an only son; an’ her prayer is, that ye will live and mak her happy, by marrying the maiden ye despise.”

“What!” he cried, “has even my mother so far forgot herself as to desire me to marry the dochter o’ oor enemy, whom no other man could be found to take! It shall never be. I wad obey her in onything but that.”

“But,” said the maiden, “I still think ye are wrong to reject and despise puir Meg before that ye hae seen her. She may baith be better an’ look better than ye are aware o’. There are as guid as Scott o’ Harden who hae said, that were it in their power they wad mak her their wife; an’ ye should remember, sir, that it will be as pleasant for you to hear the blithe laverock singing ower yer head, as for another person to hear the wind sougning and the long grass rustling ower yer grave. Ye hae another day to live, an’ see her, an’ speak to her, before ye decide rashly. Yours is a cruel doom, but Sir Gideon is a wrathfu’ man; an’ even for his ain flesh an’ bluid he has but sma’ compassion when his anger is provoked. Death, too, is an awfu’ thing to think aboot; an’, therefore, for yer ain sake, an’ for the sake o’ yer puir distressed mother an’ sisters, dinna come to a rash determination.”

“Sweet lass,” replied he, “I respect the sympathy which ye evince; but never shall Sir Gideon Murray say that, in order to save my life, he terrified me into a marriage wi’ his daughter. An’ when my puir mother’s grief has subsided, she will think differently o’ my decision.”

“Weel, sir,” said the maiden, “since ye will not listen to my advice—an’ I own t¹ I hae nae richt to offer it—

I will send ane to ye whose persuasion will hae mair avail."

"Whom will ye send?" inquired the laird; "it isna possible that ye can hae been playing me false?"

"No," she replied, "that isna possible; an' from her that I will send to you, you will see whether or not I hae kept my word, guid and truly, to fulfil yer message."

So saying, she withdrew, leaving him much wondering at her words, and yet more at the interest which she took in his fate. But she had not long withdrawn when the prison-door was again opened, and Lady Scott rushed into the arms of her son.

"My mother!" cried he, starting back in astonishment—"my mother!—hoo is this?"

"Oh, joy an' gladness, an' every blessing be upon my honoured lady! for noo I may stand some chance o' walkin' back upon my ain feet to see my family. Oh! yer leddyship," Simon added, "join yer prayers to my prayers, an' try if ye can persuade my maister to marry Sir Gideon's dochter, an' thereby save baith his life an' mine."

But she fell upon the neck of her son, and seemed not to hear the words which Simon addressed to her.

"O my son! my son!" she cried; "since there is no other way by which yer life can be ransomed, yield to the demand o' the fierce Murray. Marry his daughter an' live—save yer wretched mother's life; for yer death, Willie, wad be mine also."

"Mother!" answered he, vehemently, "I will never accept life upon such terms. I am in Murray's hands, but the day may come—yea, see ye that it does come—when he shall fall into the hands o' the Scotts o' Harden; an' see ye that ye do to him as he shall have done to me. But, tell me, mother, hoo are ye here? Wherefore did ye venture, or hoo got ye permission to see me? Ken ye not

that if he found ye in his power, upon your life also he wad fix a ransom?"

"The kind lassie," she replied, "that brought the letter from ye, at my request conducted me here, and contrived to get me permission to see ye; an' she says that my visit shall not come to the knowledge o' Sir Gideon. But, O Willie! as ye love an' respect the mother that bore ye, an' that nursed ye nicht an' day at her bosom, dinna throw awa yer life when it is in yer power to save it, but marry Miss Murray, an' ye may live, an' so may I, to see many happy days; for, from a' that I hae heard, though not weel-favoured, she is a young lady o' an excellent disposition!"

"Oh! that's richt, my leddy," interrupted Simon; "urge him to marry her, for it would be a dreadfu' thing for him an' I to be gibbeted, as a pair o' perpetual spectacles for the Murrays to mak a jest o'. Ye ken if he does marry, an' if he finds he doesna like her, he can leave her; or he needna live wi' her; or, perhaps, she may soon die; an' ye will certainly agree that marriage, ony way ye tak it, is to be desired, a thousand times ower, before a violent death. Therefore, urge him again, yer leddyship, for he may listen to what ye say, though he despises my words, an' will not hearken to my advice."

"Simon," said the laird, "never shall a Murray hae it in his power to boast that he struck terror into the breast o' a Scott o' Harden. My determination is fixed as fate. I shall welcome my doom, an' meet it as a man. Come, dear mother," he added, "weep not, nor cause me to appear in the presence o' my enemies with a blanched cheek. Hasten to avenge my death, an' think that in yer revenge yer son lives again. Come, though I die, there will be moonlight again."

She hung upon his breast and wept, but he turned away his head and refused to listen to her entrea-

ties. The young maiden again entered the prison, and said—

“Ye must part noo, for in a few minutes Sir Gideon will be astir, an’ should he find yer leddyship here, or discover that I hae brought ye, I wad hae sma’ power to gie ye protection.”

“Fareweel, dear mother!—fareweel!” exclaimed the youth, grasping her hand.

“O Willie! Willie!” she cried, “did I bear ye to see ye come to an end like this! Bairn! bairn! live—for yer mother’s sake, live!”

“Fareweel, mother!—fareweel!” he again cried, and the sentinel conducted her from the apartment.

It again drew towards noon. The loud gong again sounded, and Simon sank upon his knees in despair, as the voice of the warder was heard crying—“It is the hour! prepare the prisoners for execution!”

Again the prison-door was opened, and Sir Gideon, with wrath upon his brow, stood before them.

“Weel, youngster,” said he, addressing the laird, “yer hour is come. What is yer choice—a wife or the wuddy?”

“Lead me to execution, ye auld knave,” answered the laird, scornfully; “an’ ken, that wi’ the hemp around my neck, in contempt o’ you an’ yours, I will spit upon the ground where ye tread.”

“Here, guards!” cried Sir Gideon; “lead forth William Scott o’ Harden to execution. Strap him upon the nearest tree, an’ there let him hang until the bauldest Scott upon the Borders dare to cut him down. As for you,” added he, addressing Simon, “I seek not your life; depart, ye are free; but beware hoo ye again fall into the hands o’ Gideon Murray.”

“No, sir!” exclaimed Simon, “though I am free to acknowledge that I hae nae ambition to die before it is the

wise will an' purpose o' nature, yet I winna, I canna leave my dear young maister; an' if he be to suffer, I will share his fate. Only, Sir Gideon, there is ae thing I hae to say, an' that is, that he is young, an' he is proud an' stubborn, like yersel', an' though he will not, o' his ain free will an' accord, nor in obedience to yer commandments, marry yer dochter—is it not possible to compel him, whether he be willing or no, an' so save his life, as it were, in spite o' him?"

"Away with both!" cried the knight, striking his ironed heel upon the ground, and leaving the apartment.

"Then, if it is to be, it must be," said Simon, folding his arms in resignation, "an' there is no help for it! But, oh, maister! maister! ye hae acted foolishly."

They were led from the prison-house, and through the court-yard, towards a tall elm-tree, round which all the retainers of Sir Gideon were assembled to witness the execution; and the old knight took his place upon an elevated seat in the midst of them.

The executioners were preparing to perform their office, when Agnes, or Muckle-mouthed Meg, as she was called, came forth, with a deep veil thrown over her face, and sinking on her knee before the old knight, said, imploringly—"A boon, dear faither—yer dochter begs a simple boon."

"Ye tak an ill season to ask it, Meg," said the knight, angrily; "but what may it be?"

She whispered to him earnestly for a few minutes, during which his countenance exhibited indignation and surprise; and when she had finished speaking, she again knelt before him and embraced his knees.

"Rise, Meg, rise!" said he, impatiently, "for yer sake, an' at yer request, he shall hae another chance to live." And, approaching the prisoner, he added—"William Scott, ye hae chosen death in preference to the hand o'

my dochter. Will ye noo prefer to die rather than marry the lassie that ran wi' the letter to yer mother, an' without my consent brought her to see ye?"

"Had another asked me the question," said the laird, "though I ken not who she is, yet she has a kind heart, and I should hae said 'No,' an' offered her my hand, heart, an' fortune; but to you, Sir Gideon, I only say—do yer worst."

"Then, Willie, my ain Willie!" cried his mother, who at that moment rushed forward, "another does request ye to marry her, an' that is yer ain mother!"

"An'," said Agnes, stepping forward, and throwing aside the veil that covered her face, "puir Meg, ower whom ye gied a preference to the gallows, also requests ye!"

"What!" exclaimed the young laird, grasping her hand, "is the kind lassie that has striven, night and day, to save me—the very Meg that I hae been treating wi' disdain?"

"In troth am I," she replied, "an' do ye prefer the wuddy still?"

"No," answered he; and, turning to Sir Gideon, he added—"Sir, I am now willing that the ceremony end in matrimony."

"Be it so," said the old knight, and the spectators burst into a shout.

The day that began with preparations for death ended in a joyful bridal. The honour of knighthood was afterwards conferred upon the laird; and Meg bore unto him many sons and daughters, and was, as the reader will be ready to believe, one of the best wives in Scotland; while Simon declared that he never saw a better-looking woman in Ettrick Forest, his own wife and daughters not excepted.

LORD DURIE AND CHRISTIE'S WILL.

Who can journey, now-a-days, along the high parts of Selkirkshire, and hear the mire-snipe whistle in the morass, proclaiming itself, in the silence around, the unmolested occupant of the waste, or descend into the green valley, and see the lazy shepherd lying folded up in his plaid, while his flocks graze in peace around him and in the distance, and not think of the bold spirits that, in the times of Border warfare, sounded the war-horn till it rang in reverberating echoes from hill to hill? The land of the Armstrongs knows no longer their kindred. The hills, ravines, mosses, and muirs, that, only a few centuries ago, were animated by the boldest spirits that ever sounded a war-cry, and defended to the death by men whose swords were their only charters of right, have passed into other hands, and the names of the warlike holders serve now only to give a grim charm to a Border ballad. An extraordinary lesson may be read on the banks of the Liddel and the Esk—there is a strange eloquence in the silence of these quiet dales. Stand for a while among the graves of the chief of Gilnockie and his fifty followers, in the lonely churchyard of Carlenrig—cast a contemplative eye on the roofless tower of that brave riever, then glance at the gorgeous policies of Bowhill, and resist, if you can, the deep sigh that rises as a tribute to the memories of men who, having, by their sleepless spirits, kept a kingdom in commotion, died on the gallows, and left no generation to claim their lands from those who, with less bravery and no better sense of right, had the subtle policy to rise on their ruins. Poorly, indeed, now sound the names of Johnny Armstrong, Sim of Whittram, Sim of the Cathill, Kinmont Willie, or Christie's

Will, besides those of Dukes of Buccleuch and Roxburgh, Scott of Harden, and Elliot of Stobbs and Wells; and yet, without wishing to take away the *merit* or the *extent* of their ancestors' own "reif and felonie," how much do they owe to their succession to the ill-got gear of those hardy Borderers whose names and scarcely credible achievements are all that have escaped the rapacity that, not satisfied with their lands, took also their lives! For smaller deprivations, the old laws of the Border—and it would not be fair to exclude those of the present day, not confined to that locality—awarded a halter; for thefts of a larger kind, they gave a title. Old Wat of Buccleuch deserved the honour of "the neck garter" just as much as poor Johnny Armstrong; yet all he got was a reproof and a dukedom.

"Then up and spake the noble king—
 And an angry man, I trow, was he—
 'It ill becomes ye, bauld Bucclew,
 To talk o' reif or felonie;
 For, if every man had his ain cow,
 A right pair clan yer name would be.'"

There is a change now. The bones of the bold Armstrongs lie in Carlenrig, and the descendants of their brother-rivers who got their lands sit in high places, and speak words of legislative command. But these things will be as they have ever been. We cannot change the world, far less remake it; but we can resuscitate a part of its moral wonders; and, while the property of Christie's Will, the last of the bold Armstrongs, is now possessed by another family, under a written title, we will do well to commit to record a part of his fame.

It is well known that the chief of the family of Armstrongs had his residence* at Mangerton in Liddesdale.

* In a MS. we have seen, as old as the end of the 15th century, "the Laird of Mangerton" is placed at the head of the Liddesdale chiefs—Harden, Buccleuch, and others coming after him in respectful order.

There is scarcely now any trace of his tower, though time has not exerted so cruel a hand against his brother Johnny Armstrong's residence, which lies in the Hollows near Langholme. We know no tumult of the emotions of what may be called antiquarian sentiment, so engrossing and curious as that produced by the headless skeleton of "auld Gilnockie's Tower," as it is seen in the grey gloaming, with a breeze brattling through its dry ribs, and a stray owl sitting on the top, and sending his eldritch screech through the deserted hollows. The mind becomes busy on the instant with the former scenes of festivity, when "their stolen gear," "baith nolt and sheep," and "flesh, and bread, and ale," as Maitland says, were eaten and drunk with the *kitchen* of a Cheviot hunger, and the sweetness of stolen things; and when the wild spirit of the daring outlaws, with Johnny at their head, made the old tower of the Armstrongs ring with their wassail shouts. This Border turret came—after the execution of Johnny Armstrong, and when the clan had become what was called a broken clan—into the possession of William Armstrong, who figured in the times of Charles I. He was called Christie's Will, though from what reason does not now seem very clear; neither is it at all evident why, after the execution of his forbear, Johnny, and his fifty followers, at Carlenrig, the Tower of Gilnockie was not forfeited to the crown, and taken from the rebellious clan altogether; but, to be sure it was in those days more easy to take a man's life than his property, insomuch as the former needed no guard, while the other would have required a small standing army to keep it and the new proprietor together. Certain, however, it is, that Christie's Will did get possession of the Tower of Gilnockie, where, according to the practice of the family, he lived "on Scottish ground and English kye;" and, when the latter could not easily be had, on the poorer land of his neighbours of Scotland.

This descendant of the Armstrongs was not unlike Johnny; and, indeed, it has been observed that throughout the whole branches of the family there was an extraordinary union of boldness and humour—two qualities which have more connection than may, at first view, be apparent. Law-breakers, among themselves, are seldom serious; a lightness of heart and a turn for wit being necessary for the sustenance of their outlawed spirits, as well as for a quaint justification—resorted to by all the tribe—of their calling, against the laws of the land. In the possession of these qualities, Will was not behind the most illustrious of his race; but he, perhaps, excelled them all in the art of “*conveying*”—a polite term then used for that change of ownership which the affected laws of the time denominated *theft*. This art was not confined to cattle or plenishing, though

“They left not spindell, spoone, nor speit,
 Bed, boster, blanket, sark, nor sheet:
 John of the Park ryps kist and ark—
 To all sic wark he is sae meet.”*

It extended to abduction, and this was far seldomer exercised on damsels than on men, who would be well ransomed, especially of those classes, duke, earl, or baron, any of whom Johnny offered (for his life) to bring, “within a certain day, to his Majesty James V., either quick or dead.” This latter part of their art was the highest to which the Borderers aspired; and there never was a riever among them all that excelled in it so much as Christie’s Will. “To steal a stirk, or wear a score o’ sheep *hamewards*,” he used to say, “was naething; but to steal a *lord* was the highest flicht o’ a man’s genius, and ought never to be lippeden to a hand less than an Armstrong’s;” and, certainly, if the success with which he executed one

* See Maitland’s curious satire on the Border robberies.—Ed.

scheme of that high kind will guarantee Will's boasted abilities, he did not transcend the truth in limiting lord-stealing to the Armstrongs.

Will married a distant relation of the true Border breed, named Margaret Elliot—a lass whose ideas of hussyskep were so peculiar, that she thought Gilnockie and its laird were going to ruin when she saw in the kail-pot a "heugh bane" of their *own* cattle, a symptom of waste, extravagance, and laziness, on the part of her husband, that boded less good than the offer made by "the Laird's Jock," (Johnny Armstrong's henchman,) to give "Dick o' the Cow" a piece of his own ox, which he came to ask reparation for, and, not having got it, tied with St. Mary's knot (hamstringed) thirty good horses. To this good housewife, in fact, might be traced, if antiquaries would renounce for it less important investigations, the old saying, that stolen joys (qu. queys?) are sweetest, undoubtedly a Border aphorism, and now received into the society of legitimate moral sayings. When lazy and not inclined for "felonie," Will would not subscribe to the truth of the dictum, and often got for grace to the dinner he had not taken from the English, and yet relished, the wish of the good dame, that, for his want of spirit, it might choke him. That effect, however, was more likely to be produced by the beef got in the regular Border way; for the laws were beginning now to be more vigorously executed, and many a riever was astonished and offended by the proceedings of the Justice-Ayr at Jedburgh, where they were actually going the length of *hanging* for the crime of *conveying* cattle from one property to another.

It was in vain that Will told his wife these proceedings of the Jedburgh court; she knew very well that many of the Armstrongs, and the famous Johnny among the rest, had been strung up, by the command of their king, for rebellion against his authority; but it was out of all ques-

tion, beyond the reach of common sense, and, indeed, utterly barbarous and unjust to hang a man, as Gilderoy's lover said, "for gear," a thing that never yet was known to be stationary, but, even from the times of the Old Testament, given to taking to itself wings and flying away. It was, besides, against the oldest constitution of things, the old possessors being the *Tories*, who acted upon the comely principle already alluded to, that right was might—the new lairds, again, being the *Whigs*, who wished to take from the *Tories* (the freebooters) the good old law of nature and possession, and regulate property by the mere conceits of men's brains. To some such purpose did Margaret argue against Will's allusions to the doings at Jedburgh; but, secretly, Will cared no more for the threat of a rope, than he did for the empty bravado of a neighbour whom he had eased of a score of cattle. He merely brought in the doings of the Justice-Ayr at Jedburgh, to screen his fits of laziness; those states of the mind common to rieurs, thieves, writers, and poets, and generally all people who live upon their wits, which at times incapacitate them for using sword or pen for their honest livelihood. But all Margaret's arguments and Will's courage were on one occasion overturned, by the riever's apprehension for stealing a cow, belonging to a farmer at Stobbs, of the name of Grant. He was carried to Jedburgh jail, and indicted to stand his trial before the Lord Justice-General at the next circuit. There was a determination, on the part of the crown authorities, to make an example of the most inveterate riever of the time, and Will stood a very fair chance of being hanged.

The apprehension of Will Armstrong made a great noise throughout all Liddesdale, producing, to the class of victims, joy, and to the class of spoilers, great dismay; but none wondered more at the impertinence and presumption of the government authorities in attempting thus to dislo-

cate the old Tory principle of "might makes right," than Margaret Elliot; who, as she sat in her turret of Gilnockie, alternately wept and cursed for the fate of her "winsome Will," and, no doubt, there was in the projected condemnation and execution of a man six feet five inches high, with a face like an Adonis, shoulders like a Milo, the speed of Mercury, the boldness of a lion, and more than the generosity of that noble animal, for the crime of stealing a stirk, something that was very apt to rouse, even in those who loved him not so well as did Margaret, feelings of sympathy for his fate, and indignation against his oppressors. There was no keeping, as the artists say, in the picture, no proper causality in a stolen cow, for the production of such an effect as a hanged Phaon or strangled Hercules; and though we have used some classic names to grace our idea, the very same thought, at least as good a one, though perhaps not so gaudily clothed, occupied the mind of Margaret Elliot. She sobbed and cried bitterly, till the Gilnockie ravens and owls, kindred spirits, were terrified from the riever's tower.

"What is this o't?" she exclaimed, in the midst of her tears. "Shall Christie's Will, the bravest man o' the Borders, be hanged because a cow, that kenned nae better, followed him frae Stobbs to the Hollows; and shall it be said that Margaret Elliot was the death o' her braw riever? I had meat enough in Gilnockie larder that day I scorned him wi' his laziness, and forced him to do the deed that has brought him to Jedburgh jail. But I'll awa to the warden, James Stewart o' Traquair, and see if it be the king's high will that a man's life should be ta'en for a cow's."

Making good her resolution, Margaret threw her plaid about her shoulders, and hied her away to Traquair House, the same that still stands on the margin of the Tweed, and raises its high white walls, perforated by numerous Flemish-

shaped windows, among the dark woods of Traquair. When she came to the front of the house, and saw the two stone figures stationed at the old gate, she paused and wondered at the weakness and effeminacy of the Lord High Steward in endeavouring to defend his castle by fearful representations of animals.

"My faith," muttered she to herself, as she approached to request entrance, "the warden was right in no makin' choice o' the figure o' a *quey* to defend his castle." And she could scarcely resist a chuckle in the midst of her tears, at her reference to the cause of her visit.

"Is my Lord Steward at hame?" said she to the servant who answered her call.

"Yes," answered the man; "who is it that wishes to see him?"

"The mistress o' Gilnockie," rejoined Margaret, "has come to seek a guid word for Christie's Will, who now lies in Jedburgh jail for stealing a tether, and I fear may hang for't."

The servant heard this extraordinary message as servants who presume to judge of the sense of their messages ever do, with critical attention, and, after serious consideration, declared that he could not deliver such a message to his lord.

"I dinna want ye to deliver my message, man," said Margaret. "I merely wished to be polite to ye, and show ye a little attention. God be thankit, the mistress o' Gilnockie can deliver her ain errand."

And, pushing the waiting man aside by a sudden jerk of her brawnie arm, she proceeded calmly forward to a door, which she intended to open; but the servant was at her heels, and, laying hold of her plaid, was in the act of hauling her back, when the Warden himself came out, and asked the cause of the affray.

"Is the house yours, my Lord, or this man's?" said

Margaret. "Take my advice, my Lord," (whispering in his ear,) "turn him aff—he's a traitor; would you believe it, my Lord, that, though placed there for the purpose o' lettin' folk into yer Lordship, he actually—ay, as sure as death—tried to keep me oot! Can ye deny it, sir? Look i' my face, and deny it if ye daur!"

The man smiled, and his Lordship laughed; and Margaret wondered at the easy good-nature of a Lord in forgiving such a heinous offence on the part of a servitor.

"If ye're as kind to me as ye are to that rebel," continued Margaret, as she followed his Lordship into his sitting chamber, "Christie's Will winna hang yet."

"What mean you, good woman?" said the Warden. "What is it that you want?"

"As if your Lordship didna ken," answered Margaret, with a knowing look. "Is it likely that a Liddesdale woman frae the Hollows, should ca' upon the great Warden for aught short o' the life and safety o' the man wha's in Jedburgh jail?" (Another Scotch wink.)

"I am still at a loss, good woman," said the Warden.

"At a loss!" rejoined Margaret. "What! doesna a' the Forest,* and Teviotdale and Tweeddale to boot, ken that Christie's Will is in Jedburgh jail?"

"I know, I know, good dame," replied the Warden, "that that brave riever is in prison; but I thought his crime was the stealing of a cow, and not a tether, as I heard you say to my servant."

"Weel, weel—the cow may have been at the end o' the tether," replied Margaret.

"She is a wise woman who concealeth the *extremity* of her husband's crime," replied Lord Traquair, with a smile, "But what wouldst thou have me to do?"

"Just to save Christie's Will frae the gallows, my Lord," answered Margaret. And, going up close to his Lordship,

* Selkirkshire.

and, whispering in his ear—"And sometimes a Lord needs a lift as weel as ither folk. If there's nae buck on Traquair when your Lordship has company at the castle, you hae only to gie Christie's Will a nod, and there will be nae want o' venison here for a month. There's no a stouthriever in a' Liddesdale, be he baron or bondsman, knight or knave, but Christie's Will will bring to you at your Lordship's bidding, and a week's biding; and if there's ony want o' a braw leddie," (speaking low,) "to keep the bonny house o' Traquair in order, an' she canna be got for a carlin keeper, a wink to Christie's Will will bring her here, unscathed by sun or wind, in suner time than a priest could tie the knot, or a lawyer loose it. Is sic a man a meet burden for a fir wuddy, my Lord?"

"By my faith, your husband hath good properties about him," replied Traquair. "There is not one in these parts that knoweth not Christie's Will; but I fear it is to that fame he oweth his danger. He is the last of the old Armstrongs; and there is a saying hereaway, that

'Comes Liddesdale's peace
When Armstrongs cease;'

and since, good dame, it would ill become the King's Warden to let slip the noose that is to catch peace and order for our march territories, yet Will is too noble a fellow for hanging. Go thy ways. I'll see him—I'll see him."

"Hech na, my Lord," answered Margaret; "I'll no budge frae this house till ye say ye'll save him this ance. I'll be caution and surety for him mysel,' that he'll never again dine in Gilnockie on another man's surloins. His clan has been lang a broken ane; but I am now the head o't, and it has aye been the practice in our country to make the head answer for the rest o' the body."

"Well, that is the practice of the hangman at Jedburgh," replied Traquair, laughing. "But go thy ways. Will

shall not hang yet. He hath a job to do for me. There's a 'lurdon' * of the north he must steal for me. I'll take thy bond."

"Gie me your hand then, my Lord," said the determined dame; "and the richest lurdon o' the land he'll bring to your Lordship, as surely as he ever took a Cumberland cow—whilk, as your Lordship kens, is nae rieving."

Traquair gave the good dame his hand, and she departed, wondering, as she went, what the Lord Warden was to do with a stolen lurdon. A young damsel might have been a fair prize for the handsome baron; but an "auld wife," as she muttered to herself, was the most extraordinary object of rieving she had ever heard of, amidst all the varieties of a Borderer's prey. Next day Traquair mounted his horse, and—

"Traquair has riden up Chaplehope,
An' sae has he doun by the Grey-Mare's-Tail;
He never stinted the light gallop,
Until he speered for Christie's Will."

Having arrived at Jedburgh, he repaired direct to the jail, where Margaret had been before him, to inform her husband that the great Lord Warden was to visit him, and get him released; but upon the condition of stealing away a lurdon in the north—a performance, the singularity of which was much greater than the apparent difficulty, unless, indeed, as Will said, she was a bedridden lurdon, in which case, it would be no easy matter to get her conveyed, as horses were the only carriers of stolen goods in those days. But the wonder why Traquair should wish to steal away an old woman had perplexed the wits of Will and his wife to such an extent, that they had recourse to

* It has been attempted to derive this word from "Lord," (paper lord); but we have no faith in the etymology; it was, however, often applied to the wigged and gowned judges, as being, in their appearance, more like women than men—for "lurdon," though applied to a male, is generally used for a lazy woman.—Ed.

the most extraordinary hypotheses; supposing at one time that she was some coy heiress of seventy summers, who had determined to be carried off after the form of young damsels in the times of chivalry; at another, that she was the parent of some lord, who could only be brought to concede something to the Warden by the force of the impledgment of his mother; and, again, that she was the duenna of an heiress, who could only be got through the confinement of the old hag. Be who she might, however, Christie's Will declared, upon the faith of the long shablas of Johnny Armstrong, that he would carry her off through fire and water, as sure as ever Kinmont Willie was carried a way by old Wat of Buccleuch from the Castle of Carlisle.

"Oh, was it war-wolf in the wood,
Or was it mermaid in the sea,
Or was it maid or lurdon auld,
He'd carry an' bring her bodilie."

Such was the heroic determination to which Christie's Will had come, when the jailor came and whispered in his ear, that the Lord Warden was in the passage on the way to see him. Starting to his feet, the riever was prepared to meet the baron, of whom he generally stood in so much awe in his old tower of Gilnockie, but who came to him now on a visit of peace.

"Thou'lt hang, Will, this time," said the Warden, with an affectation of gruffness, as he stepped forward. "It is not in the power of man to save ye!"

"Begging yer Lordship's pardon," replied Will, "I believe it, however, to be in the power o' a woman. The auld lurdon will be in Gilnockie tower at yer Lordship's ain time."

"And who is the 'auld lurdon?'" replied the Warden, trying to repress a laugh, which forced its way in spite of his efforts.

"Margaret couldna tell me that," said Will; "but many

a speculation we had on the question yer Lordship has now put to me. 'Wha can she be?' said Peggy; and 'Wha can she be?' replied I; but it's for yer Lordship to say wha she is, and for me to steal the auld limmer awa, as sure as ever I *conveyed* an auld milker frae the land o' the Nevills. I'm nae sooner free than she's a prisoner."

The familiarity with which Will spoke of the female personage thus destined to durance vile, produced another laugh on the part of the Warden, not altogether consistent, as Will thought, with the serious nature of the subject in hand.

"Where is she, my Lord?" continued Will; "in what fortress?—wha is her keeper?—whar will I tak her, and how long retain her a prisoner?"

"I fear, Will, she is beyond the power o' mortal," said his Lordship, in a serious voice; "but on condition of thy making a fair trial, I will make intercession for thy life, and take the chance of thy success. Much hangeth by the enterprise—ay, even all my barony of Coberston dependeth upon that 'hurdon' being retained three months in a quiet corner of Gràme's Tower. Thou knowest the place?"

"Ay, weel, weel," replied Will, who began to see the great importance of the enterprise, while his curiosity to know who the object was had considerably increased. "That tower has its 'redcap sly.' E'en Lord Soulis' Hermitage is no better guarded. Ance there, and awa wi' care, as we say o' Gilnockie as a rendezvous for *strayed* steers. But who is she, my Lord?"

"Thou hast thyself said she is a woman," replied the Warden, smiling, "and I correct thee not. Hast thou ever heard, Will, of fifteen old women—'hurdons,' as the good people call them—that reside in a large house in the Parliament close of Edinburgh?"

"Brawly, brawly," answered Will, with a particular

leer of fun and intelligence; "and weel may I ken the limmers—real lurdons, wi' lang gowns and curches. Ken them! Wha that has a character to lose, or a property to keep against the claims o' auld parchment, doesna ken thae fifteen auld runts? They keep the hail country side in a steer wi' their scandal. Nae man's character is safe in their keeping; and they're sae fu' o' mischief that they hae even blawn into the king's lug that my tower o' Gilnockie was escheat to the king by the death o' my ancestor, who was hanged at Carlenrig. They say a' the mischief that has come on the Borders sin' the guid auld times, has its beginning in that coterie o' weazened gimmers. Dootless, they're at the root o' the danger o' yer bonny barony o' Coberston. By the rood! I wish I had a dash at their big curches."

"Ay, Will," responded Traquair; "but they're securely lodged in their strong Parliament House, and the difficulty is how to get at them."

"But I fancy ane o' the lurdons will satisfy yer Lordship," said Will, "or do ye want them a' lodged in Græme's Tower? They would mak a bonny nest o' screighing hoolets, if we had them safely under the care o' the sly redcap o' that auld keep: they wad hatch something else than scandal, and leasin-makin, and reports o' the instability o' Border rights, the auld jauds."

"I will be content with one of them," rejoined the Warden.

"Ha! ha! I see, I see," replied Will. "Ane o' the limmers has been sapping and undermining Coberston wi' her hellish scandal. What's the lurdon's name, my Lord?"

"Gibson of Durie," rejoined Traquair.

"Ah! a weel-kenned scandalous runt that," replied Will. "She's the auldest o' the hail fifteen, if I'm no cheated—Leddie President o' the coterie. She spak sair

against me when the King's advocate claimed for his Majesty my auld turret o' Gilnockie. I owe that quean an auld score. How lang do you want her lodged in Græme's Tower?"

"Three months would maybe change her tongue," replied the Warden; "but the enterprise seems desperate, Will."

"Desperate! my Lord," replied the other—"that word's no kened on the Borders. Is it the doing o't, or the dool for the doing o't, that has the desperation in't?"

"The consequences to you would be great, Will," said Traquair. "You are confined here for stealing a cow, and would be hanged for it if I did not save ye. Our laws are equal and humane. For stealing a cow one may be hanged; but there's no such law against stealing a paper-lord."

"That shows the guid sense o' our lawgivers," replied Will, with a leer on his face. "The legislator has wisely weighed the merits o' the twa cratures; yet, were it no for your case, my Lord, I could wish the law reversed. I wad be in nae hurry stealing ane o' thae cummers, at least for my ain use; and, as for Peggy, she would rather see a cow at Gilnockie ony day."

"Weel, Will," said his Lordship, "I do not ask thee to steal for me old Leddie Gibson. I dare not. You understand me; but I am to save your life; and I tell thee that, if that big-wigged personage be not, within ten days, safely lodged in Græme's Tower, my lands of Coberston will find a new proprietor, and your benefactor will be made a lordly beggar."

"Fear not, my Lord," replied Will. "I'm nae suner out than she's in. She'll no say a word against Coberston for the next three months, I warrant ye. But, by my faith, it's as teuch a job as boilin' auld Soulis in the cauldron at the Skelfhill; and I hae nae black spae-book like

Thomas to help my spell. Yet, after a', my Lord, what spell is like the wit o' man, when he has courage to act up to't !”

The Warden acknowledged the truth of Will's heroic sentiment; and, having satisfied himself that the bold riever would perform his promise, he departed, and in two days afterwards the prisoner was liberated, and on his way to his residence at the Hollows. It was apparent, from Will's part of the dialogue, that he had some knowledge of the object the Lord Warden had in view in carrying off a Lord of Session from the middle of the capital; yet it is doubtful if he troubled himself with more than the fact of its being the wish of his benefactor that the learned judge should be for a time confined in Græme's Tower; and, conforming to a private hint of his Lordship before he departed from the jail, he kept up in his wife Margaret's mind the delusion that it was truly “an auld lurdon” whom he was to steal, as a condition for getting out of prison. On the morning after his arrival at Gilnockie, Will held a consultation with two tried friends, whose assistance he required in this most extraordinary of all the rieving expeditions he had ever yet been engaged in; and the result of their long sederunt was, that, within two hours after, the three were mounted on as many prancing Galloways, and with a fourth led by a bridle, and carrying their provisions, a large cloak, and some other articles. They took the least frequented road to the metropolis of Scotland. Having arrived there, they put up their horses at a small hostelry in the Grassmarket; and, next day, Will, leaving his friends at the inn, repaired to that seat of the law and learning of Scotland, where the “hail fifteen” sat in grim array, munching, with their toothless jaws, the thousand scraps of Latin law-maxims (borrowed from the Roman and feudal systems) which then ruled the principles of judicial proceedings in Scotland.

Planting himself in one of the litigants' benches—a line of seats in front of the semicircle where the fifteen Lords sat—the Liddesdale riever took a careful survey of all the wonders of that old laboratory of law. The first objects that attracted his attention, were, of course, the imposing semicircular line of judges, no fewer than fifteen (almost sufficient for a small standing army for puny Scotland in those days), who, wigged and robed, sat and nodded and grinned, and munched their chops in each other's faces, with a most extraordinary regularity of mummery, which yielded great amusement to the stalworth riever of the Borders. Their appearance in the long gowns, with sleeves down to the hands, wigs whose lappets fell on their breasts, displaying many a line of crucified curl, and white cambric cravats falling from below their gaucy double-chins on their bosoms, suggested at once the appellation of lurdons, often applied to them in those days, and now vivid in the fancy of the staring Borderer, whose wild and lawless life was so strangely contrasted with that of the drowsy, effeminate-looking individuals who sat before him. He understood very little of their movements, which had all the regularity and ceremony of a raree-show. One individual (the macer) cried out, at intervals, with a cracked voice, some words he could not understand; but the moment the sound had rung through the raftered hall, another species of wigged and robed individuals (advocates) came forward, and spoke a strange mixture of English and Latin, which Will could not follow; and, when they had finished, the whole fifteen looked at each other, and then began, one after another, but often two or three at a time, to speak, and nod, and shake their wigs, as if they had been set agoing by some winding-up process on the part of the advocates. Not one word of all this did Will understand; and, indeed, he cared nothing for such mummery, but ever and anon fixed his keen eye

on the face of the middle senator, with an expression that certainly never could have conveyed the intelligence that that rough country-looking individual meditated such a thing as an abduction of the huge incorporation of law that sat there in so much state and solidity.

"Ha! ha! my old lass," said Will to himself; "ye little ken that the Laird o' Gilnockie, whom ye tried to deprive of his birthright, sits afore ye; and will a' the lear 'neath that big wig tell ye that that same Laird o' Gilnockie sits here contriving a plan to run awa wi' ye? Faith, an' it's a bauld project; but the baulder the bonnier, as we say in Liddesdale. I only wish I could tak her wig and gown wi' her—for, if the lurdon were seen looking out o' Græme's Tower, wi' that lang lappet head-gear, there would be nae need o' watch or ward to keep her there."

Will had scarcely finished his monologue, when he heard the macer cry out, "Maxwell against Lord Traquair;" then came forward the advocates, and shook their wigs over the bar, and at length old Durie, the President, said, in words that did not escape Will's vigilant ear—

"This case, I believe, involves the right to the large barony of Coberston. Seven of my brethren, you are aware, have given their opinions in favour of the defendant, Lord Traquair, and seven have declared for the pursuer, Maxwell. My casting vote must, therefore, decide the case, and I have been very anxious to bring my mind to a conclusion on the subject, with as little delay as possible; but there are difficulties which I have not yet been able to surmount.")

"Ay, and there's a new ane here, sittin' afore ye," muttered Will, "maybe the warst o' them a'."

"I still require some new lights," continued the judge. "I have already, as the case proceeded, partially announced an opinion against Lord Traquair; but I wish confirmation before I pronounce a judgment that is to have the

effect of turning one out of possession of a large barony. I am sorry that my learned friends at the bar have not been able to relieve me of my scruples."

"Stupid fules," muttered Will; "but I'll relieve ye, my Lord Durie. It'll ne'er be said that a Lord o' Session stood in need o' relief, and a Border riever in the court, wha has a hundred times made the doubtin' stirk tak ae road (maybe Gilnockie-ways) in preference to anither."

The Traquair case being the last called that day, the court broke up, and the judges, followed still by the eye of Christie's Will, retired into the robing-room to take off their wigs and gowns. The Borderer now inquired, in a very simple manner, at a macer, at what door the judges came out of the court, as he was a countryman, and was curious to see their Lordships dressed in their usual everyday clothes. The request was complied with; and Will, as a stupid gazing man from the Highlands, who wished to get an inane curiosity gratified by what had nothing curious in it, was placed in a convenient place to see the Solomons pass forth on their way to their respective dwellings. They soon came; and Will's lynx eye caught, in a moment, the face of the President, whom, to his great satisfaction, he now found to be a thin, spare, portable individual, and very far from the unwieldy personage which his judge's dress made him appear to be when sitting on the bench—a reversing of the riever's thoughts, in reference to the spareness and fatness of his object of seizure, that brought a twinkle to his eye in spite of the serious task in which he was engaged. Forti went the President with great dignity, and Christie's Will behind him, dogging him with the keen scent of a sleuth-hound. To his house in the Canongate he slowly bent his steps, ruminating as he went, in all likelihood, upon the difficulties of the Traquair case, from which his followers were so anxious to relieve him. Will saw him ascend the steps

and enter, and his next object was to ascertain at what time he took his walk, and to what quarter of the suburbs he generally resorted; but on this point he could not get much satisfaction, the good judge being in his motions somewhat irregular, though (as Will learned) seldom a day passed without his having recourse to the country in some direction or other. Will, therefore, set a watch upon the house. Another of his friends held the horses at the foot of Leith Wynd, while he himself paced between the watchman and the top of the passage, so that he might have both ends of the line always in his eye. A concerted whistle was to regulate their movements.

The first day passed without a single glimpse being had of the grave senator, who was probably occupied in the consultation of legal authorities, little conscious of the care that was taken about his precious person by so important an individual as the far-famed Christie's Will of Gilnockie. On the second day, about three of the afternoon, and two hours after he had left the Parliament House, a whistle from Will's friend indicated that the grave judge was on the steps of his stair. Will recognised him in an instant, and, despatching his friend to him who held the horses at the foot of the Wynd, with instructions to keep behind him at a distance, he began to follow his victim slowly, and soon saw with delight that he was wending his senatorial steps down towards Leith. The unconscious judge seemed drowned in study: his eyes were fixed on the ground; his hands placed behind his back; and, ever and anon, he twirled a gold-headed cane that hung suspended by a silken string from one of his fingers. Will was certain that he was meditating the fall of Coberston, and the ruin of his benefactor, Traquair; and, as the thought rose in his mind, the fire of his eye burned brighter, and his resolution mounted higher and higher, till he could even have seized his prey in Leith lane, and carried him

off amidst the cries of the populace. But his opportunity was coming quicker than he supposed. To enable him to get deeper and deeper into his brown study, Durie was clearly bent upon avoiding the common road where passengers put to flight his ideas; and, turning to the right, went up a narrow lane, and continued to saunter on till he came to that place commonly known by the name of the Figgate Whins. In that sequestered place, where scarcely an individual was seen to pass in an hour, the deep thinking of the cogitative senator might trench the soil of the law of prescription, turn up the principle which regulated tailzies under the second part of the act 1617, and bury Traquair's right to Coberston. No sound but the flutter of a bird, or the moan of the breaking waves of the Frith of Forth, could there interfere with his train of thought. Away he sauntered, ever turning his gold-headed cane, and driving his head farther and farther into the deep hole where, like the ancient philosopher, he expected to find truth. Sometimes he struck his foot against a stone, and started and looked up, as if awakened from a dream; but he was too intent on his study to take the pains to make a complete turn of his wise head, to see if there was any one behind him. During all this time, a regular course of signals was in progress among Will and his friends who were coming up behind him, the horses being kept far back, in case the sound of their hoofs might reach the ear of the day-dreamer. He had now reached the most retired and lonely part of the common, where, at that time, there stood a small clump of trees at a little distance from the whin-road that gave the place its singular name. His study still continued, for his head was still bent, and he looked neither to the right nor to the left. In a single instant, he was muffled up in a large cloak, a hood thrown over his face, and his hands firmly bound by a cord. The operation was that of a moment—finished

before the prisoner's astonishment had left him power to open his mouth. A whistle brought up the horses; he was placed on one of them with the same rapidity; a cord was passed round his loins and bound to the saddle; and, in a few minutes, the party was in rapid motion to get to the back part of the city.*

During all this extraordinary operation, not a single word passed between the three rievvers, to whom the proceeding was, in a great degree, perfectly familiar. Through the folds of the hood of the cloak in which the President's head was much more snugly lodged than it ever was in his senatorial wig, he contrived to send forth some muffled sounds, indicating, not unnaturally, a wish to know what was the meaning and object of so extraordinary a manœuvre. At that time, be it understood, the belief in the power of witches was general, and Durie himself had been accessory to the condemnation of many a wise woman who was committed to the flames; but though he had, to a great extent, emancipated his strong mind from the thralldom of the prevailing prejudice, the mode in which he was now seized—in broad day, in the midst of a legal study, without seeing a single individual (his head being covered first), and without hearing the sound of man's voice—would have been sufficient to bring him back to the general belief, and force the conviction that he was now in the hands of the agents of the Devil. It is, indeed, a fact (afterwards ascertained), that the learned judge did actually conceive that he was now in the power of those he had helped to persecute; and his fears—bringing up before him the burning tar-barrels, the paid prickers, the roaring crowds, and the expiring victim—completed the delusion, and bound up his energies, till he was speechless and motionless. There was,

* This famous abduction was reported by Lord Fountainhall. Every circumstance is literally true.—ED.

therefore, no cause of apprehension from the terror-struck prisoner himself; and, as the party scoured along, they told every inquiring passenger on the way (for they were obliged, in some places, to ask the road) that they were carrying an auld lurdon to Dumfries, to be burnt for exercising the power of her art on the innocent inhabitants of that district. It was, therefore, no uncommon thing for Durie to hear himself saluted by all the appellations generally applied to the poor persecuted class to which he was supposed to belong.

“ Ay, awa wi’ the auld limmer,” cried one, “ and see that the barrels are fresh frae Norraway, and weel-lined wi’ the bleezing tar.”

“ Be sure and prick her weel,” cried another; “ the foul witch may be fireproof. If she winna burn, boil her like Meg Davy at Smithfield, or Shirra Melville on the hill o’ Garvock.”

These cries coming on the ear of the astonished judge, did not altogether agree with his preconceived notions of being committed to the power of the Evil One; but they tended still farther to confuse him, and he even fancied at times that the vengeance of the populace, which thus rung in his ears, was in the act of being realized, and that he was actually to suffer the punishment he had so often awarded to others. Some expressions wrung from him by his fear, and overheard by the quick ear of Will, gave the latter a clue to the workings of his mind, and he did not fail to see how he might take advantage of it. As night began to fall, they had got far on their way towards Moffat, and, consequently, far out of danger of a pursuit and a rescue. Durie’s horse was pricked forward at a speed not inconsistent with his power of keeping the saddle. They stopped at no baiting place, but kept pushing forward, while the silence was still maintained, or, if it ever was broken, it was to introduce, by interlocutory

snatches of conversation, some reference to the doom which awaited the unhappy judge. The darkness in which he was muffled, the speed of his journey, the sounds and menaces that had met his ear, all co-operating with the original sensations produced by his mysterious seizure, continued to keep alive the terrors he at first felt, to overturn all the ordinary ideas and feelings of the living world, and to sink him deeper and deeper in the confusion that had overtaken his mind in the midst of his legal reverie at the Figgate Whins.

The cavalcade kept its course all next day, and, towards the evening, they approached Græme's Tower, a dark, melancholy-looking erection, situated on Dryfe Water, not very distant from the village of Moffat. In a deep cell of this old castle the President of the Court of Session was safely lodged, with no more light than was supplied by a small grating, and with a small supply of meat, only sufficient to allay at first the pangs of hunger. Will having thus executed his commission, sat down and wrote on a scrap of paper these expressive words—"The brock's in the pock!" and sent it with one of his friends to Traquair House. The moment the Earl read the scrawl, he knew that Will had performed his promise, and took a hearty laugh at the extraordinary scheme he had resorted to for gaining his plea. It was not yet, however, his time to commence his proceedings; but, in a short while after the imprisonment of the President, he set off for Edinburgh, which town he found in a state of wonder and ferment at the mysterious disappearance of the illustrious Durie. Every individual he met had something to say on the subject; but the prevailing opinion was, that the unhappy President had ventured upon that part of the sands near Leith where the incoming tide usually encloses, with great rapidity, large sand-banks, and often overwhelms helpless strangers who are unacquainted with the manner in which

the tide there flows. Numbers of people had exerted themselves in searching all the surrounding parts, and some had traversed the whole coast from Musselburgh to Cramond, in the expectation of finding the body upon the sea-shore. But all was in vain: no President was found; and a month of vain search and expectation having passed, the original opinion settled down into a conviction that he had been drowned. His wife, Lady Durie, after the first emotions of intense grief, went, with her whole family, into mourning; and young and old lamented the fate of one of the most learned judges and best men that ever sat on the judgment-seat of Scotland.

There was nothing now to prevent Traquair from reaping the fruits of his enterprise. He pressed hard for a judgment in his case; and pled that the fourteen judges having been equally divided, he was entitled to a decision in his favour as *defender*. This plea was not at that time sustained; but a new president having been appointed, who was favourable to his side of the question, the case was again to be brought before the court, and the Earl expected to carry his point, and reap all the benefit of Will's courage and ingenuity.

Meantime, the dead-alive President was closely confined in the old tower of Græme, and had never recovered from the feelings of superstition which held the sovereign power of his mind at the time of his confinement. He never saw the face of man, his food being handed into him by an unseen hand, through a small hole at the foot of the door. The small grating was not situated so as to yield him any prospect; and the only sounds that greeted his ears were the calls of the shepherds who tended their sheep in the neighbouring moor. Sometimes he heard men's voices calling out "Batty!" and anon a female crying "Maudge!" The former was the name of a shepherd's dog, and the latter was the name of the cat belonging to an old woman.

who occupied a small cottage adjoining to the tower. Both the names sounded strangely and ominously in the ears of the President, and sorely did he tax his wits as to what they implied. Every day he heard them, and every time he heard them he meditated more and more as to the species of beings they denominated. Still remaining in the belief that he was in the hands of evil powers, he imagined that these strange names, Batty and Maudge, were the earthly titles of the two demons that held the important authority of watching and tormenting the President of the Court of Session. He had heard these often, and suffered so much from their cruel tyranny, that he became nervous when the ominous sounds struck on his ear, and often (as he himself subsequently admitted) he adjured heaven, in his prayers, to take away Maudge and Batty, and torment him no longer by their infernal agency. "Relieve me, relieve me, from these conjunct and confident spirits, cruel Maudge and inexorable Batty," (he prayed,) "and any other punishment due to my crimes I will willingly bear." Exorcisms in abundance he applied to them, and used many fanciful tricks of demon-expelling agency to free him from their tyranny; but all to no purpose. The names still struck his ear in the silence of his cell, and kept alive the superstitious terror with which he was enslaved.

Traquair, meanwhile, pushed hard for a decision, and, at last, after a period of about three months, the famous cause was brought before the court, and the successor of the dead-alive President having given his vote for the defender, the wily Warden carried his point, and secured to him and his heirs, in time coming, the fine barony in dispute, which, for aught we know to the contrary, is in the family to this day.

It now remained for the actors in this strange drama to let free the unhappy Durie, and relieve him from the

power of his enemies. The Warden accordingly despatched a messenger to Christie's Will, with the laconic and emphatic demand—"Let the brock out o' the pock"—a return of Will's own humorous message, which he well understood. Will and his associates accordingly went about the important deliverance in a manner worthy of the dexterity by which the imprisonment had been effected. Having opened the door of his cell, they muffled him up in the same black cloak in which he was enveloped at the Figgate Whins, and leading him to the door, placed him on the back of a swift steed, while they mounted others, with a view to accompany him. Setting off at a swift pace, they made a circuit of the tower in which he had been confined, and continuing the same circuitous route round and round the castle for a period of two or three hours, they stopped at the very door of his cell from which they had started. They then set him down upon the ground, and again mounting their horses, took to their heels, and never halted till they arrived at Gilnockie.

On being left alone, Durie proceeded to undo the cords by which the cloak was fastened about his head; and, for the first time after three months, breathed the fresh air and saw the light of heaven. He had ridden, according to his own calculation, about twenty miles; and, looking round him, he saw alongside of him the tower of Gràme, an old castle he had seen many years before, and recollected as being famous in antiquarian reminiscence. The place he had been confined in must have been some castle twenty miles distant from Gràme's Tower—a circumstance that would lead him, he thought, to discover the place of his confinement, though he was free to confess that he was utterly ignorant of the direction in which he had travelled. Thankful for his deliverance, he fell on his knees, and poured out a long prayer of gratitude for being thus freed from his enemies, Batty and Maudge. The distance

he had travelled must have taken him far away from the regions of their influence—the most grateful of all the thoughts that now rose in his wondering mind. No more would these hated names strike his ear with terror and dismay, and no more would he feel the tyranny of their demoniac sway. As these thoughts were passing through his mind a sound struck his ear.

“Hey, Batty, lad!—far yaud, far yaud!” cried a voice by his side.

“God have mercy on me! here again,” ejaculated the president.

“Maudge, ye jaud!” cried another voice, from the door of a poor woman’s cottage.

The terrified president lifted his eyes, and saw a goodly shepherd, with a long staff in his hand, crying to his dog, Batty, to drive his sheep to a distance; and, a little beyond, a poor woman sat at her door, looking for her black cat, that sat on the roof of the cottage, and would not come down for all the energies of her squeaking voice.

“What could all this mean?” now ejaculated Durie. “Have I not been for three months tortured with these sounds, which I attributed to evil spirits? I have ridden from them twenty miles, and here they are again, in the form of fair honest denominations of living animals. I am in greater perplexity than ever. While I thought them evil spirits, I feared them as such; but now, God help me, they have taken on the forms of a dog and cat, and this shepherd and this old woman are kindred devils, under whose command they are. What shall I do, whither run to avoid them, since twenty miles have been to them as a flight in the air?”

“It’s a braw morning, sir,” said the shepherd. “How far hae ye come this past night?—for I ken nae habitation near whar ye may hae rested.”

"It's seldom we see strangers hereawa," said the old woman, "at this early hour—will ye come in, sir, and rest ye?"

Durie looked first at the one and then at the other, bewildered and speechless. The fair face of nature before him, with the forms of God's creatures, and the sounds of human voices in his ears, were as nothing to recollections and sensations which he could not shake from his mind. He had, for certain, heard these dreadful sounds for three months; he had ridden twenty miles, and now he heard them again, mixed up with the delusive accompaniments of the enticing speeches of a man and a woman. He would fly, but felt himself unable; and, standing under the influence of the charm of his own terrors, he continued to look, first at the shepherd and then at the old woman, in wonder and dismay. The people knew as little what to think of him as he did in regard to them. He looked wild and haggard, his eyes rolled about in his head, his voice was mute; and the cloak, which he had partially unloosed from his head, hung in strange guise down his back, and flapped in the wind. The old castle had its "red cap," a fact known to both the shepherd and the old woman, who had latterly heard strange sounds coming from it. Might not Durie be the spirit in another form? The question was reasonable, and was well answered by the wildly-staring president, who was still under the spell of his terrors.

"Avaunt ye!—avaunt! in the name o' the haly rude o' St. Andrews!" cried the woman, now roused to a state of terror.

The same words were repeated by the simple-minded shepherd, and poor Durie's fears were, if possible, increased; for it seemed that they were now performing some new incantation, whereby he would be again reduced to their power; but he was now in the open air, and why

not take advantage of the opportunity of escaping from their thralldom? The moment the idea started in his mind, he threw from him the accursed cloak, and flew away over the moor as fast as his decayed limbs, inspired by terror, would carry him. As he ran, he heard the old woman clapping her hands, and crying "Shoo, shoo!" as if she had been exorcising a winged demon. After running till he was fairly out of the sights and sounds that had produced in him so much terror, he sat down, and took a retrospect of what had occurred to him during the preceding three months; but he could come to no conclusion that could reconcile all the strange things he had experienced with any supposition based on natural powers. It was certain, however, that he was still upon the earth, and it was probable he was now beyond the power of his evil genius. His best plan, therefore, under all the circumstances, was to seek home, and Lady Durie and his loving family, who would doubtless be in a terrible condition on account of his long absence; and even this idea, pleasant as it was, was qualified by the fear that he might, for aught he knew, have been away, like the laird of Comrie, for many, perhaps a hundred years, and neither Lady Durie, nor friend or acquaintance, would be alive to greet him on his return. Of all this, however, he must now take his chance; and, rising and journeying forward, he came to a house, where he asked for some refreshment by way of charity; for he had nothing in the world to pay for what he required. He was fortunate in getting some relief from the kind woman to whom he had applied, and proceeded to speak to her on various topics with great sense and propriety, as became the ex-President of the Court of Session; but when, to satisfy his scruples, he asked her the day of the month, then the month of the year, and then the year of the Lord, the good woman was satisfied he was mad; and, with a look of pity, recom-

mended him to proceed on his way, and get home as fast as he could.

So on the president went, begging his way from hamlet to hamlet, getting alms from one and news from another, but never gratified with the year of the Lord in which he lived; for, when he put that question, he was uniformly pitied, and allowed to proceed on his way for a madman. He heard, however, several times that President Durie had been drowned in the Frith of Forth, and that a new President of the Court of Session had been appointed in his place. Whether his wife was married again or not, he could not learn, and was obliged to wrestle with this and other fears as he still continued his way to the metropolis. At last Edinburgh came in view, and glad was he to see again the cat's head of old St. Arthur's, and the diadem of St. Giles rearing their heights in the distance. Nearer and nearer he approached the place of his home, happiness, and dignity; but, as he came nearer still, he began to feel all the effects of his supposed demise. Several of his old acquaintances stared wildly at him as they passed, and, though he beckoned to them to stand and speak, they hurried on, and seemed either not to recognize him, or to be terrified at him. At last he met Lord F——, the judge who had sat for many years next to him on the bench; and, running up to him, he held out his hand in kindly salutation, grinning, with his long thin jaws and pallid cheeks, a greeting which he scarcely understood himself. By this time it was about the gloaming, and such was the extraordinary effect produced by his sudden appearance and changed cadaverous look, that his old brother of the bench got alarmed, and fairly took to his heels, as if he had seen a spectre. Undaunted, however, he pushed on, and by the time he reached the Canongate it was almost dark. He went direct to his own house, and peeping through the window, saw Lady Durie sitting by

the fire dressed in weeds, and several of his children around, arrayed in the same style. The sight brought the tears of joy to his eyes, and, forgetting entirely the effect his appearance would produce, he threw open the door, and rushed into the room. A loud scream from the throats of the lady and the children rang through the whole house, and brought up the servants, who screamed in their turn, and some of them fainted, while others ran away; and no one had any idea that the emaciated haggard being before them was other than the grim ghost of Lord President Durie, come from the other world to terrify the good people of this. The confusion, however, soon ceased; for Durie began to speak softly to them, and, taking his dear lady in his arms, pressed her to his bosom in a way that satisfied her that he was no ghost, but her own lord, who, by some mischance, had been spirited away by some bad angels. The children gradually recovered their confidence, and in a short time joy took the place of fear, and all the neighbourhood was filled with the news that Lord Durie had come alive again, and was in the living body in his own house. Shortly after the good lord sat down by the fire and got his supper, and, by the quantity he ate, satisfied his lady and family still more that he carried a good body, with as fair a capability of reception as he ever exhibited after a walk at the Figgate Whins. He told them all he had undergone since first he was carried away, not forgetting the two spirits, Batty and Maudge, that had tormented him so cruelly during the period of his enchantment. The lady and family stared with open mouths as they heard the dreadful recital; but a goodly potation of warm spiced wine drove off the vapours produced by the dismal story, and, by-and-by, Lord Durie and his wife retired to bed—the one weary and exhausted with his trials, and the other with her terrors and her joys.

RECOLLECTIONS OF BURNS.*

CHAPTER I.

“Wear we not graven on our hearts
The name of Robert Burns!”—*American Poet.*

THE degrees shorten as we proceed from the higher to the lower latitudes—the years seem to shorten in a much greater ratio as we pass onward through life. We are almost disposed to question whether the brief period of storms and foul weather that floats over us with such dream-like rapidity, and the transient season of flowers and sunshine that seems almost too short for enjoyment, be at all identical with the long summers and still longer winters of our boyhood, when day after day and week after week stretched away in dim perspective, till lost in the obscurity of an almost inconceivable distance. Young as I was, I had already passed the period of life when we wonder how it is that the years should be described as short and fleeting; and it seemed as if I had stood but yesterday beside the deathbed of the unfortunate Ferguson, though the flowers of four summers and the snows of four winters had now been shed over his grave.

My prospects in life had begun to brighten. I served in the capacity of mate in a large West India trader, the master of which, an elderly man of considerable wealth, was on the eve of quitting the sea; and the owners had already determined that I should succeed him in the charge. But fate had ordered it otherwise. Our seas

* Our author, Hugh Miller, never communicated to the Editor his authority for these “Recollections.” Probably it was of the same kind as that possessed by Lucian, Lord Lyttleton, and Walter Savage Lander; but whether so or not, we must at least be well satisfied that the parts of the conversation sustained by the principal interlocutor are true to the genius and character of Burns, and that however searching the thoughts or beautiful the sentiments, they do not transcend what might have been expected from the Bard himself.—Ed.

were infested at this period by American privateers—prime sailors, and strongly armed; and, when homeward bound from Jamaica with a valuable cargo, we were attacked and captured when within a day's sailing of Ireland, by one of the most formidable of the class. Vain as resistance might have been deemed—for the force of the American was altogether overpowering—and though our master, poor old man! and three of the crew, had fallen by the first broadside, we had yet stood stiffly by our guns, and were only overmastered when, after falling foul of the enemy, we were boarded by a party of thrice our strength and number. The Americans, irritated by our resistance, proved on this occasion no generous enemies; we were stripped and heavily ironed, and, two days after, were set ashore on the wild coast of Connaught, without a single change of dress, or a sixpence to bear us by the way.

I was sitting, on the following night, beside the turf fire of a hospitable Irish peasant, when a seafaring man, whom I had sailed with about two years before, entered the cabin. The meeting was equally unexpected on either side. My acquaintance was the master of a smuggling lugger then on the coast; and on acquainting him with the details of my disaster, and the state of destitution to which it had reduced me, he kindly proposed that I should accompany him on his voyage to the west coast of Scotland, for which he was then on the eve of sailing. "You will run some little risk," he said, "as the companion of a man who has now been thrice outlawed for firing on his Majesty's flag; but I know your proud heart will prefer the danger of bad company at its worst, to the alternative of begging your way home." He judged rightly. Before daybreak we had lost sight of land, and in four days more we could discern the precipitous shores of Carrick stretching in a dark line along the horizon, and the hills of the interior rising thin and blue behind, like a volume of

clouds. A considerable part of our cargo, which consisted mostly of tea and spirits, was consigned to an Ayr trader, who had several agents in the remote parish of Kirkoswald, which at this period afforded more facilities for carrying on the contraband trade than any other on the western coast of Scotland; and, in a rocky bay of the parish, we proposed unloading on the following night. It was necessary, however, that the several agents, who were yet ignorant of our arrival, should be prepared to meet with us; and, on volunteering my service for the purpose, I was landed near the ruins of the ancient castle of Turnberry, once the seat of Robert the Bruce.

I had accomplished my object; it was evening, and a party of countrymen were sauntering among the cliffs, waiting for nightfall and the appearance of the lugger. There are splendid caverns on the coast of Kirkoswald; and, to while away the time, I had descended to the shore by a broken and precipitous path, with a view of exploring what are termed the Caves of Colzean, by far the finest in this part of Scotland. The evening was of great beauty; the sea spread out from the cliffs to the far horizon, like the sea of gold and crystal described by the prophet; and its warm orange hues so harmonized with those of the sky, that, passing over the dimly-defined line of demarcation, the whole upper and nether expanse seemed but one glorious firmament, with the dark Ailsa, like a thunder-cloud, sleeping in the midst. The sun was hastening to his setting, and threw his strong red light on the wall of rock which, loftier and more imposing than the walls of even the mighty Babylon, stretched onward along the beach, headland after headland, till the last sank abruptly in the far distance, and only the wide ocean stretched beyond. I passed along the insulated piles of cliff that rise thick along the basis of the precipices—now in sunshine now in shadow—till I reached the opening of one of the largest

caves. The roof rose more than fifty feet over my head—a broad stream of light, that seemed redder and more fiery from the surrounding gloom, slanted inwards, and, as I paused in the opening, my shadow, lengthened and dark, fell athwart the floor—a slim and narrow bar of black—till lost in the gloom of the inner recess. There was a wild and uncommon beauty in the scene that powerfully affected the imagination; and I stood admiring it in that delicious dreamy mood in which one can forget all but the present enjoyment, when I was roused to a recollection of the business of the evening by the sound of a footfall echoing from within. It seemed approaching by a sort of cross passage in the rock, and, in a moment after, a young man, one of the country people whom I had left among the cliffs above, stood before me. He wore a broad Lowland bonnet, and his plain homely suit of coarse russet seemed to bespeak him a peasant of perhaps the poorest class; but, as he emerged from the gloom, and the red light fell full on his countenance, I saw an indescribable something in the expression that in an instant awakened my curiosity. He was rather above the middle size, of a frame the most muscular and compact I have almost ever seen, and there was a blended mixture of elasticity and firmness in his tread, that to one accustomed, as I had been, to estimate the physical capabilities of men, gave evidence of a union of immense personal strength with great activity. My first idea regarding the stranger—and I know not how it should have struck me—was that of a very powerful frame, animated by a double portion of vitality. The red light shone full on his face, and gave a ruddy tinge to the complexion, which I afterwards found it wanted—for he was naturally of a darker hue than common; but there was no mistaking the expression of the large flashing eyes, the features that seemed so thoroughly cast in the mould of thought, and of the broad, full, perpendicular forehead.

Such, at least, was the impression on my mind, that I addressed him with more of the courtesy which my earlier pursuits had rendered familiar to me, than of the bluntness of my adopted profession. "This sweet evening," I said, "is by far too fine for our lugger; I question whether, in these calms, we need expect her before midnight; but, 'tis well, since wait we must, that 'tis in a place where the hours may pass so agreeably." The stranger, good-humouredly, acquiesced in the remark, and we sat down together on the dry, water-worn pebbles, mixed with fragments of broken shells and minute pieces of wreck, that strewed the opening of the cave.

"Was there ever a lovelier evening!" he exclaimed; "the waters above the firmament seem all of a piece with the waters below. And never surely was there a scene of wilder beauty. Only look inwards, and see how the stream of red light seems bounded by the extreme darkness, like a river by its banks, and how the reflection of the ripple goes waving in golden curls along the roof!"

"I have been admiring the scene for the last half hour," I said; "Shakspeare speaks of a music that cannot be heard, and I have not yet seen a place where one might better learn to comment on the passage."

Both the thought and the phrase seemed new to him.

"A music that cannot be heard!" he repeated; and then, after a momentary pause, "you allude to the fact," he continued, "that sweet music, and forms such as these, of silent beauty and grandeur, awaken in the mind emotions of nearly the same class. There is something truly exquisite in the concert of to-night."

I muttered a simple assent.

"See," he continued, "how finely these insulated piles of rock, that rise in so many combinations of form along the beach, break and diversify the red light, and how the

glossy leaves of the ivy glisten in the hollows of the precipices above! And then, how the sea spreads away to the far horizon, a glorious pavement of crimson and gold! —and how the dark Ailsa rises in the midst, like the little cloud seen by the prophet! The mind seems to enlarge, the heart to expand, in the contemplation of so much of beauty and grandeur. The soul asserts its due supremacy. And, oh! 'tis surely well that we can escape from those little cares of life which fetter down our thoughts, our hopes, our wishes, to the wants and the enjoyments of our animal existence; and that, amid the grand and the sublime of nature, we may learn from the spirit within us that we are better than the beasts that perish!"

I looked up to the animated countenance and flashing eyes of my companion, and wondered what sort of a peasant it was I had met with. "Wild and beautiful as the scene is," I said, "you will find, even among those who arrogate to themselves the praise of wisdom and learning, men who regard such scenes as mere errors of nature. Burnet would have told you that a Dutch landscape, without hill, rock, or valley, must be the perfection of beauty, seeing that Paradise itself could have furnished nothing better."

"I hold Milton as higher authority on the subject," said my companion, "than all the philosophers who ever wrote. Beauty, in a tame unvaried flat, where a man would know his country only by the milestones! A very Dutch Paradise, truly!"

"But would not some of your companions above," I asked, "deem the scene as much an error of nature as Burnet himself? They could pass over these stubborn rocks neither plough nor harrow."

"True," he replied; "there is a species of small wisdom in the world that often constitutes the extremest of its folly; a wisdom that would change the entire nature of

good, had it but the power, by vainly endeavouring to render that good universal. It would convert the entire earth into one vast corn field, and then find that it had ruined the species by its improvement."

"We of Scotland can hardly be ruined in that way for an age to come," I said. "But I am not sure that I understand you. Alter the very nature of good in the attempt to render it universal! How?"

"I daresay you have seen a graduated scale," said my companion, "exhibiting the various powers of the different musical instruments, and observed how some of limited scope cross only a few of the divisions, and how others stretch nearly from side to side. 'Tis but a poor truism, perhaps, to say that similar differences in scope and power obtain among men—that there are minds who could not join in the concert of to-night—who could see neither beauty nor grandeur amid these wild cliffs and caverns, or in that glorious expanse of sea and sky; and that, on the other hand, there are minds so finely modulated—minds that sweep so broadly across the scale of nature, that there is no object, however minute, no breath of feeling, however faint, but that it awakens their sweet vibrations—the snow-flake falling in the stream, the daisy of the field, the conies of the rock, the hysop of the wall. Now, the vast and various frame of nature is adapted not to the lesser, but to the larger mind. It spreads on and around us in all its rich and magnificent variety, and finds the full portraiture of its Proteus-like beauty in the mirror of genius alone. Evident, however, as this may seem, we find a sort of levelling principle in the inferior order of minds, and which, in fact, constitutes one of their grand characteristics—a principle that would fain abridge the scale to their own narrow capabilities—that would cut down the vastness of nature to suit the littleness of their own conceptions and desires, and convert it into one tame, uniform,

méliocre good, which would be *good* but to themselves alone, and ultimately not even that."

"I think I can now understand you," I said; "you describe a sort of swinish wisdom that would convert the world into one vast sty. For my own part, I have travelled far enough to know the value of a blue hill, and would not willingly lose so much as one of these landmarks of our mother land, by which kindly hearts in distant countries love to remember it."

"I daresay we are getting fanciful," rejoined my companion; "but certainly, in man's schemes of improvement, both physical and moral, there is commonly a littleness and want of adaptation to the general good that almost always defeats his aims. He sees and understands but a minute portion—it is always some partial good he would introduce; and thus he but destroys the just proportions of a nicely-regulated system of things by exaggerating one of the parts. I passed of late through a richly-cultivated district of country, in which the agricultural improver had done his utmost. Never were there finer fields, more convenient steadings, crops of richer promise, a better regulated system of production. Corn and cattle had mightily improved; but what had man, the lord of the soil, become? Is not the body better than food, and life than raiment? If that decline for which all other things exist, it surely matters little that all these other things prosper. And here, though the corn, the cattle, the fields, the steadings had improved, man had sunk. There were but two classes in the district: a few cold-hearted speculators, who united what is worst in the character of the landed proprietor and the merchant—these were your gentleman farmers; and a class of degraded helots, little superior to the cattle they tended—these were your farm servants. And for two such extreme classes—necessary result of such a state of things—had this unfortunate,

though highly-eulogized district, parted with a moral, intelligent, high-minded peasantry—the true boast and true riches of their country.”

“I have, I think, observed something like what you describe,” I said.

“I give,” he replied, “but one instance of a thousand. But mark how the sun’s lower disk has just reached the line of the horizon, and how the long level rule of light stretches to the very innermost recess of the cave! It darkens as the orb sinks. And see how the gauze-like shadows creep on from the sea, film after film!—and now they have reached the ivy that mantles round the castle of The Bruce. Are you acquainted with Barbour?”

“Well,” I said; “a spirited, fine old fellow, who loved his country and did much for it. I could once repeat all his chosen passages. Do you remember how he describes King Robert’s rencounter with the English knight?”

My companion sat up erect, and, clenching his fist, began repeating the passage, with a power and animation that seemed to double its inherent energy and force.

“Glorious old Barbour!” ejaculated he, when he had finished the description; “many a heart has beat all the higher when the bale-fires were blazing, through the tutorage of thy noble verses! Blind Harry, too—what has not his country owed to him!”

“Ah, they have long since been banished from our popular literature,” I said; “and yet Blind Harry’s ‘Wallace,’ as Hailes tells us, was at one time the very Bible of the Scotch. But love of country seems to be getting old-fashioned among us, and we have become philosophic enough to set up for citizens of the world”

“All cold pretence,” rejoined my companion; “an effect of that small wisdom we have just been decrying. Cosmopolitism, as we are accustomed to define it, can be no virtue of the present age, nor yet of the next, nor

perhaps for centuries to come. Even when it shall have attained to its best, and when it may be most safely indulged in, it is according to the nature of man, that, instead of running counter to the love of country, it should exist as but a wider diffusion of the feeling, and form, as it were, a wider circle round it. It is absurdity itself to oppose the love of our country to that of our race."

"Do I rightly understand you?" I said. "You look forward to a time when the patriot may safely expand into the citizen of the world; but, in the present age, he would do well, you think, to confine his energies within the inner circle of country."

"Decidedly," he rejoined; "man should love his species at all times, but it is ill with him if, in times like the present, he loves not his country more. The spirit of war and aggression is yet abroad—there are laws to be established, rights to be defended, invaders to be repulsed, tyrants to be deposed. And who but the patriot is equal to these things? We are not yet done with the Bruces, the Wallaces, the Tells, the Washingtons—yes, the Washingtons, whether they fight for or against us—we are not yet done with them. The cosmopolite is but a puny abortion—a birth ere the natural time, that at once endangers the life and betrays the weakness of the country that bears him. Would that he were sleeping in his elements till his proper time! But we are getting ashamed of our country, of our language, our manners, our music, our literature; nor shall we have enough of the old spirit left us to assert our liberties or fight our battles. Oh, for some Barbour or Blind Harry of the present day, to make us, once more, proud of our country!"

I quoted the famous saying of Fletcher of Salton—"Allow me to make the songs of a country, and I will allow you to make its laws."

"But here," I said, "is our lugger stealing round Turn-

berry Head. We shall soon part, perhaps for ever, and I would fain know with whom I have spent an hour so agreeably, and have some name to remember him by. My own name is Matthew Lindsay; I am a native of Irvine."

"And I," said the young man, rising and cordially grasping the proffered hand, "am a native of Ayr; my name is Robert Burns."

CHAPTER II.

If friendless, low, we meet together,
Then, sir, your hand—my friend and brother!

Dedication to G. Hamilton.

A light breeze had risen as the sun sunk, and our lugger, with all her sails set, came sweeping along the shore. She had nearly gained the little bay in front of the cave, and the countrymen from above, to the number of perhaps twenty, had descended to the beach, when, all of a sudden, after a shrill whistle, and a brief half minute of commotion among the crew, she wore round and stood out to sea. I turned to the south, and saw a square-rigged vessel shooting out from behind one of the rocky headlands, and then bearing down in a long tack on the smuggler. "The sharks are upon us," said one of the countrymen, whose eyes had turned in the same direction—"we shall have no sport to-night." We stood lining the beach in anxious curiosity; the breeze freshened as the evening fell; and the lugger, as she lessened to our sight, went leaning against the foam in a long bright furrow, that, catching the last light of evening, shone like the milky way amid the blue. Occasionally we could see the flash, and hear the booming of a gun from the other vessel; but the night

fell thick and dark; the waves too began to lash against the rocks, drowning every feebler sound in a continuous roaring; and every trace of both the chase and the chaser disappeared. The party broke up, and I was left standing alone on the beach, a little nearer home, but in every other respect in quite the same circumstances as when landed by my American friends on the wild coast of Connaught. "Another of Fortune's freaks!" I ejaculated; "but 'tis well she can no longer surprise me."

A man stepped out in the darkness as I spoke, from beside one of the rocks; it was the peasant Burns, my acquaintance of the earlier part of the evening.

"I have waited, Mr. Lindsay," he said, "to see whether some of the country folks here, who have homes of their own to invite you to, might not have brought you along with them. But I am afraid you must just be content to pass the night with me. I can give you a share of my bed and my supper, though both, I am aware, need many apologies." I made a suitable acknowledgment, and we ascended the cliff together. "I live, when at home with my parents," said my companion, "in the inland parish of Tarbolton; but, for the last two months, I have attended school here, and lodge with an old widow woman in the village. To-morrow, as harvest is fast approaching, I return to my father."

"And I," I replied, "shall have the pleasure of accompanying you in at least the early part of your journey, on my way to Irvine, where my mother still lives."

We reached the village, and entered a little cottage, that presented its gable to the street, and its side to one of the narrower lanes.

"I must introduce you to my landlady," said my companion, "an excellent, kind-hearted old woman, with a fund of honest Scotch pride and shrewd good sense in her composition, and with the mother as strong in her heart as

ever, though she lost the last of her children more than twenty years ago."

We found the good woman sitting beside a small but very cheerful fire. The hearth was newly swept, and the floor newly sanded; and, directly fronting her, there was an empty chair, which seemed to have been drawn to its place in the expectation of some one to fill it.

"You are going to leave me, Robert, my bairn," said the woman, "an' I kenna how I sall ever get on without you; I have almost forgotten, sin you came to live with me, that I have neither children nor husband." On seeing me, she stopped short.

"An acquaintance," said my companion, "whom I have made bold to bring with me for the night; but you must not put yourself to any trouble, mother; he is, I daresay, as much accustomed to plain fare as myself. Only, however, we must get an additional pint of *yill* from the *clachan*; you know this is my last evening with you, and was to be a merry one at any rate." The woman looked me full in the face.

"Matthew Lindsay!" she exclaimed—"can you have forgotten your poor old aunt Margaret!" I grasped her hand.

"Dearest aunt, this is surely most unexpected! How could I have so much as dreamed you were within a hundred miles of me?" Mutual congratulation ensued.

"This," she said, turning to my companion, "is the nephew I have so often told you about, and so often wished to bring you acquainted with. He is, like yourself, a great reader and a great thinker, and there is no need that your proud, kindly heart should be jealous of him; for he has been ever quite as poor, and maybe the poorer of the two." After still more of greeting and congratulation, the young man rose.

"The night is dark, mother," he said, "and the road to

the clachan a rough one; besides you and your kinsman will have much to say to one another. I shall just slip out to the clachan for you; and you shall both tell me on my return whether I am not a prime judge of ale."

"The kindest heart, Matthew, that ever lived," said my relative, as he left the house; ever since he came to Kirkoswald, he has been both son and daughter to me, and I shall feel twice a widow when he goes away."

"I am mistaken, aunt," I said, "if he be not the strongest minded man I ever saw. Be assured he stands high among the aristocracy of nature, whatever may be thought of him in Kirkoswald. There is a robustness of intellect, joined to an overmastering force of character, about him, which I have never yet seen equalled, though I have been intimate with at least one very superior mind, and with hundreds of the class who pass for men of talent. I have been thinking ever since I met with him, of the William Tells and William Wallaces of history—men who, in those times of trouble which unfix the foundations of society, step out from their obscurity to rule the destiny of nations."

"I was ill about a month ago," said my relative—"so very ill that I thought I was to have done with the world altogether; and Robert was both nurse and physician to me—he kindled my fire, too, every morning, and sat up beside me sometimes for the greater part of the night. What wonder I should love him as my own child? Had your cousin Henry been spared to me, he would now have been much about Robert's age."

The conversation passed to other matters, and in about half an hour, my new friend entered the room; when we sat down to a homely, but cheerful repast.

"I have been engaged in argument, for the last twenty minutes, with our parish schoolmaster," he said—"a shrewd, sensible man, and a prime scholar, but one of the

most determined Calvinists I ever knew. Now, there is something, Mr. Lindsay, in abstract Calvinism, that dissatisfies and distresses me; and yet, I must confess, there is so much of good in the working of the system, that I would ill like to see it supplanted by any other. I am convinced, for instance, there is nothing so efficient in teaching the bulk of a people to think as a Calvinistic church."

"Ah, Robert," said my aunt, "it does meikle mair nor that. Look round ye, my bairn, an' see if there be a kirk in which pair sinful creatures have mair comfort in their sufferings or mair hope in their deaths."

"Dear mother," said my companion, "I like well enough to dispute with the schoolmaster, but I must have no dispute with you. I know the heart is everything in these matters, and yours is much wiser than mine."

"There is something in abstract Calvinism," he continued, "that distresses me. In almost all our researches we arrive at an ultimate barrier, which interposes its wall of darkness between us and the last grand truth, in the series which we had trusted was to prove a master-key to the whole. We dwell in a sort of Goshen—there is light in our immediate neighbourhood, and a more than Egyptian darkness all around; and as every Hebrew must have known that the hedge of cloud which he saw resting on the landscape, was a boundary not to things themselves, but merely to his view of things—for beyond there were cities, and plains, and oceans, and continents—so we in like manner must know that the barriers of which I speak exist only in relation to the faculties which we employ, not to the objects on which we employ them. And yet, notwithstanding this consciousness that we are necessarily and irremediably the bound prisoners of ignorance, and that all the great truths lie outside our prison, we can almost be content that, in most cases, it should be so—

not, however, with regard to those great unattainable truths which lie in the track of Calvinism. They seem too important to be wanted, and yet want them we must—and we beat our very heads against the cruel barrier which separates us from them.”

“I am afraid I hardly understand you,” I said;—“do assist me by some instance of illustration.”

“You are acquainted,” he replied, “with the Scripture doctrine of Predestination, and, in thinking over it, in connection with the destinies of man, it must have struck you that, however much it may interfere with our fixed notions of the goodness of Deity, it is thoroughly in accordance with the actual condition of our race. As far as we can know of ourselves and the things around us, there seems, through the will of Deity—for to what else can we refer it?—a fixed, invariable connection between what we term cause and effect. Nor do we demand of any class of mere effects, in the inanimate or irrational world, that they should regulate themselves otherwise than the causes which produce them have determined. The roe and the tiger pursue, unquestioned, the instincts of their several natures; the cork rises, and the stone sinks; and no one thinks of calling either to account for movements so opposite. But it is not so with the family of man; and yet our minds, our bodies, our circumstances, are but combinations of effects, over the causes of which we have no control. We did not choose a country for ourselves, nor yet a condition in life—nor did we determine our modicum of intellect, or our amount of passion—we did not impart its gravity to the weightier part of our nature, or give expansion to the lighter—nor are our instincts of our own planting. How, then, being thus as much the creatures of necessity as the denizens of the wild and forest—as thoroughly under the agency of fixed, unalterable causes, as the dead matter around us—why are

we yet the subjects of a retributive system, and accountable for all our actions?"

"You quarrel with Calvinism," I said; "and seem one of the most thorough-going necessitarians I ever knew."

"Not so," he replied; "though my judgment cannot disprove these conclusions, my heart cannot acquiesce in them—though I see that I am as certainly the subject of laws that exist and operate independent of my will, as the dead matter around me, I feel, with a certainty quite as great, that I am a free, accountable creature. It is according to the scope of my entire reason that I should deem myself bound—it is according to the constitution of my whole nature that I should feel myself free. And in this consists the great, the fearful problem—a problem which both reason and revelation propound; but the truths which can alone solve it, seem to lie beyond the horizon of darkness—and we vex ourselves in vain. 'Tis a sort of moral asymptotes; but its lines, instead of approaching through all space without meeting, seem receding through all space, and yet meet."

"Robert, my bairn," said my aunt, "I fear you are wasting your strength on these mysteries to your ain hurt. Did ye no see, in the last storm, when ye staid out among the caves till cock-crow, that the bigger and stronger the wave, the mair was it broken against the rocks?—it's just thus wi' the pride o' man's understanding, when he measures it against the dark things o' God. An' yet it's sae ordered, that the same wonderful truths which perplex and cast down the proud reason, should delight and comfort the humble heart. I am a lone, puir woman, Robert. Bairns an' husband have gone down to the grave, one by one; an' now, for twenty weary years, I have been childless an' a widow. But trow ye that the puir lone woman wanted a guard, an' a comforter, an' a provider, through a' the lang mirk nichts, an' a' the cauld scarce winters o'

these twenty years? No, my bairn—I kent that Himsel' was wi' me. I kent it by the provision He made, an' the care He took, an' the joy He gave. An' how, think you, did He comfort me maist? Just by the blessed assurance that a' my trials an' a' my sorrows were nae hasty chance matters, but dispensations for my guid, an' the guid o' those He took to Himsel', that, in the perfect love and wisdom o' His nature, He had ordained frae the beginning."

"Ah, mother," said my friend, after a pause, "you understand the doctrine far better than I do! There are, I find, no contradictions in the Calvinism of the heart."

CHAPTER III.

"Ayr, gurgling, kissed his pebbled shore,
 O'erhung with wild woods thick'ning green;
 The fragrant birch and hawthorn hoar
 Twined, amorous, round the raptured scene;

The flowers sprang wanton to be prest,
 The birds sang love on every spray—
 Till, too, too soon, the glowing west
 Proclaimed the speed of winged day."

To Mary in Heaven.

We were early on the road together; the day, though somewhat gloomy, was mild and pleasant, and we walked slowly onward, neither of us in the least disposed to hasten our parting by hastening our journey. We had discussed fifty different topics, and were prepared to enter on fifty more, when we reached the ancient burgh of Ayr, where our roads separated.

"I have taken an immense liking to you, Mr. Lindsay."

said my companion, as he seated himself on the parapet of the old bridge, "and have just bethought me of a scheme through which I may enjoy your company for at least one night more. The Ayr is a lovely river, and you tell me you have never explored it. We shall explore it together this evening for about ten miles, when we shall find ourselves at the farm-house of Lochlea. You may depend on a hearty welcome from my father, whom, by the way, I wish much to introduce to you, as a man worth your knowing; and, as I have set my heart on the scheme, you are surely too good-natured to disappoint me." Little risk of that, I thought; I had, in fact, become thoroughly enamoured of the warm-hearted benevolence and fascinating conversation of my companion, and acquiesced with the best goodwill in the world.

We had threaded the course of the river for several miles. It runs through a wild pastoral valley, roughened by thickets of copsewood, and bounded on either hand by a line of swelling, moory hills, with here and there a few irregular patches of corn, and here and there some little nest-like cottage peeping out from among the wood. The clouds, which during the morning had obscured the entire face of the heavens, were breaking up their array, and the sun was looking down, in twenty different places, through the openings, checkering the landscape with a fantastic, though lovely carpeting of light and shadow. Before us there rose a thick wood, on a jutting promontory, that looked blue and dark in the shade, as if it wore mourning; while the sunlit stream beyond shone through the trunks and branches, like a river of fire. At length the clouds seemed to have melted in the blue—for there was not a breath of wind to speed them away—and the sun, now hastening to the west, shone in unbroken effulgence over the wide extent of the dell, lighting up stream and wood, and field and cottage, in one continuous blaze

of glory. We had walked on in silence for the last half hour; but I could sometimes hear my companion muttering as he went; and when, in passing through a thicket of hawthorn and honeysuckle, we started from its perch a linnet that had been filling the air with its melody, I could hear him exclaim, in a subdued tone of voice, "Bonny, bonny birdie! why hasten frae me?—I wadna skaith a feather o' yer wing." He turned round to me, and I could see that his eyes were swimming in moisture.

"Can he be other," he said, "than a good and benevolent God, who gives us moments like these to enjoy? Oh, my friend, without these sabbaths of the soul, that come to refresh and invigorate it, it would dry up within us! How exquisite," he continued, "how entire the sympathy which exists between all that is good and fair in external nature, and all of good and fair that dwells in our own! And, oh, how the heart expands and lightens! The world is as a grave to it—a closely-covered grave—and it shrinks, and deadens, and contracts all its holier and more joyous feelings under the cold, earth-like pressure. But, amid the grand and lovely of nature—amid these forms and colours of richest beauty—there is a disinterment, a resurrection of sentiment; the pressure of our earthly part seems removed, and those *senses of the mind*, if I may so speak, which serve to connect our spirits with the invisible world around us, recover their proper tone, and perform their proper office."

"*Senses of the mind*," I said, repeating the phrase; "the idea is new to me; but I think I catch your meaning."

"Yes; there are—there must be such," he continued, with growing enthusiasm; "man is essentially a religious creature—a looker beyond the grave, from the very constitution of his mind; and the sceptic who denies it is untrue not merely to the Being who has made and who

preserves him, but to the entire scope and bent of his own nature besides. Wherever man is—whether he be a wanderer of the wild forest or still wilder desert, a dweller in some lone isle of the sea, or the tutored and full-minded denizen of some blessed land like our own—wherever man is, there is religion—hopes that look forward and upward—the belief in an unending existence, and a land of separate souls.”

I was carried away by the enthusiasm of my companion, and felt, for the time, as if my mind had become the mirror of his. There seems to obtain among men a species of moral gravitation, analogous, in its principles, to that which regulates and controls the movements of the planetary system. The larger and more ponderous any body, the greater its attractive force, and the more overpowering its influence over the lesser bodies which surround it. The earth we inhabit carries the moon along with it in its course, and is itself subject to the immensely more powerful influence of the sun. And it is thus with character. It is a law of our nature, as certainly as of the system we inhabit, that the inferior should yield to the superior, and the lesser owe its guidance to the greater. I had hitherto wandered on through life almost unconscious of the existence of this law, or, if occasionally rendered half aware of it, it was only through a feeling that some secret influence was operating favourably in my behalf on the common minds around me. I now felt, however, for the first time, that I had come in contact with a mind immeasurably more powerful than my own; my thoughts seemed to cast themselves into the very mould—my sentiments to modulate themselves by the very tone of his. And yet he was but a russet-clad peasant—my junior by at least eight years—who was returning from school to assist his father, an humble tacksman, in the labours of the approaching harvest. But the law of circumstance, so

arbitrary in ruling the destinies of common men, exerts but a feeble control over the children of genius. The prophet went forth commissioned by Heaven to anoint a king over Israel, and the choice fell on a shepherd boy who was tending his father's flocks in the field.

We had reached a lovely bend of the stream. There was a semicircular inflection in the steep bank, which waved over us, from base to summit, with hawthorn and hazle; and while one half looked blue and dark in the shade, the other was lighted up with gorgeous and fiery splendour by the sun, now fast sinking in the west. The effect seemed magical. A little grassy platform that stretched between the hanging wood and the stream, was whitened over with clothes, that looked like snow-wreathes in the hollow; and a young and beautiful girl watched beside them.

"Mary Campbell!" exclaimed my companion, and in a moment he was at her side, and had grasped both her hands in his. "How fortunate, how very fortunate I am!" he said; "I could not have so much as hoped to have seen you to-night, and yet here you are! This, Mr. Lindsay, is a loved friend of mine, whom I have known and valued for years; ever, indeed, since we herded our sheep together under the cover of one plaid. Dearest Mary, I have had sad forebodings regarding you for the whole last month I was in Kirkoswald, and yet, after all my foolish fears, here you are, ruddier and bonnier than ever."

She was, in truth, a beautiful, sylph-like young woman—one whom I would have looked at with complacency in any circumstances; for who that admires the fair and the lovely in nature—whether it be the wide-spread beauty of sky and earth, or beauty in its minuter modifications, as we see it in the flowers that spring up at our feet, or the butterfly that flutters over them—who, I say, that

admires the fair and lovely in nature, can be indifferent to the fairest and loveliest of all her productions? As the mistress, however, of by far the strongest-minded man I ever knew, there was more of scrutiny in my glance than usual, and I felt a deeper interest in her than mere beauty could have awakened. She was, perhaps, rather below than above the middle size; but formed in such admirable proportion, that it seemed out of place to think of size in reference to her at all. Who, in looking at the *Venus de Medicis*, asks whether she be tall or short? The bust and neck were so exquisitely moulded, that they reminded me of Burke's fanciful remark, viz., that our ideas of beauty originate in our love of the sex, and that we deem every object beautiful which is described by soft-waving lines, resembling those of the female neck and bosom. Her feet and arms, which were both bare, had a statue-like symmetry and marble-like whiteness; but it was on her expressive and lovely countenance, now lighted up by the glow of joyous feeling, that nature seemed to have exhausted her utmost skill. There was a fascinating mixture in the expression of superior intelligence and child-like simplicity; a soft, modest light dwelt in the blue eye; and in the entire contour and general form of the features, there was a nearer approach to that union of the straight and the rounded, which is found in its perfection in only the Grecian face, than is at all common in our northern latitudes, among the descendants of either the Celt or the Saxon. I felt, however, as I gazed, that when lovers meet, the presence of a third person, however much the friend of either, must always be less than agreeable.

"Mr. Burns," I said, "there is a beautiful eminence a few hundred yards to the right, from which I am desirous to overlook the windings of the stream. Do permit me to leave you for a short half hour, when I shall return; or, lest I weary you by my stay, 'twere better, perhaps, you

should join me there." My companion greeted the proposal with a good-humoured smile of intelligence; and, plunging into the wood, I left him with his Mary. The sun had just set as he joined me.

"Have you ever been in love, Mr. Lindsay?" he said.

"No, never seriously," I replied. "I am, perhaps, not naturally of the coolest temperament imaginable; but the same fortune that has improved my mind in some little degree, and given me high notions of the sex, has hitherto thrown me among only its less superior specimens. I am now in my eight-and-twentieth year, and I have not yet met with a woman whom I could love."

"Then you are yet a stranger," he rejoined, "to the greatest happiness of which our nature is capable. I have enjoyed more heartfelt pleasure in the company of the young woman I have just left, than from every other source that has been opened to me from my childhood till now. Love, my friend, is the fulfilling of the whole law."

"Mary Campbell, did you not call her?" I said. "She is, I think, the loveliest creature I have ever seen; and I am much mistaken in the expression of her beauty, if her mind be not as lovely as her person."

"It is, it is," he exclaimed—"the intelligence of an angel with the simplicity of a child. Oh, the delight of being thoroughly trusted, thoroughly beloved by one of the loveliest, best, purest-minded of all God's good creatures! To feel that heart beating against my own, and to know that it beats for me only! Never have I passed an evening with my Mary without returning to the world a better, gentler, wiser man. Love, my friend, is the fulfilling of the whole law. What are we without it?—poor, vile, selfish animals; our very virtues themselves, so exclusively virtues on our own behalf as to be well nigh as hateful as our vices. Nothing so opens and improves the

heart, nothing so widens the grasp of the affections, nothing half so effectually brings us out of our crust of self, as a happy, well-regulated love for a pure-minded, affectionate-hearted woman!"

"There is another kind of love, of which we sailors see somewhat," I said, "which is not so easily associated with good."

"Love!" he replied—"no, Mr. Lindsay, that is not the name. Kind associates with kind in all nature; and love—humanizing, heart-softening love—cannot be the companion of whatever is low, mean, worthless, degrading—the associate of ruthless dishonour, cunning, treachery, and violent death. Even independent of its amount of evil as a crime, or the evils still greater than itself which necessarily accompany it, there is nothing that so petrifies the feeling as illicit connection."

"Do you seriously think so?" I asked.

"Yes, and I see clearly how it should be so. Neither sex is complete of itself—each was made for the other, that, like the two halves of a hinge, they may become an entire whole when united. Only think of the scriptural phrase, *one flesh*—it is of itself a system of philosophy. Refinement and tenderness are of the woman, strength and dignity of the man. Only observe the effects of a thorough separation, whether originating in accident or caprice. You will find the stronger sex lost in the rudenesses of partial barbarism; the gentler wrapt up in some pitiful round of trivial and unmeaning occupation—dry-nursing puppies, or making pincushions for posterity. But how much more pitiful are the effects when they meet amiss—when the humanizing friend and companion of the man is converted into the light degraded toy of an idle hour; the object of a sordid appetite that lives but for a moment, and then expires in loathing and disgust! The better feelings are iced over at their source, chilled by the freez-

ing and deadening contact—where there is nothing to inspire confidence or solicit esteem; and, if these pass not through the first, the inner circle—that circle within which the social affections are formed, and from whence they emanate—how can they possibly flow through the circles which lie beyond? But here, Mr. Lindsay, is the farm of Lochlea, and yonder brown cottage, beside the three elms, is the dwelling of my parents.”

CHAPTER IV.

“From scenes like these old Scotia’s grandeur springs,
That makes her lov’d at home, revered abroad.”

Cotter’s Saturday Night.

There was a wide and cheerful circle this evening round the hospitable hearth of Lochlea. The father of my friend, a patriarchal-looking old man, with a countenance the most expressive I have almost ever seen, sat beside the wall, on a large oaken settle, which also served to accommodate a young man, an occasional visitor of the family, dressed in rather shabby black, whom I at once set down as a probationer of divinity. I had my own seat beside him. The brother of my friend (a lad cast in nearly the same mould of form and feature, except, perhaps, that his frame, though muscular and strongly set, seemed in the main less formidably robust, and his countenance, though expressive, less decidedly intellectual) sat at my side. My friend had drawn in his seat beside his mother, a well-formed, comely brunette, of about thirty-eight, whom I might almost have mistaken for his elder sister; and two or three younger members of the family were grouped behind her. The fire blazed cheerily within the wide and

open chimney; and, throwing its strong light on the faces and limbs of the circle, sent our shadows flickering across the rafters and the wall behind. The conversation was animated and rational, and every one contributed his share. But I was chiefly interested in the remarks of the old man, for whom I already felt a growing veneration, and in those of his wonderfully-gifted son.

“Unquestionably, Mr. Burns,” said the man in black, addressing the farmer, “politeness is but a very shadow, as the poet hath it, if the heart be wanting. I saw, to-night, in a strictly polite family, so marked a presumption of the lack of that natural affection of which politeness is but the portraiture and semblance, that truly I have been grieved in my heart ever since.”

“Ah, Mr. Murdoch,” said the farmer, “there is ever more hypocrisy in the world than in the church, and that, too, among the class of fine gentlemen and fine ladies who deny it most. But the instance”—

“You know the family, my worthy friend,” continued Mr. Murdoch—“it is a very pretty one, as we say vernacularly, being numerous, and the sons highly genteel young men; the daughters not less so. A neighbour of the same very polite character, coming on a visit when I was among them, asked the father, in the course of a conversation to which I was privy, how he meant to dispose of his sons; when the father replied that he had not yet determined. The visitor said, that were he in his place, seeing they were all well-educated young men, he would send them abroad; to which the father objected the indubitable fact, that many young men lost their health in foreign countries, and very many their lives. ‘True,’ did the visitor rejoin; ‘but, as you have a number of sons, it will be strange if some one of them does not live and make a fortune.’ Now, Mr. Burns, what will you, who know the feelings of paternity, and the incalculable, and

assuredly I may say, invaluable value of human souls, think when I add, that the father commended the hint, as showing the wisdom of a shrewd man of the world!"

"Even the chief priests," said the old man, "pronounced it unlawful to cast into the treasury the thirty pieces of silver, seeing it was the price of blood; but the gentility of the present day is less scrupulous. There is a laxity of principle among us, Mr. Murdoch, that, if God restore us not, must end in the ruin of our country. I say laxity of principle; for there have ever been evil manners among us, and waifs in no inconsiderable number, broken loose from the decencies of society—more, perhaps, in my early days than there are now. But our principles at least were sound; and not only was there thus a restorative and conservative spirit among us, but, what was of not less importance, there was a broad gulf, like that in the parable, between the two grand classes, the good and the evil—a gulf which, when it secured the better class from contamination, interposed no barrier to the reformation and return of even the most vile and profligate, if repentant. But this gulf has disappeared, and we are standing unconcernedly over it, on a hollow and dangerous marsh of neutral ground, which, in the end, if God open not our eyes, must assuredly give way under our feet."

"To what, father," inquired my friend, who sat listening with the deepest and most respectful attention, "do you attribute the change?"

"Undoubtedly," replied the old man, "there have been many causes at work; and, though not impossible, it would certainly be no easy task to trace them all to their several effects, and give to each its due place and importance. But there is a deadly evil among us, though you will hear of it from neither press nor pulpit, which I am disposed to rank first in the number—the affectation of gentility. It has a threefold influence among us: it con-

founds the grand eternal distinctions of right and wrong, by erecting into a standard of conduct and opinion that heterogeneous and artificial whole which constitutes the manners and morals of the upper classes; it severs those ties of affection and good-will which should bind the middle to the lower orders, by disposing the one to regard whatever is below them with a true contemptuous indifference, and by provoking a bitter and indignant, though natural jealousy in the other for being so regarded; and, finally, by leading those who most entertain it into habits of expense, torturing their means, if I may so speak, on the rack of false opinion—disposing them to think, in their blindness, that to be genteel is a first consideration, and to be honest merely a secondary one—it has the effect of so hardening their hearts, that, like those Carthaginians of whom we have been lately reading in the volume Mr. Murdoch lent us, they offer up their very children, souls and bodies, to the unreal, phantom-like necessities of their circumstances.”

“Have I not heard you remark, father,” said Gilbert “that the change you describe has been very marked among the ministers of our church?”

“Too marked and too striking,” replied the old man; “and in affecting the respectability and usefulness of so important a class, it has educed a cause of deterioration, distinctly from itself, and hardly less formidable. There is an old proverb of our country—‘Better the head of the commonality than the tail of the gentry.’ I have heard you quote it, Robert, oftener than once, and admire its homely wisdom. Now, it bears directly on what I have to remark—the ministers of our church have moved but one step during the last sixty years; but that step has been an all-important one—it has been from the best place in relation to the people, to the worst in relation to the aristocracy.”

“Undoubtedly, worthy Mr. Burns,” said Mr. Murdoch, “there is great truth, according to mine own experience, in that which you affirm. I may state, I trust, without over-boasting or conceit, my respected friend, that my learning is not inferior to that of our neighbour the clergyman—it is not inferior in Latin, nor in Greek, nor yet in French literature, Mr. Burns, and probable it is he would not much court a competition, and yet, when I last waited at the manse regarding a necessary and essential certificate, Mr. Burns, he did not so much as ask me to sit down.”

“Ah!” said Gilbert, who seemed the wit of the family, “he is a highly respectable man, Mr. Murdoch—he has a fine house, fine furniture, fine carpets—all that constitutes respectability, you know; and his family is on visiting terms with that of the laird. But his credit is not so respectable, I hear.”

“Gilbert,” said the old man, with much seriousness, “it is ill with a people when they can speak lightly of their clergymen. There is still much of sterling worth and serious piety in the Church of Scotland; and if the influence of its ministers be unfortunately less than it was once, we must not cast the blame too exclusively on themselves. Other causes have been in operation. The church, eighty years ago, was the sole guide of opinion, and the only source of thought among us. There was, indeed, but one way in which a man could learn to think. His mind became the subject of some serious impression:—he applied to his Bible, and, in the contemplation of the most important of all concerns, his newly awakened faculties received their first exercise. All of intelligence, all of moral good in him, all that rendered him worthy of the name of man, he owed to the ennobling influence of his church; and is it wonder that that influence should be all-powerful from this circumstance alone? But a thorough change

has taken place;—new sources of intelligence have been opened up; we have our newspapers, and our magazines, and our volumes of miscellaneous reading; and it is now possible enough for the most cultivated mind in a parish to be the least moral and the least religious; and hence necessarily a diminished influence in the church, independent of the character of its ministers.”

I have dwelt too long, perhaps, on the conversation of the elder Burns; but I feel much pleasure in thus developing, as it were, my recollections of one whom his powerful-minded son has described—and this after an acquaintance with our Henry Mackenzies, Adam Smiths, and Dugald Stewarts—as the man most thoroughly acquainted with the world he ever knew. Never, at least, have I met with any one who exerted a more wholesome influence, through the force of moral character, on those around him. We sat down to a plain and homely supper. The slave question had, about this time, begun to draw the attention of a few of the more excellent and intelligent among the people, and the elder Burns seemed deeply interested in it.

“This is but homely fare, Mr. Lindsay,” he said, pointing to the simple viands before us, “and the apologists of slavery among us would tell you how inferior we are to the poor negroes, who fare so much better. But surely ‘man liveth not by bread alone!’ Our fathers who died for Christ on the hillside and the scaffold were noble men, and never, never shall slavery produce such, and yet they toiled as hard, and fared as meanly as we their children.”

I could feel, in the cottage of such a peasant, and seated beside such men as his two sons, the full force of the remark. And yet I have heard the miserable sophism of unprincipled power against which it was directed—a sophism so insulting to the dignity of honest poverty—a thousand times repeated.

Supper over, the family circle widened round the

hearth; and the old man, taking down a large clasped Bible, seated himself beside the iron lamp which now lighted the apartment. There was deep silence among us as he turned over the leaves. Never shall I forget his appearance. He was tall and thin, and though his frame was still vigorous, considerably bent. His features were high and massy—the complexion still retained much of the freshness of youth, and the eye all its intelligence; but the locks were waxing thin and grey round his high, thoughtful forehead, and the upper part of the head, which was elevated to an unusual height, was bald. There was an expression of the deepest seriousness on the countenance, which the strong umbery shadows of the apartment served to heighten; and when, laying his hand on the page, he half turned his face to the circle, and said, "*Let us worship God,*" I was impressed by a feeling of awe and reverence to which I had, alas! been a stranger for years. I was affected too, almost to tears, as I joined in the psalm; for a thousand half-forgotten associations came rushing upon me; and my heart seemed to swell and expand as, kneeling beside him when he prayed, I listened to his solemn and fervent petition, that God might make manifest his great power and goodness in the salvation of man. Nor was the poor solitary wanderer of the deep forgotten.

On rising from our devotions, the old man grasped me by the hand. "I am happy," he said, "that we should have met, Mr. Lindsay. I feel an interest in you, and must take the friend and the old man's privilege of giving you an advice. The sailor, of all men, stands most in need of religion. His life is one of continued vicissitude—of unexpected success, or unlooked-for misfortune; he is ever passing from danger to safety, and from safety to danger; his dependence is on the ever-varying winds, his abode on the unstable waters. And the mind takes a peculiar tone from what is peculiar in the circumstances.

With nothing stable in the real world around it on which it may rest, it forms a resting-place for itself in some wild code of belief. It peoples the elements with strange occult powers of good and evil, and does them homage—addressing its prayers to the genius of the winds, and the spirits of the waters. And thus it begets a religion for itself;—for what else is the professional superstition of the sailor? Substitute, my friend, for this—(shall I call it unavoidable superstition?)—this natural religion of the sea, the religion of the Bible. Since you must be a believer in the supernatural, let your belief be true; let your trust be on Him who faileth not—your anchor within the veil; and all shall be well, be your destiny for this world what it may.”

We parted for the night, and I saw him no more.

Next morning, Robert accompanied me for several miles on my way. I saw, for the last half hour, that he had something to communicate, and yet knew not how to set about it; and so I made a full stop.

“You have something to tell me, Mr. Burns,” I said: “need I assure you I am one you are in no danger from trusting.” He blushed deeply, and I saw him, for the first time, hesitate and falter in his address.

“Forgive me,” he at length said—“believe me, Mr. Lindsay, I would be the last in the world to hurt the feelings of a friend—a—a—but you have been left among us penniless, and I have a very little money which I have no use for—none in the least;—will you not favour me by accepting it as a loan?”

I felt the full and generous delicacy of the proposal, and, with moistened eyes and a swelling heart, availed myself of his kindness. The sum he tendered did not much exceed a guinea; but the yearly earnings of the peasant Burns fell, at this period of his life, rather below eight pounds.

CHAPTER V.

"Corbies an' clergy are a shot right kittle."—*Brigs of Ayr.*

The years passed, and I was again a dweller on the sea; but the ill-fortune which had hitherto tracked me like a bloodhound, seemed at length as if tired in the pursuit, and I was now the master of a West India trader, and had begun to lay the foundation of that competency which has secured to my declining years the quiet and comfort which, for the latter part of my life, it has been my happiness to enjoy. My vessel had arrived at Liverpool in the latter part of the year 1784, and I had taken coach for Irvine, to visit my mother, whom I had not seen for several years. There was a change of passengers at every stage; but I saw little in any of them to interest me, till within about a score of miles of my destination, when I met with an old respectable townsman, a friend of my father's. There was but another passenger in the coach, a north country gentleman from the West Indies. I had many questions to ask my townsman, and many to answer—and the time passed lightly away.

"Can you tell me aught of the Burns of Lochlea?" I inquired, after learning that my mother and other relatives were well. "I met with the young man Robert about five years ago, and have often since asked myself what special end providence could have in view in making such a man."

"I was acquainted with old William Burns," said my companion, "when he was gardener at Denholm, an' got intimate wi' his son Robert when he lived wi' us at Irvine, a twalmonth syne. The faither died shortly ago, sairly straitened in his means, I'm feared, and no very square wi' the laird—an' ill wad he hae liked that, for an

honestest man never breathed. Robert, puir chield, is no very easy either."

"In his circumstances?" I said.

"Ay, an' waur:—he got entangled wi' the kirk on an unlucky sculduddey business, an' has been writing bitter, wicked ballads on a' the guid ministers in the country ever syne. I'm vexed it's on them he suld hae fallen; an' yet they hae been to blame too."

"Robert Burns so entangled, so occupied!" I exclaimed; "you grieve and astonish me."

"We are puir creatures, Matthew," said the old man; "strength an' weakness are often next door neighbours in the best o' us; nay, what is our vera strength taen on the ae side, may be our vera weakness taen on the ither. Never was there a stancher, firmer fallow than Robert Burns; an' now that he has taen a wrang step, puir chield, that vera stanchness seems just a weak want o' ability to yield. He has planted his foot where it lighted by mishanter, and a' the guid an' ill in Scotland wadna budge him frae the spot."

"Dear me! that so powerful a mind should be so frivolously engaged! Making ballads, you say?—with what success?"

"Ah, Matthew lad, when the strong man puts out his strength," said my companion, "there's naething frivolous in the matter, be his object what it may. Robert's ballads are far, far aboon the best things ever seen in Scotland afore; we auld folk dinna ken whether maist to blame or praise them, but they keep the young people laughing irae the ae nuik o' the shire till the ither."

"But how," I inquired, "have the better clergy rendered themselves obnoxious to Burns? The laws he has violated, if I rightly understand you, are indeed severe, and somewhat questionable in their tendencies; and even good men often press them too far."

“And in the case of Robert,” said the old man, “our clergy have been strict to the very letter. They’re guid men an’ faithfu’ ministers; but ane o’ them, at least, an’ he a leader, has a harsh, ill temper, an’ mistakes sometimes the corruption o’ the auld man in him for the proper zeal o’ the new ane. Nor is there ony o’ the ithers wha kent what they had to deal wi’ when Robert cam afore them. They saw but a proud, thrawart ploughman, that stood uncow’ring under the glunsh o’ a hail session; and so they opened on him the artillery o’ the kirk, to bear down his pride. Wha could hae told them that they were but frushing their straw an’ rotten wood against the iron scales o’ Leviathan? An’ now that they hae dune their maist, the record o’ Robert’s mishanter is lying in whity-brown ink yonder in a page o’ the session-buik, while the ballads hae sunk deep deep intil the very mind o’ the country, and may live there for hunders and hunders o’ years.”

“You seem to contrast, in this business,” I said, “our better with what you must deem our inferior clergy. You mean, do you not, the higher and lower parties in our church? How are they getting on now?”

“Never worse,” replied the old man; “an’, oh, it’s surely ill when the ministers o’ peace become the very leaders o’ contention! But let the blame rest in the right place. Peace is surely a blessing frae Heaven—no a guid wark demanded frae man; an’ when it grows our duty to be in war, it’s an ill thing to be in peace. Our Evangelicals are stan’in’, puir folk, whar their fathers stood; an’ if they maun either fight or be beaten frae their post, why, it’s just their duty to fight. But the Moderates are rinnin’ mad a’thegither amang us: signing our auld Confession, just that they may get intil the kirk to preach against it; paring the New Testament down to the vera standard o’ heathen Plawto; and sinking ae doctrine after anither, till they leave ahint naething but deism that might scunner

an infidel. Deed, Matthew, if there comena a change among them, an' that sune, they'll swamp the puir kirk a' thegither. The cauld morality that never made ony ane mair moral, taks nae haud o' the people; an' patronage, as meikle's they roose it, winna keep up either kirk or manse o' itsel. Sorry I am, sin' Robert has entered on the quarrel at a', it suld hae been on the wrang side."

"One of my chief objections," I said, "to the religion of the Moderate party is, that it is of no use."

"A gey serious ane," rejoined the old man; "but maybe there's a waur still. I'm unco vexed for Robert, baith on his worthy faither's account and his ain. He's a fearsome fellow when ance angered, but an honest, warm-hearted chield for a' that; an' there's mair sense in yon big head o' his, than in ony ither twa in the country."

"Can you tell me aught," said the north country gentleman, addressing my companion, "of Mr. R——, the chapel minister in K——? I was once one of his pupils in the far north; but I have heard nothing of him since he left Cromarty."

"Why," rejoined the old man, "he's just the man that, mair nor a' the rest, has borne the brunt o' Robert's fearsome waggery. Did ye ken him in Cromarty, say ye?"

"He was parish schoolmaster there," said the gentleman, "for twelve years; and for six of these I attended his school. I cannot help respecting him; but no one ever loved him. Never surely was there a man at once so unequivocally honest and so thoroughly unamiable."

"You must have found him a rigid disciplinarian," I said.

"He was the most so," he replied, "from the days of Dionysius, at least, that ever taught a school. I remember there was a poor fisher boy among us named Skinner, who, as is customary in Scottish schools, as you must know, blew the horn for gathering the scholars, and kept the

catalogue and the key; and who, in return, was educated by the master, and received some little gratuity from the scholars besides. On one occasion, the key dropped out of his pocket; and, when school-time came, the irascible dominie had to burst open the door with his foot. He raged at the boy with a fury so insane, and beat him so unmercifully, that the other boys, gathering heart in the extremity of the case, had to rise *en masse* and tear him out of his hands. But the curious part of the story is yet to come: Skinner has been a fisherman for the last twelve years; but never has he been seen disengaged, for a moment, from that time to this, without mechanically thrusting his hand into the key pocket."

Our companion furnished us with two or three other anecdotes of Mr. R——. He told us of a lady who was so overcome by sudden terror on unexpectedly seeing him, many years after she had quitted his school, in one of the pulpits of the south, that she fainted away; and of another of his scholars, named M'Glashan, a robust, daring fellow of six feet, who, when returning to Cromarty from some of the colonies, solaced himself by the way with thoughts of the hearty drubbing with which he was to clear off all his old scores with the dominie."

"Ere his return, however," continued the gentleman, "Mr. R—— had quitted the parish; and, had it chanced otherwise, it is questionable whether M'Glashan, with all his strength and courage, would have gained anything in an encounter with one of the boldest and most powerful men in the country."

Such were some of the chance glimpses which I gained, at this time, of by far the most powerful of the opponents of Burns. He was a good, conscientious man; but unfortunate in a harsh, violent temper, and in sometimes mistaking, as my old townsman remarked, the dictates of that temper for those of duty.

CHAPTER VI.

"It's hardly in a body's pow'r
 To keep at times frae being sou't,
 To see how things are shar'd—
 How best o' chiefs are whiles in want,
 While coofs on countless thousands rant,
 And kenna how to wair't."—*Epistle to Davie.*

I visited my friend, a few days after my arrival in Irvine, at the farm-house of Mossgiel, to which, on the death of his father, he had removed, with his brother Gilbert and his mother. I could not help observing that his manners were considerably changed: my welcome seemed less kind and hearty than I could have anticipated from the warm-hearted peasant of five years ago, and there was a stern and almost supercilious elevation in his bearing, which at first pained and offended me. I had met with him as he was returning from the fields after the labours of the day; the dusk of twilight had fallen; and, though I had calculated on passing the evening with him at the farm-house of Mossgiel, so displeased was I, that, after our first greeting, I had more than half changed my mind. The recollection of his former kindness to me, however, suspended the feeling, and I resolved on throwing myself on his hospitality for the night, however cold the welcome.

"I have come all the way from Irvine to see you, Mr. Burns," I said. "For the last five years, I have thought more of my mother and you than of any other two persons in the country. May I not calculate, as of old, on my supper and a bed?"

There was an instantaneous change in his expression.

"Pardon me, my friend," he said, grasping my hand; "I have, unwittingly, been doing you wrong; one may

surely be the master of an Indiaman and in possession of a heart too honest to be spoiled by prosperity!"

The remark served to explain the haughty coldness of his manner which had so displeased me, and which was but the unwillingly assumed armour of a defensive pride.

"There, brother," he said, throwing down some plough irons which he carried, "send *wee Davoc* with these to the smithy, and bid him tell Rankin I won't be there to-night. The moon is rising, Mr. Lindsay—shall we not have a stroll together through the coppice?"

"That of all things," I replied; and, parting from Gilbert, we struck into the wood.

The evening, considering the lateness of the season, for winter had set in, was mild and pleasant. The moon at full was rising over the Cumnock hills, and casting its faint light on the trees that rose around us, in their winding-sheets of brown and yellow, like so many spectres, or that, in the more exposed glares and openings of the wood, stretched their long naked arms to the sky. A light breeze went rustling through the withered grass; and I could see the faint twinkling of the falling leaves, as they came showering down on every side of us.

"We meet in the midst of death and desolation," said my companion—"we parted when all around us was fresh and beautiful. My father was with me then, and—and Mary Campbell—and now"——

"Mary! your Mary!" I exclaimed—"the young—the beautiful—alas! is she also gone?"

"She has left me," he said—"left me. Mary is in her grave!"

I felt my heart swell, as the image of that loveliest of creatures came rising to my view in all her beauty, as I had seen her by the river side; and I knew not what to reply.

"Yes," continued my friend, "she's in her grave;—we

parted for a few days, to re-unite, as we hoped, for ever; and, ere these few days had passed, she was in her grave. But I was unworthy of her—unworthy even then; and now——But she is in her grave!”

I grasped his hand. “It is difficult,” I said, “to *bid* the heart submit to these dispensations, and, oh, how utterly impossible to bring it to *listen!* But life—*your* life, my friend—must not be passed in useless sorrow. I am convinced, and often have I thought of it since our last meeting, that yours is no vulgar destiny—though I know not to what it tends.”

“Downwards!” he exclaimed—“it tends downwards;—I see, I feel it;—the anchor of my affection is gone, and I drift shoreward on the rocks.”

“’Twere ruin,” I exclaimed, “to think so!”

“Not half an hour ere my father died,” he continued, “he expressed a wish to rise and sit once more in his chair; and we indulged him. But, alas! the same feeling of uneasiness which had prompted the wish, remained with him still, and he sought to return again to his bed. ‘It is not by quitting the bed or the chair,’ he said, ‘that I need seek for ease: it is by quitting the body.’ I am oppressed, Mr. Lindsay, by a somewhat similar feeling of uneasiness, and, at times, would fain cast the blame on the circumstances in which I am placed. But I may be as far mistaken as my poor father. I would fain live at peace with all mankind—nay, more, I would fain love and do good to them all; but the villain and the oppressor come to set their feet on my very neck, and crush me into the mire—and must I not resist? And when, in some luckless hour, I yield to my passions—to those fearful passions that must one day overwhelm me—when I yield, and my whole mind is darkened by remorse, and I groan under the discipline of conscience, then comes the odious, abominable hypocrite—the devourer of widows’ houses and the

substance of the orphan—and demands that my repentance be as public as his own hollow, detestable prayers. And can I do other than resist and expose him? My heart tells me it was formed to bestow—why else does every misery that I cannot relieve render me wretched? It tells me, too, it was formed not to receive—why else does the proffered assistance of even a friend fill my whole soul with indignation? But ill do my circumstances agree with my feelings. I feel as if I were totally misplaced in some frolic of nature, and wander onwards in gloom and unhappiness, seeking for my proper sphere. But, alas! these efforts of uneasy misery are but the blind gropings of Homer's Cyclops round the walls of his cave."

I again began to experience, as on a former occasion, the o'ermastering power of a mind larger beyond comparison than my own; but I felt it my duty to resist the influence. "Yes, you are misplaced, my friend," I said—"perhaps more decidedly so than any other man I ever knew; but is not this characteristic, in some measure, of the whole species? We are all misplaced; and it seems a part of the scheme of deity, that we should work ourselves up to our proper sphere. In what other respect does man so differ from the inferior animals as in those aspirations which lead him through all the progressions of improvement, from the lowest to the highest level of his nature?"

"That may be philosophy, my friend," he replied, "but a heart ill at ease finds little of comfort in it. You knew my father: need I say he was one of the excellent of the earth—a man who held directly from God Almighty the patent of his honours? I saw that father sink broken-hearted into the grave, the victim of legalized oppression—yes, saw him overborne in the long contest which his high spirit and his indomitable love of the right had

incited him to maintain—overborne by a mean, despicable scoundrel, one of the creeping things of the earth. Heaven knows I did my utmost to assist in the struggle. In my fifteenth year, Mr. Lindsay, when a thin, loose-jointed boy, I did the work of a man, and strained my unknit and overtoiled sinews as if life and death depended on the issue, till oft, in the middle of the night, I have had to fling myself from my bed to avoid instant suffocation—an effect of exertion so prolonged and so premature. Nor has the man exerted himself less heartily than the boy—in the roughest, severest labours of the field, I have never yet met a competitor. But my labours have been all in vain—I have seen the evil bewailed by Solomon—the righteous man falling down before the wicked.” I could answer only with a sigh. “You are in the right,” he continued, after a pause, and in a more subdued tone: “man is certainly misplaced—the present scene of things is below the dignity of both his moral and intellectual nature. Look round you—(we had reached the summit of a grassy eminence which rose over the wood, and commanded a pretty extensive view of the surrounding country)—see yonder scattered cottages, that, in the faint light, rise dim and black amid the stubble fields—my heart warms as I look on them, for I know how much of honest worth, and sound, generous feeling shelters under these rooftrees. But why so much of moral excellence united to a mere machinery for ministering to the ease and luxury of a few of, perhaps, the least worthy of our species—creatures so spoiled by prosperity that the claim of a common nature has no force to move them, and who seem as miserably misplaced as the myriads whom they oppress?”

“If I’m designed yon lordling’s slave—
 By nature’s law designed—
 Why was an independent wish
 E’er planted in my mind?”

If not, why am I subject to
His cruelty and scorn?
Or why has man the will and power
To make his fellow mourn?"

"I would hardly know what to say in return, my friend," I rejoined, "did not you, yourself, furnish me with the reply. You are groping on in darkness, and it may be unhappiness, for your proper sphere; but it is in obedience to a great though occult law of our nature—a law, general as it affects the species, in its course of onward progression—particular, and infinitely more irresistible, as it operates on every truly superior intellect. There are men born to wield the destinies of nations—nay, more, to stamp the impression of their thoughts and feelings on the mind of the whole civilized world. And by what means do we often find them roused to accomplish their appointed work? At times hounded on by sorrow and suffering, and thus in the design of providence, that there may be less of sorrow and suffering in the world ever after—at times roused by cruel and maddening oppression, that the oppressor may perish in his guilt, and a whole country enjoy the blessings of freedom. If Wallace had not suffered from tyranny, Scotland would not have been free."

"But how apply the remark?" said my companion.

"Robert Burns," I replied, again grasping his hand, "yours, I am convinced, is no vulgar destiny. Your griefs, your sufferings, your errors even, the oppressions you have seen and felt, the thoughts which have arisen in your mind, the feelings and sentiments of which it has been the subject, are, I am convinced, of infinitely more importance in their relation to your country than to yourself. You are, wisely and benevolently, placed far below your level, that thousands and ten thousands of your countrymen may be the better enabled to attain to theirs. Assert the dignity of manhood and of genius, and

there will be less of wrong and oppression in the world ever after."

I spent the remainder of the evening in the farm-house of Mossiel, and took the coach next morning for Liverpool.

CHAPTER VII.

"His is that language of the heart
 In which the answering heart would speak—
 Thought, word, that bids the warm tear start,
 Or the smile light up the cheek;
 And his that music to whose tone
 The common pulse of man keeps time,
 In cot or castle's mirth or moan,
 In cold or sunny clime."—*American poet.*

The love of literature, when once thoroughly awakened in a reflective mind, can never after cease to influence it. It first assimilates our intellectual part to those fine intellects which live in the world of books, and then renders our connection with them indispensable, by laying hold of that social principle of our nature which ever leads us to the society of our fellows as our proper sphere of enjoyment. My early habits, by heightening my tone of thought and feeling, had tended considerably to narrow my circle of companionship. My profession, too, had led me to be much alone; and now that I had been several years the master of an Indiaman, I was quite as fond of reading, and felt as deep an interest in whatever took place in the literary world, as when a student at St. Andrew's. There was much in the literature of the period to gratify my pride as a Scotchman. The despotism, both political and religious, which had overlaid the energies of our country for more than a century, had long been removed, and the national mind had swelled and expanded under a better

system of things, till its influence had become co-extensive with civilized man. Hume had produced his inimitable history, and Adam Smith his wonderful work, which was to revolutionize and new-model the economy of all the governments of the earth. And there, in my little library, were the histories of Henry and Robertson, the philosophy of Kaimes and Reid, the novels of Smollett and Mackenzie, and the poetry of Beattie and Home. But, if there was no lack of Scottish intellect in the literature of the time, there was a decided lack of Scottish manners; and I knew too much of my humble countrymen not to regret it. True, I had before me the writings of Ramsay and my unfortunate friend Ferguson; but there was a radical meanness in the first that lowered the tone of his colouring far beneath the freshness of truth, and the second, whom I had seen perish—too soon, alas! for literature and his country—had given us but a few specimens of his power when his hand was arrested for ever.

My vessel, after a profitable, though somewhat tedious voyage, had again arrived in Liverpool. It was late in December, 1786, and I was passing the long evening in my cabin, engaged with a whole sheaf of pamphlets and magazines which had been sent me from the shore. *The Lounger* was, at this time, in course of publication. I had ever been an admirer of the quiet elegance and exquisite tenderness of Mackenzie; and, though I might not be quite disposed to think, with Johnson, that "the chief glory of every people arises from its authors," I certainly felt all the prouder of my country, from the circumstance that so accomplished a writer was one of my countrymen. I had read this evening some of the more recent numbers, half disposed to regret, however, amid all the pleasure they afforded me, that the Addison of Scotland had not done for the manners of his country what his illustrious prototype had done for those of England, when my eye fell

on the ninety-seventh number. I read the introductory sentences, and admired their truth and elegance. I had felt, in the contemplation of supereminent genius, the pleasure which the writer describes, and my thoughts reverted to my two friends—the dead and the living. “In the view of highly superior talents, as in that of great and stupendous objects,” says the essayist, “there is a sublimity which fills the soul with wonder and delight—which expands it, as it were, beyond its usual bounds, and which, investing our nature with extraordinary powers and extraordinary honours, interests our curiosity and flatters our pride.”

I read on with increasing interest. It was evident, from the tone of the introduction, that some new luminary had arisen in the literary horizon, and I felt somewhat like a schoolboy when, at his first play, he waits for the drawing up of the curtain. And the curtain at length rose. “The person,” continues the essayist, “to whom I allude”—and he alludes to him as a genius of no ordinary class—“is Robert Burns, an Ayrshire ploughman.” The effect on my nerves seemed electrical; I clapped my hands, and sprung from my seat: “Was I not certain of it! Did I not foresee it!” I exclaimed. “My noble-minded friend, Robert Burns!” I ran hastily over the warm-hearted and generous critique, so unlike the cold, timid, equivocal notices with which the professional critic has greeted, on their first appearance, so many works destined to immortality. It was Mackenzie, the discriminating, the classical, the elegant, who assured me that the productions of this “heaven-taught ploughman were fraught with the high-toned feeling and the power and energy of expression characteristic of the mind and voice of the poet”—with the solemn, the tender, the sublime; that they contained images of pastoral beauty which no other writer had ever surpassed, and strains of wild humour which only the

higher masters of the lyre had ever equalled; and that the genius displayed in them seemed not less admirable in tracing the manners than in painting the passions, or in drawing the scenery of nature. I flung down the essay, ascended to the deck in three huge strides, leaped ashore, and reached my bookseller's as he was shutting up for the night.

"Can you furnish me with a copy of Burns' Poems," I said, "either for love or money?"

"I have but one copy left," replied the man, "and here it is."

I flung down a guinea. "The change," I said, "I shall get when I am less in a hurry."

'Twas late that evening ere I remembered that 'tis customary to spend at least part of the night in bed. I read on and on with a still increasing astonishment and delight, laughing and crying by turns. I was quite in a new world; all was fresh and unsoiled—the thoughts, the descriptions, the images—as if the volume I read was the first that had ever been written; and yet all was easy and natural, and appealed, with a truth and force irresistible, to the recollections I cherished most fondly. Nature and Scotland met me at every turn. I had admired the polished compositions of Pope, and Gray, and Collins, though I could not sometimes help feeling that, with all the exquisite art they displayed, there was a little additional art wanting still. In most cases the scaffolding seemed incorporated with the structure which it had served to rear; and, though certainly no scaffolding could be raised on surer principles, I could have wished that the ingenuity which had been tasked to erect it, had been exerted a little further in taking it down. But the work before me was evidently the production of a greater artist; not a fragment of the scaffolding remained—not so much as a mark to show how it had been constructed. The whole seemed to have

risen like an exhalation, and, in this respect, reminded me of the structures of Shakspeare alone. I read the inimitable "Twa Dogs." Here, I said, is the full and perfect realization of what Swift and Dryden were hardy enough to attempt, but lacked genius to accomplish. Here are dogs—*bona fide* dogs—endowed indeed with more than human sense and observation, but true to character, as the most honest and attached of quadrupeds, in every line. And then those exquisite touches which the poor man, inured to a life of toil and poverty, can alone rightly understand! and those deeply-based remarks on character, which only the philosopher can justly appreciate! This is the true catholic poetry, which addresses itself not to any little circle, walled in from the rest of the species by some peculiarity of thought, prejudice, or condition, but to the whole human family. I read on:—"The Holy Fair," "Hallow E'en," "The Vision," the "Address to the Deil," engaged me by turns; and then the strange, uproarious, unequalled "Death and Dr. Hornbook." This, I said, is something new in the literature of the world. Shakspeare possessed above all men the power of instant and yet natural transition, from the lightly gay to the deeply pathetic—from the wild to the humorous; but the opposite states of feeling which he induces, however close the neighbourhood, are ever distinct and separate; the oil and the water, though contained in the same vessel, remain apart. Here, however, for the first time, they mix and incorporate, and yet each retains its whole nature and full effect. I need hardly remind the reader that the feat has been repeated, and even with more completeness, in the wonderful "Tam o' Shanter." I read on. "The Cotter's Saturday Night" filled my whole soul—my heart throbbed and my eyes moistened; and never before did I feel half so proud of my country, or know half so well on what score it was I did best in feeling proud. I had

perused the entire volume from beginning to end, ere I remembered I had not taken supper, and that it was more than time to go to bed.

But it is no part of my plan to furnish a critique on the poems of my friend. I merely strive to recall the thoughts and feelings which my first perusal of them awakened, and thus only as a piece of mental history. Several months elapsed from this evening ere I could hold them out from me sufficiently at arms' length, as it were, to judge of their more striking characteristics. At times the amazing amount of thought, feeling, and imagery which they contained—their wonderful continuity of idea, without gap or interstice—seemed to me most to distinguish them. At times they reminded me, compared with the writings of smoother poets, of a collection of medals which, unlike the thin polished coin of the kingdom, retained all the significant and pictorial roughness of the original die. But when, after the lapse of weeks, months, years, I found them rising up in my heart on every occasion, as naturally as if they had been the original language of all my feelings and emotions—when I felt that, instead of remaining outside my mind, as it were, like the writings of other poets, they had so amalgamated themselves with my passions, my sentiments, my ideas, that they seemed to have become portions of my very self—I was led to a final conclusion regarding them. Their grand distinguishing characteristic is their unswerving and perfect truth. The poetry of Shakspeare is the mirror of life—that of Burns the expressive and richly modulated voice of human nature.

CHAPTER VIII

“Burns was a poor man from his birth, and an exciseman from necessity; but—I *will say it!*—the sterling of his honest worth, poverty could not debase; and his independent British spirit oppression might bend, but could not subdue.”—*Letter to Mr. Graham.*

I have been listening for the last half hour to the wild music of an Eolian harp. How exquisitely the tones rise and fall!—now sad, now solemn—now near, now distant. The nerves thrill, the heart softens, the imagination awakes as we listen. What if that delightful instrument be animated by a living soul, and these finely-modulated tones be but the expression of its feelings! What if these dying, melancholy cadences, which so melt and sink into the heart, be—what we may so naturally interpret them—the melodious sinkings of a deep-seated and hopeless unhappiness! Nay, the fancy is too wild for even a dream. But are there none of those fine analogies, which run through the whole of nature and the whole of art, to sub lime it into truth? Yes, *there have* been such living harps among us; beings, the tones of whose sentiments, the melody of whose emotions, the cadences of whose sorrows, remain to thrill, and delight, and humanize our souls. They seem born for others, not for themselves. Alas, for the hapless companion of my early youth! Alas, for him, the pride of his country, the friend of my maturer manhood!—But my narrative lags in its progress.

My vessel lay in the Clyde for several weeks during the summer of 1794, and I found time to indulge myself in a brief tour along the western coasts of the kingdom, from Glasgow to the Borders. I entered Dumfries in a calm, lovely evening, and passed along one of the principal streets. The shadows of the houses on the western side were stretched half-way across the pavement, while, on the side

opposite, the bright sunshine seemed sleeping on the jutting irregular fronts, and high antique gables. There seemed a world of well-dressed company this evening in town; and I learned, on inquiry, that all the aristocracy of the adjacent country, for twenty miles round, had come in to attend a county ball. They went fluttering along the sunny side of the street, gay as butterflies—group succeeding group. On the opposite side, in the shade, a solitary individual was passing slowly along the pavement. I knew him at a glance. It was the first poet, perhaps the greatest man, of his age and country. But why so solitary? It had been told me that he ranked among his friends and associates many of the highest names in the kingdom, and yet to-night not one of the hundreds who fluttered past appeared inclined to recognise him. He seemed too—but perhaps fancy misled me—as if care-worn and dejected; pained, perhaps, that not one among so many of the *great* should have humility enough to notice a poor exciseman. I stole up to him unobserved, and tapped him on the shoulder; there was a decided fierceness in his manner as he turned abruptly round, but, as he recognised me, his expressive countenance lighted up in a moment, and I shall never forget the heartiness with which he grasped my hand.

We quitted the streets together for the neighbouring fields, and, after the natural interchange of mutual congratulations—"How is it," I inquired, "that you do not seem to have a single acquaintance among all the gay and great of the country?"

"I lie under quarantine," he replied; "tainted by the plague of liberalism. There is not one of the hundreds we passed to-night whom I could not once reckon among my intimates."

The intelligence stunned and irritated me. "How infinitely absurd!" I said. "Do they dream of sinking you into a common man?"

“Even so,” he rejoined. “Do they not all know I have been a gauger for the last five years!”

The fact had both grieved and incensed me long before. I knew, too, that Pye enjoyed his salary as poet laureate of the time, and Dibdin, the song writer, his pension of two hundred a-year, and I blushed for my country.

“Yes,” he continued—the ill-assumed coolness of his manner giving way before his highly excited feelings—“they have assigned me my place among the mean and the degraded, as their best patronage; and only yesterday, after an official threat of instant dismissal, I was told it was my business to act, not to think. God help me! what have I done to provoke such bitter insult? I have ever discharged my miserable duty—discharged it, Mr. Lindsay, however repugnant to my feelings, as an honest man; and though there awaited me no promotion, I was silent. The wives or sisters of those whom they advanced over me had bastards to some of the — family, and so their influence was necessarily greater than mine. But now they crush me into the very dust. I take an interest in the struggles of the slave for his freedom; I express my opinions as if I myself were a free man; and they threaten to starve me and my children if I dare so much as speak or think.”

I expressed my indignant sympathy in a few broken sentences; and he went on with kindling animation:—

“Yes, they would fain crush me into the very dust! They cannot forgive me, that, being born a man, I should walk erect according to my nature. Mean-spirited and despicable themselves, they can tolerate only the mean-spirited and the despicable; and were I not so entirely in their power, Mr. Lindsay, I could regard them with the proper contempt. But the wretches can starve me and my children—and they *know* it; nor does it mend the matter that I *know* in turn, what pitiful, miserable, little creatures they are. What care I for the butterflies of to-night?—

they passed me without the honour of their notice; and I, in turn, suffered them to pass without the honour of mine; and I am more than quits. Do I not know that they and I are going on to the fulfilment of our several destinies?—they to sleep, in the obscurity of their native insignificance, with the pismires and grasshoppers of all the past, and I to be whatever the millions of my unborn countrymen shall yet decide. Pitiful little insects of an hour! what is their notice to me! But I bear a heart, Mr. Lindsay, that can feel the pain of treatment so unworthy; and I must confess it moves me. One cannot always live upon the future, divorced from the sympathies of the present. One cannot always solace one's self under the grinding despotism that would fetter one's very thoughts, with the conviction, however assured, that posterity will do justice both to the oppressor and the oppressed. I am sick at heart; and were it not for the poor little things that depend so entirely on my exertions, I could as cheerfully lay me down in the grave as I ever did in bed after the fatigues of a long day's labour. Heaven help me! I am miserably unfitted to struggle with even the natural evils of existence—how much more so when these are multiplied and exaggerated by the proud, capricious inhumanity of man!"

"There is a miserable lack of right principle and right feeling," I said, "among our upper classes in the present day; but, alas for poor human nature! it has ever been so, and, I am afraid, ever will. And there is quite as much of it in savage as in civilized life. I have seen the exclusive aristocratic spirit, with its one-sided injustice, as rampant in a wild isle of the Pacific as I ever saw it among ourselves."

"'Tis slight comfort," said my friend, with a melancholy smile, "to be assured, when one's heart bleeds from the cruelty or injustice of our fellows, that man is naturally cruel and unjust, and not less so as a savage than when better taught. I knew you, Mr. Lindsay, when you were

younger and less fortunate; but you have now reached that middle term of life when man naturally takes up the Tory and lays down the Whig; nor has there been aught in your improving circumstances to retard the change; and so you rest in the conclusion that, if the weak among us suffer from the tyranny of the strong, 'tis because human nature is so constituted, and the case therefore cannot be helped."

"Pardon me, Mr. Burns," I said, "I am not quite so finished a Tory as that amounts to."

"I am not one of those fanciful declaimers," he continued, "who set out on the assumption that man is free-born. I am too well assured of the contrary. Man is not free-born. The earlier period of his existence, whether as a puny child or the miserable denizen of an uninformed and barbarous state, is one of vassalage and subserviency. He is not born free, he is not born rational, he is not born virtuous: he is born to *become* all these. And woe to the sophist who, with arguments drawn from the unconfirmed constitution of his childhood, would strive to render his imperfect, because immature, state of pupilage a permanent one! We are yet far below the level of which our nature is capable, and possess in consequence but a small portion of the liberty which it is the destiny of our species to enjoy. And 'tis time our masters should be taught so. You will deem me a wild Jacobin, Mr. Lindsay; but persecution has the effect of making a man extreme in these matters. Do help me to curse the scoundrels!—my business to act, not to think!"

We were silent for several minutes.

"I have not yet thanked you, Mr. Burns," I at length said, "for the most exquisite pleasure I ever enjoyed. You have been my companion for the last eight years."

His countenance brightened.

"Ah, here I am boring you with my miseries and my

ill-nature," he replied; "but you must come along with me and see the bairns and Jean; and some of the best songs I ever wrote. It will go hard if we hold not care at the staff's end for at least one evening. You have not yet seen my stone punch-bowl, nor my Tam o'Shanter, nor a hundred other fine things beside. And yet, vile wretch that I am, I am sometimes so unconscionable as to be unhappy with them all. But come along."

We spent this evening together with as much of happiness as it has ever been my lot to enjoy. Never was there a fonder father than Burns, a more attached husband, or a warmer friend. There was an exuberance of love in his large heart, that encircled in its flow, relatives, friends, associates, his country, the world; and, in his kinder moods, the sympathetic influence which he exerted over the hearts of others seemed magical. I laughed and cried this evening by turns; I was conscious of a wider and warmer expansion of feeling than I had ever experienced before; my very imagination seemed invigorated by breathing, as it were, in the same atmosphere with his. We parted early next morning—and when I again visited Dumfries, I went and wept over his grave. Forty years have now passed since his death, and in that time many poets have arisen to achieve a rapid and brilliant celebrity; but they seem the meteors of a lower sky; the flush passes hastily from the expanse, and we see but one great light looking steadily upon us from above. It is Burns who is exclusively the poet of his country. Other writers inscribe their names on the plaster which covers for the time the outside structure of society; his is engraved, like that of the Egyptian architect, on the ever-during granite within. The fame of the others rises and falls with the uncertain undulations of the mode on which they have reared it; his remains fixed and permanent, as the human nature on which it is based. Or, to borrow the figures Johnson

employs in illustrating the unfluctuating celebrity of a scarcely greater poet—"The sand heaped by one flood is scattered by another, but the rock always continues in its place. The stream of time, which is continually washing the dissoluble fabrics of other poets, passes without injury, by the adamant of Shakspeare."

THE PROFESSOR'S TALES.

THE CONVIVIALISTS.

WE must introduce our readers, with an apology for our abruptness, into a party of about half-a-dozen young gallants, who had evidently been making deep and frequent libations at the shrine of Bacchus. The loud bursts of hearty laughter which rang round the room like so many triple bobmajors, the leering eyes, the familiar diminutives with which the various parties addressed each other, and the frequent locking of hands together in a grasp the force of which was meant to express an ardour of social friendship which words were too weak to convey—all showed that the symposiasts had cleared the fences which prudence or selfishness set up in the sober intercourse of life, and were now, with loosened reins, spurring away over the free wild fields of fancy and fun. An immense quantity of walnut-shells—which the mercurial compotators had been amusing themselves by throwing at each other—lay scattered about the table and on the floor; two or three shivered wine glasses had been shoved into the centre of the table, the fragments glittering upon a pile of glorious Woodvilles, all speckled over, like Jacob's sheep; each man had one of the weeds stuck rakishly in the corner of his mouth, and was knocking off the ashes upon his deviled biscuits; and, to the right of the president's chair, a long straggling regiment of empty bottles gave dumb but eloquent proof of the bibulous capabilities of the company. Each man was talking vehemently to his neighbour, and every one for himself; in order, as a wag among them said,

to get through the work quickly, and jump at once to a conclusion. They were, as Sheridan has it, "arguing in platoons." There was one exception, however, to the boisterous mirth of the convivialists, in the person of Frank Elliot, in celebration of whose obtaining his medical degree the feast had been given. He was leaning back in his chair, gazing, with a slight curl of contempt on his lip, at the rude glee of his associates. He had distinguished himself so highly among his fellow-students, that one of the professors had, in the ceremony of the morning, singled him out, before all his contemporaries, with the highest eulogiums, and had predicted, in the most flattering manner, his certain celebrity in his profession. Perhaps the natural vanity which these public honours had created, the bright prospect which lay before him, and his being less excited than his companions—caused him to turn, with disgust, from the silly ribaldry and weak witticisms which circled round his table. Amid the uproar his silence was for some time unheeded; but at length Harry Whitaker, his old college chum, now lieutenant in his Majesty's navy, and with a considerable portion of broad sailor's humour and slang, observed it, and slapping him roundly on the back, cried, "Hilloa, Frank! what are you dodging about?—quizzing the rig of your convoy, because they have too much light duck set to walk steadily through the water?"

"Frank! why, isn't he asleep all this time? I haven't heard his voice this half hour," exclaimed another.

"*Parce meum, quisquis tanges cava marmora somnum
Rumpere; sive bibas, sive lavere, tace,*"

said Elliot beseechingly.

"Come, come," said Harry, "none of your heathenish lingo over the mahogany. Boys! I move that Frank be made to swallow a tumbler of port for using bad language,

and to make him fit company for the rest of us honest fellows."

"*Fiat experimentum in corpore vili,*" squeaked a first year medical student, shoving the lighted end of his cigar, by mistake, into his mouth when he had delivered his sentence, and then springing up and sputtering out a mighty oath and a quantity of hot tobacco ashes.

"Ashes to ashes," cried Harry, filling up a tumbler to the brim; "we'll let you off this time, as you're a fire-eater; but rally round, lads, and see this land shark swallow his grog."

"Nay, but, my friends"—began Frank, seeing, with horror, that the party had gathered round him, and that Harry held the glass inexorably in his mouth.

"Get a gag rigged," shouted the young sailor; "we'll find a way into his grog shop."

"Upon my word, Whitaker," said Frank, with a ludicrous intonation of voice, between real anger and distress, "this is too hard on one who has filled fairly from the first—to punish him without an inquiry into the justice of the case."

"Jeddart justice—hang first, and judge after!" roared a student from the sylvan banks of the Jed.

"No freeman can, under any pretence," hiccupped a young advocate, who was unable to rise from his chair, "be condemned, except by the legal decision of his peers, or by the law of the land. So sayeth the Magna Charta—King John—(*hic*)—right of all freeborn Englishmen—including thereby all inhabitants of Great Britain, incorporated at the Union—*hic*—and Ireland."

Whitaker set the tumbler down in despair, finding that his companions, like the generality of raw students, were so completely wedded to their pedantry, that the fine, if insisted on, would have to go all round.

"Let's have a song, Rhimeson," cried Frank, very glad

to escape from his threatened bumper, and still fearful that it might be insisted upon, "a song extempore, as becomes a poet in his cups, and in thine own vein; for what says Spenser?—

'For Bacchus' fruit is friend to Phœbus wise;
And when, with wine, the brain begins to sweat,
The numbers flow as fast as spring doth rise.'

"By Jove, boys! you shall have it," cried Rhimeson, filling his glass with unsteady hand, and muttering, from the same prince of poets—

"Who can counsell a thirstie soule,
With patience to forbear the offred bowle?"

"That is the pure well of English undefiled, old fellows,
and so here goes—'The Lass we Love!'

TUNE—'Duncan Davison.'

"Come, fill your glass, my trusty friend,
And fill it sparkling to the brim—
A flowing bumper, bright and strong—
And push the bottle back again;
For what is man without his drink?
An oyster prison'd in his shell;
A rushlight in the vaults of death;
A rattlesnake without his tail.

CHORUS.

This world, we know, is full of cares,
And sorrow darkens every day;
But wine and love shall be the stars
To light us on our weary way.

Beyond yon hills there lives a lass,
Her name I dare not even speak;
The wine that sparkles in my glass
Was ne'er so rosy as her cheek.
Her neck is clearer than the spring
That streams the water lilies on;
So, here's to her I long have loved—
The fairest flower in Albion.

Let knaves and fools this world divide,
 As they have done since Adam's time;
 Let misers by their hoards abide,
 And poets weave their rotten rhyme;
 But ye, who, in an hour like this,
 Feel every pulse to rapture move,
 Fill high! each lip the goblet kiss—
 The pledge shall be—'The Lass we Love!'

After a good deal of roaritorious applause, the young gentlemen began to act upon the hint contained in the song, and each to give, as a toast, the lady of his heart. When it came to Elliot's turn, he declared he was unable to fulfil the conditions of the toast, as there was not a woman in the world for whom he had the slightest predilection.

"Why, thou personified snowball! thou human icicle!" cried Whitaker.

"Say an avalanche," interrupted Frank; "for, when once my heart is shaken, it will be as irresistible in its course as one of these 'thunderbolts of snow.'"

"Still, it's nothing but cold snow, for all that," cried Harry.

"Who talks of Frank Elliot and love in the same breath?" cried Rhimeson; "why, his heart is like a rock, and love, like a torpid serpent, enclosed in it."

"True," replied Frank; "but, you know, these same serpents sting as hard as ever when once they get into the open air; besides, love, as the shepherd in Virgil discovered, is an inhabitant of the rocks."

"Confound the fellow! he's a walking apothegm—as consequential as a syllogism!" muttered Harry; "but come now, Frank, let us have the inexpressive she, without backing and filling any longer."

"Upon my word, Harry, it is out of my power; but, in few weeks, I hope to"—said Elliot.

"Hope, Frank, hope, my good fellow, is a courtier very

pleasant and agreeable in his conversation, but very much given to forget his promises. But I'll tell you, Frank, since you won't give a toast, I will, because I know it will punish you—so, gentlemen"—

The toast was only suited for the meridian of the place in which it was given, and we will, therefore, be excused from repeating it. But Whitaker had judged rightly that he had punished his friend, who, from the strictness of his education, and a certain delicacy in his opinions respecting women, could never tolerate the desecration of these opinions by the libertine ribaldry which forms so great a part of the conversation of many men after the first bottle. Frank's brow darkened, his keen eye turned with a glance of indignation to Harry; and he was prevented only by the circumstance of being in his own house, from instantly kicking him out of the room.

"Look at Frank now, gentles," continued the young sailor, when the mirth had subsided; "his face is as long as a ropewalk, while every one of yours is as broad as the main hatchway. He has a reverence for women as great as I have for my own tight, clean, sprightly craft; but because a fellow kicks one of my loose spars, or puts it to a base use, I'm not to quarrel with him, as if he had called my vessel a collier, eh? Frank, my good fellow, you're too sober; you're thinking too much of yourself; you're looking at the world with convex glasses; and thus the world seems little—you yourself only great; but, recollect, everybody looks through a convex glass; and that's vanity, Frank:—there, now! the murder's out."

"Nay, Harry," cried Rhimeson, goodnaturedly; for he saw Elliot's nether lip grow white with suppressed passion; "don't push Frank too hard, for charity's sake."

"Charity, to be sure!" interrupted Harry; "but consider what I must have suffered if I had not got that dead weight pitched overboard. I was labouring in the trough,

man, and would have foundered with that spite in my hold. Charity begins at home."

"'Tis a pity that the charity of many persons ends there too," said Frank drily.

"Frank's wit is like the King of Prussia's regiment of death," said the young seaman—"it gives no quarter. But come now, my lads, rig me out a female craft fit for that snow-blooded youngster to go captain of in the voyage of matrimony; do it shipshape, and bear a hand. I would try it myself; but the room looks, to my eyes, as it were filled with dancing logarithms; and then he's so cold, slow, misty-hearted"——

"That if," cried Rhimeson, interrupting him, "he addresses a lady as cold, slow, and misty-hearted as himself, they may go on courting the whole course of their natural lives, like the asymptotes of a hyperbola, which approach nearer and nearer, *ad infinitum*, without the possibility of ever meeting."

"Ha, ha, ha!—ay," shouted Harry; "and if he addresses one of a sanguine temperament, there will be a pretty considerable traffic of quarrels carried on between them, typified and illustrated very well by the constant commerce of heat which is maintained between the poles and the equator, by the agency of opposite currents in the atmosphere. By Jove! Frank, matrimony presents the fire of two batteries at you; one rakes you fore and aft, and the other strikes between wind and water."

"And pray, Harry, what sort of a consort will you sail with yourself?" inquired Rhimeson. This was, perhaps, a question, of all others, that the young sailor would have wished to avoid answering at that time. He was the accepted lover of the sister of his friend Elliot—and, at the moment he was running Frank down, to be, as he himself might have said, brought up standing, was sufficiently disagreeable.

“Come, come, Harry,” cried the young poet, seeing the sailor hesitate; “let’s have her from skysail-mast fid to keel—from starboard to larboard stunsails—from the tip of the flying jib-boom to the taffrail.”

“They’re all fireships, Rhimeson!” replied Harry, with forced gaiety—for he was indignant at Elliot’s keen and suspicious glance—“and, if I do come near them, it shall always be to windward, for the Christian purpose of blowing them out of the water.”

“A libertine,” said Frank, significantly, “reviles women just in the same way that licentious priests lay the blame of the disrespect with which parsons are treated on the irreligion of the laity.”

“I don’t understand either your wit or your manner, Frank,” replied Harry, giving a lurch in his chair; “but this I know, that I don’t care a handful of shakings for either of them; and I say still, that women are all fireships—keep to windward of them—pretty things to try your young gunners at; but, if you close with them, you’re gone, that’s all.”

“I’ll tell you what you’re very like, just now, Harry,” said Frank—who had been pouring down glass after glass of wine, as if to quench his anger—“you’re just like a turkey cock after his head has been cut off, which will keep stalking on in the same gait for several yards before he drops.”

“Elliot! do you mean to insult me?” cried Whitaker, springing furiously from his seat.

“I leave that to the decision of your own incomparable judgment, sir,” replied Elliot, bowing, with a sneer just visible on his features.

“If I thought so, Frank, I would—but it’s impossible; you are my oldest friend.” And the young sailor sat down with a moody brow.

“What would you, sir?” said Elliot, in a tone of calm

contempt; "bear it meekly, I presume? Nay, do not look big, and clench your hands, sir, unless, like Bob Acres, you feel your valour oozing out at your palms, and are striving to retain it!"

"I'll tell you what, Elliot," cried the young sailor, again springing to his feet, and seizing a decanter of wine by the neck, "I don't know what prevents me from driving this at your head."

"It would be quite in keeping with the rest of your gentlemanly conduct, sir," replied Frank, still keeping his seat, and looking at Harry with the most cool and provoking derision; "but I'll tell you why you don't—you dare not!"

"But that you are Harriet Elliot's brother"—began Harry, furiously.

"Scoundrel!" thundered Elliot, rising suddenly, and making a stride towards the young sailor, while the veins of his brow protruded like lines of cordage; "utter that name again, before me, with these blasphemous lips"—

Elliot had scarce, however, let fall the opprobrious epithet, ere the decanter flew, with furious force, from Whitaker's hand, and, narrowly missing Frank's head, was shivered on the wall beyond.

In a moment the young sailor was in the nervous grasp of Frank, who, apparently without the slightest exertion of his vast strength, lifted up the comparatively slight form of Whitaker, and laid him on his back on the floor.

"Be grateful, sir," said he, pressing the prostrate youth firmly down with one hand; "be grateful to the laws of hospitality, which, though you may think it a slight matter to violate, prevent me from striking you in my own house, or pitching you out of the window. Rise, sir, and begone."

Harry rose slowly; and it was almost fearful to see the change which passion had wrought in a few moments on his features. The red flush of drunken rage was entirely

gone, and the livid cheek, the pale quivering lip, and collected eye, which had usurped its place, showed that the degradation he had just undergone had completely sobered him, and given his passion a new but more malignant character. He stood for a brief period in moody silence, whilst the rest of the young men closed round him and Frank, with the intention of reconciling them. At length he moved away towards the door, pushing his friends rudely aside; but turning, before he left the room, he said, in a voice trembling with suppressed emotion—

“I hope to meet Mr. Elliot where his mere brute strength will be laid aside for more honourable and equitable weapons.”

“I shall be happy, at any place or time, to show my sense of Mr. Whitaker’s late courtesy,” replied Frank, bowing slightly, and then drawing up his magnificent figure to its utmost height.

“Let it be *now*, then, sir,” said the young sailor, stepping back into the centre of the room, and pointing to a brace of sharps, which, among foils and masks, hung on one of the walls.

“Oh, no, no!—for God’s sake, not now!” burst from every one except Frank.

“It can neither be now nor here, sir,” replied he, firmly, motioning Whitaker haughtily to the door.

“Gentlemen,” said Harry, turning round to his friends with a loud laugh of derision, “you see that vanity is stronger than valour. Pompey’s troops were beaten at the battle of Pharsalia, only because they were afraid of their pretty faces. Upon my soul, I believe Mr. Elliot’s handsome features stand in the way of his gallantry.”

“Begone, trifler!” cried Frank, relapsing into fury.

“Coward!” shouted the young sailor at the top of his voice.

“Ha!” exclaimed Elliot, starting, as if an adder had

stung him; then, with a convulsive effort controlling his rage, he took down the swords, threw one of them upon the table, and putting his arm into Rhimeson's, beckoned the young sailor to follow him, and left the apartment. As it was in vain that the remainder of the young men attempted to restrain Whitaker, they agreed to accompany him in a body, in order, if possible, to prevent mischief; all but the young advocate whom we have before mentioned, who, having too great a respect for the law to patronise other methods of redressing grievances, ran off to secure the assistance of the city authorities.

The moon, which had been wading among thick masses of clouds, emerged into the clear blue sky, and scattered her silver showers of light on the rocks and green sides of Arthur's Seat, as the young men reached a secluded part in the valley at its foot.

"Gracious Heaven!" exclaimed the young poet to Frank, as they turned to wait for Whitaker and his companions, "how horrible it is to desecrate a scene and hour like this by violence—perhaps, Elliot, by *murder!*" Frank did not reply; his thoughts were at that time with his aged mother and his now unprotected sister; and he bitterly reflected that to whoever of them, in the approaching contest, wounds or death might fall, poor Harriet would have equally to suffer. But the young sailor, still boiling with rage, at that moment approached, and throwing his cloak on a rock, cried, "Now, sir!" and placed himself in attitude.

Their swords crossed, and, for a brief space, nothing was heard but the hard breathing of the spectators and the clashing of the steel, as the well-practised combatants parried each other's thrusts. Elliot was, incomparably, the cooler of the two, and he threw away many chances in which his adversary placed himself open to a palpable hit, his aim being to disarm his antagonist without wounding

him. An unforeseen accident prevented this. Whitaker, pressing furiously forward, struck his foot against a stone, and falling, received Elliot's sword in his body, the hilt, striking with a deep, quick, sullen sound against his breast. The young sailor fell with a sharp aspiration of anguish; and his victorious adversary, horrified by the sight, and rendered silent by the sudden revulsion of his feelings, stood, for some time, gazing at his sword, from the point of which the blood drops trickled slowly, and fell on the dewy sward. "Tis the blood of my dearest, oldest friend—of my brother; and shed by my hand!" he muttered at length, flinging away the guilty blade. His only answer was the groans of his victim, and the shrill whistle of the weapon as it flew through the air.

"Harry, my friend, my brother!" cried the young man, in a tone of unutterable anguish, kneeling down on the grass, and pressing the already cold clammy hand of his late foe."

"Your voice is pleasant to me, Frank, even in death," muttered the young sailor, in a thick obstructed voice. "I have done you wrong—forgive me while I can hear you; and tell Harriet—oh!"

"I do, I do forgive you; but, oh! how shall I forgive myself? Speak to me, Harry!" And Elliot, frantic at the sight of the bloody motionless heap before him, repeated the name of his friend till his voice rose into a scream of agony that curdled the very blood of his friends, and re-echoed among the rocks above, like the voices of tortured demons. Affairs were in this situation when the young advocate came running breathless up to them, and saw, at a glance, that he was too late. "Fly, for Heaven's sake! fly, Elliot; here is money; you may need it," he cried; "the officers will be here instantly, and your existence may be the forfeit of this unhappy chance. Fly! every moment lost is a stab at your life!"

"Be it so," replied the wretched young man, rising and gazing with folded arms down upon his victim; "what have I to do with life?—*he* has ceased to live. I will not leave him."

His friends joined in urging Elliot to instant flight; but he only pointed to the body, and said, in the low tones of calm despair: "Do you think I can leave him now, and thus? Let those fly who are in love with life; I shall remain and meet my fate."

"Frank Elliot!" muttered the wounded man, reviving from the fainting fit into which he had fallen; "come near to me, for I am very weak, and swear to grant the request I have to make, as you would have my last moments free from the bitterest agony."

Elliot flung himself on the ground by the side of his friend, and, in a voice broken by anguish, swore to attend to his words. "Then leave this spot immediately," said the young sailor, speaking slowly and with extreme difficulty; "and should this be my last request—as I feel it must be—get out of the country till the present unhappy affair is forgotten; and moreover, mark, Frank—and, my friends, attend to my words:—I entreat, I *command* you to lay the entire blame of this quarrel and its consequences on me. One of you will write to my poor father, and say it was my last request that he should consider Elliot innocent, and that I give my dying curse to any one who shall attempt to revenge my death. Ah! that was a pang! How dim your faces look in the moonlight! Your hand, dearest Frank, once more; and now away! Keep this, I charge you, from my Harriet—*my* Harriet! O God!" And, with a shudder, that shook visibly his whole frame, the unfortunate youth relapsed into insensibility. There was a brief pause, during which the feelings of the spectators may be better imagined than described, though, assuredly, admiration of the generous anxiety of the young sailor to

do justice to his friend was the prevailing sentiment of their minds. At length the stifled sound of voices, and the dimly seen forms of two or three men stealing towards them, within the shadow of the mountain, roused them from their reverie; and Rhimeson, who had not till now spoken, entreated Elliot to obey the dying request of his friend, and fly before the police reached them. "I have not before urged you to this," he said, "lest you should think it was from a selfish motive; for, as your second, I am equally implicated with you in this unhappy affair; but *now*," continued he, with melancholy emphasis, "there is nothing to be gained and everything to be hazarded by remaining."

The generous argument of the poet at length overcame Elliot's resolution; he bent down quickly and kissed the cold lips of his friend, then waving a silent adieu to the others, he quitted the melancholy scene. The police—for it proved to be they—were within a hundred yards of the spot when the young men left the rest of the group, and, instantly emerging from the shadow which had till now partially concealed them, the leader of the party directed one of his attendants to remain with the body, and set off, with two or three others, in pursuit of the fugitives.

"Follow me," cried Rhimeson, when he saw this movement of the pursuers; and springing as he spoke towards the entrance of a narrow defile which lay entirely in the shadow of the mountain. A deep convulsive sob burst from the pent-up bosom of Elliot ere he replied: "Leave me to my fate, my friend; I cannot fly; the weight of his blood crushes me!"

"This is childish, unjust," said Rhimeson, with strong emotion; "but once more, Frank, will you control this weakness and follow me, or will you slight the last wish of one friend, and sacrifice another, by remaining? for without you I will not stir. Now, choose."

“Lead on,” said Elliot, rousing himself with a convulsive effort; and, striking into the gloom, the two young men sped forward with a step as fleet as that of the hunted deer.

Their pursuers having seen them stand, had slackened their pace, or it is probable the fugitives would have been captured before Rhimeson had prevailed on his friend to fly; but now, separating so as to intercept them if they deviated from the direct path, the policemen raised a loud shout and instantly gave chase. But the young poet, in his solitary rambles amid the noble scenery of Arthur’s Seat and the adjoining valleys, had become intimately acquainted with every path which led through their romantic recesses; and he now sped along the broken footway which skirted the mountain-side with as much confidence as if he had trod on a level sward in the light of noonday. Elliot, having his mind diverted by the necessity of looking to his immediate preservation—for the path, strewn with fragments of rock, led along what might well be termed a precipice, of two or three hundred feet in height—roused up all his energies, and followed his friend with a speed which speedily left their pursuers far behind. Thus they held on for about a quarter of an hour, gradually and obliquely ascending the mountain side, until the voices of the policemen, calling to each other far down in the valley, proved that they had escaped the immediate danger which had threatened them. Still, however, Rhimeson kept on, though he relaxed his pace in order to hold some communication with his companion.

“We have distanced the bloodhounds for the nonce, Frank,” he said; “these ale-swilling rascals cannot set a stout heart to a stey brae; but whither shall we go now? Edinburgh, perhaps Scotland, is too hot to hold us, and the point is how to get out of it. What do you advise?”

“I am utterly careless about it, Rhimeson; do as you think best,” replied Elliot, in a tone of deep despondency.

“Cheer up, cheer up! my dear Frank,” said the young poet, feigning a confidence of hope which his heart belied. “Whitaker may still recover; he is too gallant a fellow to be lost to us in a drunken brawl; and even if the worst should happen, it must still keep you from despair to reflect that you were forced into this rencontre, and that it was an unhappy accident, resulting from his own violence and not your intention, which deprived him of his life.” Elliot stopped suddenly, and gazing down from the height which they had now reached into the valley, seemed to be searching for the spot where the fatal accident had taken place, as if to assist him in the train of thought which his friend’s words had aroused. The dark group of human beings were seen dimly in the moonlight, moving with a slow pace along the hollow of the gorge towards the city, bearing along with them the body of the young sailor.

“Dear, dear Frank,” said Rhimeson, deeply commiserating the anguish which developed itself in the clasped uplifted hands and shuddering frame of his unhappy friend, “bear up against this cruel accident like a man—he may still recover.” Elliot moved away from the ridge which overlooked the valley, muttering, as if unconsciously—

“ ‘Action is momentary—
The motion of a muscle this way or that;
Suffering is long, obscure, and infinite!’ *

How profound and awful is that sentiment!”

The sound of a piece of rock dislodged from the mountain side, and thundering and crashing down the steep, awakened Rhimeson from his contemplation of Elliot’s grief; and, springing again to the brink of the almost precipitous descent, he saw that one of their pursuers had crept up by the inequalities of the rock, and was within a few yards of the summit.

* Wordsworth.

“Dog!” cried the young man, heaving off a fragment of rock, and in the act of dashing it down upon the unprotected head of the policeman, “offer to stir, and I will scatter your brains upon the cliffs!”

A shrill cry of terror burst from the poor fellow’s lips as he gazed upwards at the frightful attitude of his enemy, and expected every moment to see the dreadful engine hurled at his head. The cry was answered by the shouts of his companions, who, by different paths, had arrived within a short distance of the fugitives.

“Retire miscreant! or I will send your mangled carcass down to the foot without your help,” shouted Rhimeson, swinging the huge stone up to the extent of his arms. His answer was a pistol shot, which, whistling past his cheek, struck the uplifted fragment of rock with such force as to send a stunning feeling up to his very shoulders. The stone fell from his benumbed grasp, and, striking the edge of the cliff, bounded innocuous over the head of the policeman, who, springing upwards, was within a few feet of Rhimeson before he had fully recovered himself. “Away!” he cried, taking again the path up the mountain, and closely followed by Elliot, who, during the few moments in which the foregoing scene was being enacted, had remained almost motionless—“Away! give them a flying shot at least,” continued he, feeling all the romance of his nature aroused by the circumstances in which he was placed. The policeman, however, who had only fired in self-defence, refrained from using his other pistol, now that the danger was past; but grasping it firmly in his hand, he followed the steps of the young men with a speed stimulated by the desire of revenge, and a kind of professional eagerness to capture so daring an offender. But, in spite of his exertions, the superior agility of the fugitives gradually widened the distance between them; and at length, as they emerged from the rocky ground upon the

smooth short grass, where a footfall could not be heard, the moon became again obscured by dark clouds, and Rhimeson, whispering his companion to observe his motions, turned short off the path they had been following, and struck eastward among the green hills towards the sea. They could hear the curse of the policeman, and the click of his pistol lock, as if he had intended to send a leaden messenger into the darkness in search of them. But the expected report did not follow; and, favoured by the continued obscurity of the night, they were, in a short time, descending the hill behind Duddingstone, which lies at the opposite extremity of the King's Park. Still continuing their route eastward, they walked forward at a rapid pace, consulting on their future movements. The sound of wheels rapidly approaching, interrupted their conversation. It was the south mail.

In a short time they were flying through the country towards Newcastle, at the rate of ten miles an hour, including stoppages. Elliot was at the river side, searching for a vessel to convey them to some part of the continent, and Rhimeson was dozing over a newspaper in the Turk's Head in that town, when a policeman entered, and, mistaking him for Elliot, took him into custody. How their route had been discovered, Rhimeson knew not; but he was possessed of sufficient presence of mind to personate his friend, and offer to accompany the police officer instantly back to Edinburgh, leaving a letter and a considerable sum of money for Elliot. In a few minutes, the generous fellow leaped into the post-chaise, with a heart as light as many a bridegroom when flying on the wings of love and behind the tails of four broken-winded hacks to some wilderness, where "transport and security entwine"—the anticipated scene of a delicious honey-moon. Elliot, while in search of a vessel, had fallen in with a young man whom he had known as a medical student at

Edinburgh, and who was now about to go as surgeon of a Greenland vessel, in order to earn, during the summer, the necessary sum for defraying his college expenses. He accompanied Elliot to his inn, and heard, during the way, the story of his misfortunes. It is unnecessary to describe Frank's surprise and grief at the capture of his friend, Rhimeson. At first, he determined instantly to return and relieve him from durance. But, influenced by the entreaties contained in Rhimeson's note, and by the arguments of the young Northumbrian, he at length changed this resolution, and determined on accepting the situation of surgeon in the whaling vessel for which his present companion had been about to depart. Frank presented the Northumbrian with a sum more than equal to the expected profits of the voyage, and received his thanks in tones wherein the natural roughness of his accent was increased to a fearful degree by the strength of his emotion. All things being arranged, Frank shook his acquaintance by the hand, and remarked that it would be well for him to keep out of the way for a while. So bidding the man of harsh aspirations adieu, he made his way to the coach, and, in twenty-four hours, was embarked in the *Labrador*, with a stiff westerly breeze ready to carry him away from all that he loved and dreaded.

Let the reader imagine that six months have passed over—and let him imagine, also, if he can, the anguish which the mother and sister of Elliot suffered on account of his mysterious disappearance. It was now September. The broad harvest moon was shining full upon the bosom of Teviot, and glittering upon the rustling leaves of the woods that overhang her banks, and pouring a flood of more golden light upon the already golden grain that waved—ripe for the sickle—along the margin of the lovely stream, the stars, few in number, but most brilliant, had taken their places in the sky; the owl was whooping from the

ivied tower; the corn-craik was calling drowsily; now and then the distant baying of a watch-dog startled the silence, otherwise undisturbed, save by the plaintive murmuring of the stream, which, as it flowed past, uttered such querulous sounds, that, as some one has happily expressed it, "one was almost tempted to ask what ailed it." A traveller was moving slowly up the side of the river, and ever and anon stopping, as if to muse over some particular object. It was Elliot. He had returned from Greenland, and, in disguise, had come to the place of his birth—to the dwelling of his mother and his sister; he had heard that his mother was ill—that anxiety, on his account, had reduced her almost to the grave—and that she was now but slowly recovering. He had been able to acquire no information respecting Whitaker; and the weight of his friend's blood lay yet heavy on his soul, for he considered himself as his murderer. It was with feelings of the most miserable anxiety that he approached the place of his birth. The stately beeches that lined the avenue which led to his mother's door were in sight; they stooped and raised their stately branches, with all the gorgeous drapery of leaves, as if they welcomed him back; the very river seemed to utter, in accents familiar to him, that he was now near the hall of his fathers. Oh! how is the home of our youth enshrined in our most sacred affections! by what multitudinous fibres is it entwined with our heart-strings!—it is part of our being—its influences remain with us for ever, though years spent in foreign lands divide us from "our early home that cradled life and love." Elliot was framed to feel keenly these sacred influences—and often, even after brief absences from home, he had experienced them in deep intensity; but now the throb of exultation was kept down by the crushing weight of remorse, and the gush of tenderness checked by bitter fears. He entered the avenue which led up to the house. Yonder

were the windows of his mother's chamber—there was a light in it. He would have given worlds to have seen before him the interior. As he quickened his pace, he heard the sound of voices in the avenue. He turned aside out of the principal walk; and, standing under the branches of a venerable beech, which swept down almost to the ground, and fully concealed him, he waited the approach of the speakers, in hopes of hearing some intelligence respecting his family. Through the screen of the leaves he presently saw that it was a pair of lovers, for their arms were locked around each other, and their cheeks were pressed together as they came down the avenue—treading as slowly as though they were attempting to show how much of rest there might be in motion.

“To-morrow, then, my sweet Harriet,” said the young man, “I leave you; and though it is torture to me to be away from your side, yet I have resolved never again to see you until I have made the most perfect search for your brother; until I can win a dearer embrace than any I have yet received, by placing him before you.”

“Would to heaven it may be so!” replied the young lady; “but my mother—how will I be able to support her when you are gone, dearest Henry? She is kept up only by the happy strains of hope which your very voice creates. How shall I, myself unsupported, ever keep her from despondency? Oh! she will sink—she will die! Remain with us, Henry; and let us trust to providence to restore my brother to us—if he be yet alive!”

“Ask it not, my beloved Harriet, I beseech you,” said the young man, “lest I be unable to deny you. If your brother, as is likely, has sought some foreign land, and remains in ignorance of my recovery from the wounds I received from him, how shall I answer to myself—how shall I even dare to ask for this fair hand—how shall I ever hope to rest upon your bosom in peace—if I do not

use every possible means to discover him? O my dear Elliot—friend of my youth—if thou couldst translate the language of my heart, as it beats at this moment—if thou couldst hear my sacred resolve!”—

“Whitaker, my friend! Harriet, my beloved sister!” cried Elliot, bursting out from beneath the overspreading beech, and snatching his sister in his arms—“I am here—I see all—I understand the whole of the events—how much too graciously brought about for me, Father of mercies! I acknowledge. Let us now go to my mother.”

It is in scenes such as this that we find how weak words are to describe the feelings of the actors—the rapid transition of events—the passions that chase one another over the minds and hearts of those concerned, like waves in a tempest. Nor is it necessary. The reader who can feel and comprehend such situations as those in which the actors in our little tale are placed, are able to draw, from their own hearts and imaginations, much fitter and more rapidly sketched portraiture of the passions which are awakened, the feelings that develop themselves in such situations and with such persons, than can be painted in words.

The harvest moon was gone, and another young moon was in the skies, when Whitaker, and the same young lady of whom we before spoke, trode down the avenue, locked in each other's arms, and with cheek pressed to cheek. They talked of a thousand things most interesting to persons in their situation—for they were to be married on the morrow—but, perhaps, not so interesting to our readers, many of whom may have performed in the same scenes.

Elliot's mother was recovered; and he himself was happy, or, at least, he put on all the trappings of happiness; for, in a huge deer-skin Esquimaux dress, which he had brought from Greenland, he danced at his sister's wedding until the great bear had set in the sea, and the autumn sun began to peer through the shutters of the drawing-room of his ancient hall.

PHILIPS GREY.

“ Death takes a thousand shapes :
Borne on the wings of sullen slow disease,
Or hovering o'er the field of bloody fight,
In calm, in tempest, in the dead of night,
Or in the lightning of the summer moon ;
In all how terrible !”

AMONG the many scenes of savage sublimity which the lowlands of Scotland display, there is none more impressive in its solitary grandeur, than that in the neighbourhood of Loch Skene, on the borders of Moffatdale. At a considerable elevation above the sea, and surrounded by the loftiest mountains in the south of Scotland, the loch has collected its dark mass of waters, astonishing the lovers of nature by its great height above the valley which he has just ascended, and, by its still and terrible beauty, overpowering his mind with sentiments of melancholy and awe. Down the cliffs which girdle in the shores of the loch, and seem to support the lofty piles of mountains above them, a hundred mountain torrents leap from rock to rock, flashing and roaring, until they reach the dark reservoir beneath. A canopy of grey mist almost continually shrouds from the sight the summits of the hills, leaving the imagination to guess at those immense heights which seem to pierce the very clouds of heaven. Occasionally, however, this veil is withdrawn, and then you may see the sovereign brow of Palmoodie encircled with his diadem of snow, and the green summits of many less lofty hills arranged round him, like courtiers uncovered before their monarch. Amid this scene, consecrated to solitude and the most sombre melancholy, no sound comes upon the mountain breeze, save the wail of the plover, or the whir

of the heathcock's wing, or, haply, the sullen plunge of a trout leaping up in the loch.

At times, indeed, the solitary wanderer may be startled by the scream of the grey eagle, as dropping with the rapidity of light from his solitary cliff, he shoots past, enraged that his retreat is polluted by the presence of man, and then darts aloft into the loftiest chambers of the sky; or, dallying with the piercing sunbeams, is lost amid their glory.* At the eastern extremity of the loch, the superfluous waters are discharged by a stream of no great size, but which, after heavy showers, pours along its deep and turbid torrent with frightful impetuosity.

After running along the mountain for about half a mile, it suddenly precipitates itself over the edge of a rocky ridge which traverses its course, and, falling sheer down a height of three hundred feet, leaps and bounds over some smaller precipices, until, at length, far down in Moffatdale, it entirely changes its character, and pursues a calm and peaceful course through a fine pastoral country. Standing

* Round about the shores of Loch Skene the Ettrick Shepherd herded the flocks of his master, and fed his boyish fancies with the romance and beauty which breathes from every feature of the scene. One day, when we were at Loch Skene on a fishing excursion with him, he pointed up to the black crag overhanging the water, and said—"You see the edge o' that cliff; I ance as near dropped frae it intil eternity as I dinna care to think o'. I was herdin' aboot here, and lang and lang I thocht o' speelin' up to the eery, frae which I could hear the young eagles screamin' as plain as my ain bonny Mary Gray (his youngest daughter) when she's no pleased wi' the colley; but the fear o' the auld anes aye keepit me frae the attempt. At last, ae day, when I was at the head o' the cliff, and the auld eagle away frae the nest, I took heart o' grace, and clambered down (for there was nae gettin' up). Weel, sir, I was at the maist kittle bit o' the craig, wi' my foot on a bit ledge just wide enough to bear me, and sair bothered wi' my plaid and stick, when, guid saf's! I heard the boom o' the auld eagle's wings come whaff, whaffing through the air, and in a moment o' time she brought me sic a whang wi' her wing, as she rushed enraged by, and then turning short again and fetchin' me anither, I thought I was gane for ever; but providence gave me presence o' mind to regain my former resting-place, and there flingin' off my plaid, I keepit aye nobbing the bird wi' my stick till I was out o' danger. It was a fearsome time!" It would have been dreadful had the pleasure which "Kilmeny," "Queen Ilynde," and the hundred other beautiful creations which the glorious old bard has given us, been all thus destroyed "at one fell swoop."

on the brow of a mountain which overlooks the fall, the eye takes in at once the whole of the course which we have described; and, to a poetical mind, which recognises in mountain scenery the cradle of liberty and the favourite dwelling-place of imagination, the character of the stream seems a type of the human mind: stormy, bounding, and impetuous, when wrapped up in the glorious feelings which belong to romantic countries; peaceful, dull, and monotonous, amid the less interesting lowlands. Yet, after indulging in such a fancy for a time, another reflection arises, which, if it be less pleasing and poetical, is, perhaps, more useful—that the impetuous course of the mountain torrent, though gratifying to the lover of nature, is unaccompanied with any other benefit to man, while the stream that pursues its unpretending path through the plains, bestows fertility on a thousand fields. Such thoughts as these, however, only arise in the mind when it has become somewhat familiar with the surrounding scenes. The roar of the cataract, the savage appearance of the dark rocks that border the falling waters, and that painful feeling which the sweeping and inevitable course of the stream produces, at first paralyze the mind, and, for some time after it has recovered its tone, occupy it to the exclusion of every other sentiment.

And now, gentle reader, let us walk toward the simple stone seat, which some shepherd boy has erected under yon silvery-stemmed birch tree, where the sound of the waterfall comes only in a pleasant monotone, and where the most romantic part of old Scotland is spread beneath our feet. There you see the eternal foam of the torrent, without being distracted with its roar; and you can trace the course of the stream till it terminates in yon clear and pellucid pool at the foot of the hill, which seems too pure for aught but—

“ A mirror and a bath for beauty’s youngest daughters; ”

yet, beautiful in its purity as it seems, it is indeed the scene of the following true and terrible tale:—

Philips Grey was one of the most active young shepherds in the parish of Traquair. For two or three years he had carried off the medal given at the St. Ronan's border games to him who made the best high leap; and, at the last meeting of the games, he had been first at the running hop-step-and-jump; had beat all competitors in running; and, though but slightly formed, had gained the second prize for throwing the hammer—a favourite old Scottish exercise, but almost unknown in England. Athletic sports were, indeed, his favourite pursuit, and he cultivated them with an ardour which very few of our readers will be able to imagine. But among the shepherds, and, indeed, all inhabitants of pastoral districts, he who excels in these sports possesses a superiority over his contemporaries, which cannot but be gratifying in the highest degree to its possessor. His name is known far and wide; his friendship is courted by the men; and his hand, either as a partner in a country dance, or in a longer “minuet of the heart,” marriage, is coquetted for by the maidens: he, in fact, possesses all the power which superiority of intellect bestows in more populous and polished societies. But it is by no means the case, as is often said, that ardour in the pursuit of violent sports is connected with ignorance or mediocrity of intellect. On the contrary, by far the greater number of victors at games of agility and strength, will be found to possess a degree of mental energy, which is, in fact, the power that impels them to corporeal excitement, and is often the secret of their success over more muscular antagonists. Philips Grey, in particular, was a striking instance of this fact. Notwithstanding his passion for athletic sports, he had found time, while on the hill-side tending his flock, or in the long winter nights, to make himself well acquainted with the Latin classics. This is

by no means uncommon among the Scottish peasantry. Smith, and Black, and Murray, are not singular instances of self-taught scholars; for there is scarce a valley in Scotland in which you will not hear of one or more young men of this stamp. Philips also played exquisitely on the violin, and had that true taste for the simple Scottish melody which can, perhaps, be nowhere cultivated so well as among the mountains and streams which have frequently inspired them. Many a time, when you ask the name of the author of some sweet ballad which the country girl is breathing amongst these hills, the tear will start into her eye as she answers—"Poor Philips Grey, that met a dreadful death at the Grey Mare's Tail." With these admirable qualities, Philips unfortunately possessed a mood of mind which is often an attendant on genius—he was subject to attacks of the deepest melancholy. Gay, cheerful, humorous, active, and violent in his sports as he was, there were periods when the darkest gloom overshadowed his mind, and when his friends even trembled for his reason. It is said that he frequently stated his belief that he should die a dreadful death. Alas! that this strange presentiment should have indeed been prophetic! It is not surprising that Philips Grey, with his accomplishments, should have won the heart of a maiden somewhat above his own degree, and even gained the consent of her father to his early marriage. The old man dwelt in Moffatdale; and the night before Philips' wedding-day, he and his younger brother walked over to his intended father-in-law's house, in order to be nearer the church. That night the young shepherd was in his gayest humour; his bonny bride was by his side, and looking more beautiful than ever; he sang his finest songs, played his favourite tunes, and completely bewitched his companions. All on a sudden, while he was relating some extraordinary feat of strength which had been performed by one of his acquaint-

ances, he stopped in the middle of the story, and exchanged the animation with which he was speaking for silence and a look of the deepest despair. His friends were horror-struck; but as he insisted that nothing was the matter with him, and as his younger brother said that he had not been in bed for two nights, the old man dismissed the family, saying—"Gang awa to bed, Philips, my man, and get a sound sleep; or if you do lie wauken a wee bittie, it's nae great matter: odd! it's the last nicht my bonny Marion 'll keep ye lying wauken for her sake. Will't no, my bonnie doo?"

"Deed, faither, I dinna ken," quoth Marion, simply, yet archly; and the party separated.

Philips, however, walked down the burn side, in order to try if the cool air would dissipate his unaccountable anxiety. But, in spite of his efforts, a presentiment of some fatal event gathered strength in his mind, and he involuntarily found himself revolving the occurrences of his past life. Here he found little to condemn, for he had never received an unkind word from his father, who was now in the grave; and his mother was wearing out a green and comfortable old age beneath his own roof. He had brought up his younger brothers, and they were now in a fair way to succeed in life. He could not help feeling satisfied at this, yet why peculiarly at this time he knew not. Then came the thought of his lovely Marion, and the very agony which at once rushed on his heart had well nigh choked him. Immediately, however, the fear which had hung about him seemed to vanish; for, strange and mysterious as it was, it was not sufficiently powerful to withstand the force of that other horrible imagination. So he returned to the house, and was surprised to find himself considering how his little property should be distributed after his death. When he reached the door, he stopped for a moment, overcome with this pertinacity in

the supernatural influence which seemed exercised over him; and at length, with gloomy resolution, entered the house. His brother was asleep, and a candle was burning on the table. He sank down into a chair, and went on with his little calculations respecting his will. At length, having decided upon all these things, and having fixed upon the churchyard of St. Mary's for his burial place, he arose from his chair, took up the candle and crossed the room towards his brother, intending to convey his wishes to him.

The boy lay on the front side of one of those beds with sliding doors, so common in Scotland; and beyond him there was room for Philips to lie down. Something bright seemed gleaming in the dark recess of the bed. He advanced the candle, and beheld—oh, sight of horror!—a plate upon what bore the shape of a coffin, bearing the words—“Philips Grey, aged 23.” For a moment he gazed steadily upon it, and was about to stretch out his hand towards it, when the lid slowly rose, and he beheld a mutilated and bloody corpse, the features of which were utterly undistinguishable, but which, by some unearthly impulse, he instantly knew to be his own. Still he kept a calm and unmoved gaze at it, though the big drops of sweat stood on his brow with the agony of his feelings; and, while he was thus contemplating the dreadful revelation, it gradually faded away, and at length totally vanished. The power which had upheld him seemed to depart along with the phantom; his sight failed him, and he fell on the floor.

Presently he recovered, and found himself in bed, with his brother by his side chafing his temples. He explained everything that had occurred, seemed calm and collected, shook his head when his brother attempted to explain away the vision, and finally sank into a tranquil sleep.

Whether the horrible resemblance of his own coffin and

mutilated corpse was in reality revealed to him by the agency of some supernatural power, or whether it was (as sceptics will say) the natural effect of his hypochondriac state of mind, producing an optical deception, we will not take upon us to determine; certain, however, it is, that with a calm voice and collected manner he described to his brother James, a scene the dreadful reality of which was soon to be displayed.

In the morning Philips awoke, cheerful and calm, the memory of last night's occurrences seeming but a dreadful dream. On the grass before the door he met his beloved Marion, who, on that blessed Sabbath, was to become his wife. The sight of her perfect loveliness, arrayed in a white dress, emblem of purity and innocence, filled his heart with rapture; and as he clasped her in his arms, every sombre feeling vanished away. It is not our intention to describe the simplicity of the marriage ceremony, or the happiness which filled Philips Grey's heart during that Sabbath morning, while sitting in the church by the side of his lovely bride.

They returned home, and, in the afternoon, the young couple, together with James Grey and the bride's-maid, walked out among the glades of Craigeburn wood, a spot rendered classic by the immortal Burns. Philips had gathered some of the wild flowers that sprang among their feet—the pale primrose, the fair anemone, and the drooping blue bells of Scotland—and wove them into a garland. As he was placing them on Marion's brow, and shading back the long flaxen tresses that hung across her cheek, he said, gaily—"There wants but a broad water lily to place in the centre of thy forehead, my sweet Marion; for where should the fairest flower of the valley be, but on the brow of its queen? Come with me, Jamie, and in half an hour we will bring the fairest that floats on Loch Skene." So, kissing the cheek of his bride, Philips and his brother

set off up the hill with the speed of the mountain deer. They arrived at the foot of the waterfall, panting, and excited with their exertions. By climbing up the rocks close to the stream, the distance to the loch is considerably shortened; and Philips, who had often clambered to the top of the Bitch Craig, a high cliff on the Manor Water, proposed to his brother that they should "speel the height." The other, a supple agile lad, instantly consented. "Gie me your plaid then, Jamie, my man—it will maybe fash ye," said Philips; "and gang ye first, and keep weel to the hill side." Accordingly the boy gave his brother the plaid and began the ascent. While Philips was knotting his brother's plaid round his body above his own, a fox peeped out of his hole half way up the cliff, and thinking flight advisable, dropped down the precipice. Laughing till the very echoes rang, Philips followed his brother. Confident in his agility, he ascended with a firm step till he was within a few yards of the summit. James was now on the top of the precipice, and looking down on his brother, and not knowing the cause of his mirth, exclaimed—"Daursey, callant, ye're fey."* In a moment the memory of his last night's vision rushed on Philips Grey's mind, his eyes became dim, his limbs powerless, he dropped off the very edge of the giddy precipice, and his form was lost in the black gulf below. For a few minutes, James felt a sickness of heart which rendered him almost insensible, and sank down on the grass lest he should fall over the cliff. At length, gathering strength from very terror, he advanced to the edge of the cataract and gazed downwards. There, about two-thirds down the fall, he could perceive the remains of his brother, mangled and mutilated; the body being firmly wedged between two projecting points of rock, whereon the descending water

* "Fey," a Scottish word, expressive of that unaccountable and violent mirth which is supposed frequently to portend sudden death.—ED

streamed, while the bleeding head hung dangling, and almost separated from the body—and, turned upwards, discovered to the horrified boy the starting eye-balls of his brother, already fixed in death, and the teeth clenched in the bitter agony which had tortured his passing spirit.

It is scarcely necessary to detail the consequences of this cruel accident. Assistance was procured, and the mangled body conveyed to the house of Marion's father, whence, a few short hours ago, the young shepherd had issued in vigour and happiness. When the widowed bride saw James Grey return to them with horror painted on his features, she seemed instantly to divine the full extent of her misfortune; she sank down on the grass, with the unfinished garland of her dead lover in her hand, and in this state was carried home. For two days she passed from one fit to another; but on the night of the second day she sank into a deep sleep. That night, James Grey was watching the corpse of his brother; the coffin was placed on the very bed where they had slept two nights ago. The plate gleamed from the shadowy recess, and the words—"Philips Grey, aged 23," were distinctly visible. While James was reflecting on the prophetic vision of his brother, a figure, arrayed in white garments, entered the room and moved towards the dead body. It was poor Marion.

She slowly lifted the lid of the coffin, and gazed long and intently on the features of her dead husband. Then, turning round to James, she uttered a short shrill shriek, and fell backwards on the corpse. She hovered between life and death for a few days, and at length expired. She now lies by the side of her lover, in the solitary burial ground of St. Mary's.

Such is the event which combines, with others not less dark and terrible, to throw a wild interest around those

gloomy rocks. Many a time you will hear the story from the inhabitants of those hills ; and, until fretted away by the wind and rain, the plaid and the bonnet of the unfortunate Philips Grey hung upon the splintered precipice to attest the truth of the tale.

DONALD GORM.

In a remote corner of Assynt, one of the most remote and savage districts in the Highlands of Scotland, there is a certain wild and romantic glen, called Eddernahulish. In the picturesqueness of this glen, however, neither wood nor rock has any share; and, although it may be difficult to conceive of any place possessing that character without these ordinary adjuncts, it is, nevertheless, true, that Eddernahulish, with neither tree nor precipice, is yet strikingly picturesque. The wide sweep of the heath-clad hills whose gradual descents form the spacious glen, and the broad and brawling stream careering through its centre, give the place an air of solitude and of quiet repose that, notwithstanding its monotony, is exceedingly impressive.

On gaining any of the many points of elevation that command a view of this desolate strath, you may descry, towards its western extremity, a small, rude, but massive stone bridge, grey with age; for it was erected in the time of that laird of Assynt who rendered himself for ever infamous by betraying the Duke of Montrose, who had sought and obtained the promise of his protection, to his enemies.

Close by this bridge stands a little highland cottage, of, however, a considerably better order than the common run of such domiciles in this quarter of the world; and bespeaking a condition, as to circumstances, on the part of its occupants, which is by no means general in the Highlands.

“Well what of this cottage?” says the impatient reader.

“What of it?” say we, with the proud consciousness of having something worth hearing to tell of it. “Why, was it not the birthplace of Donald Gorm?”

“And, pray, who or what was Donald Gorm?”

“We were just going to tell you when you interrupted us; and we will now proceed to the fulfilment of that intention.”

Donald Gorm was a rough, rattling, outspoken, hot-headed, and warm-hearted highlander, of about two-and-thirty years of age. Bold as a lion, and strong as a rhinoceros, with great bodily activity, he feared nobody; and having all the irascibility of his race, would fight with anybody at a moment's notice. Possessing naturally a great flow of animal spirits and much ready wit, Donald was the life and soul of every merry-making in which he bore a part. In the dance, his joyous whoop and haloo might be heard a mile off; and the hilarious crack of his finger and thumb, nearly a third of that distance. Donald, in short, was one of those choice spirits that are always ready for anything, and who, by the force of their individual energies, can keep a whole country-side in a stir. As to his occupations, Donald's were various—sometimes farming, (assisting his father, with whom he lived,) sometimes herring fishing, and sometimes taking a turn at harvest work in the Lowlands—by which industry he had scraped a few pounds together; and, being unmarried, with no one to care for but himself, he was thus comparatively independent—a circumstance which kept Donald's head at its highest elevation, and his voice, when he spoke, at the top of its bent.

The tenor of our story requires that we should now advert to another member of Donald's family. This is a brother of the latter's, who bore the euphonious and high-flavoured patronymic of Duncan Dhu M'Tavish Gorm, or, simply, Duncan Gorm, as he was, for shortness, called,

although certainly baptized by the formidable list of names just given.

This Duncan Gorm was a man of totally different character from his brother Donald. He was of a quiet and peaceable disposition and demeanour—steady, sober, and conscientious; qualities which were thought to adapt him well for the line of life in which he was placed. This was as a domestic servant in the family of an extensive highland proprietor, of the name of Grant. In this capacity Duncan had, about a year or so previous to the precise period when our story commences—which, by the way, we beg the reader to observe, is now some ninety years past—gone to the continent, as a personal attendant on the elder son of his master, whose physicians had recommended his going abroad for the benefit of his health.

It was, then, about a year after the departure of Duncan and his master, that Donald's father received a letter from his son, intimating the death of his young master, which had taken place at Madrid, and, what was much more surprising intelligence, that the writer had determined on settling in the city just named, as keeper of a tavern or wine-house, in which calling he said he had no doubt he would do well. And he was not mistaken; in about six months after, his family received another letter from him, informing them that he was succeeding beyond his most sanguine expectations—and hereby hangs our tale.

On Donald these letters of his brother's made a very strong impression; and, finally, had the effect of inducing him to adopt a very strange and very bold resolution. This was neither more nor less than to join his brother in Madrid—a resolution from which it was found impossible to dissuade him, especially after the receipt of Duncan's second letter, giving intimation of his success.

With most confused and utterly inadequate notions, therefore, of either the nature, or distance, or position of

the country to which he was going, Donald made preparations for his journey. But they were merely such preparations as he would have made for a descent on the Lowlands, at harvest time. He put up some night-caps, stockings, and shirts in a bundle, with a quantity of bread and cheese, and a small flask of his native mountain dew. This bundle he proposed to suspend, in the usual way, over his shoulder on the end of a huge oak stick, which he had carefully selected for the purpose. And it was thus prepared—with, however, an extra supply of his earnings in his pocket, of which he had a vague notion he would stand in need—that Donald contemplated commencing his journey to Madrid from the heart of the Highlands of Scotland. In one important particular, however, did Donald's outfit on this occasion, differ from that adopted on ordinary occasions. On the present, he equipped himself in the full costume of his country—kilt, plaid, bonnet and feather, sword, dirk, and pistols; and thus arrayed, his appearance was altogether very striking, as he was both a stout and exceedingly handsome man.

Before starting on his extraordinary expedition, Donald had learned which was the fittest seaport whereat to embark on his progress to Spain; and it was nearly all he had learned, or indeed cared to inquire about, as to the place of his destination. For this port, then, he finally set out; but over his proceedings, for somewhere about three weeks after this, there is a veil which our want of knowledge of facts and circumstances will not enable us to withdraw. Of all subsequent to this, however, we are amply informed; and shall now proceed to give the reader the full benefit of that information.

Heaven knows how Donald had fought his way to Madrid, or what particular route he had taken to attain this consummation; but certain it is, that, about the end of the three weeks mentioned, the identical Donald Gorm

of whom we speak, kilted and hosed as he left Edderna-hulish, with a huge stick over his shoulder bearing a bundle suspended on its farthest extremity, was seen, early in the afternoon, approaching the gate of Alcala, one of the principal and most splendid entrances into the Spanish capital. Donald was staring about him, and at every thing he saw, with a look of the greatest wonder and amazement; and strange were the impressions that the peculiar dresses of those he met, and the odd appearance of the buildings within his view, made upon his unsophisticated mind and bewildered sensorium.

He, in truth, felt very much as if he had by some accident got into the moon, or some other planet than that of which he was a born inhabitant, and as if the beings around him were human only in form and feature. The perplexity and confusion of his ideas were, indeed, great—so great that he found it impossible to reduce them to such order as to give them one single distinct impression. There were, however, two points in Donald's character, which remained wholly unaffected by the novelty of his position. These were his courage and bold bearing. Not all Spain, nor all that was in Spain, could have deprived Donald of these for a moment. He was amazed, but not in the least awed. He was, in truth, looking rather fiercer than usual, at this particular juncture, in consequence of a certain feeling of irritation, caused by what he deemed the impertinent curiosity of the passers-by, who, no less struck with his strange appearance than he with theirs, were gazing and tittering at him from all sides—treatment this, at which Donald thought fit to take mortal offence. Having arrived, however, at the gate of Alcala, Donald thought it full time to make some inquiries as to where his relative resided. Feeling impressed with the propriety of this step, he made up to a group of idle equivocal-looking fellows, who, wrapped up in long buttoned

dilapidated cloaks, were lounging about the gate; and, plunging boldly into the middle of them, he delivered himself thus, in his best English:—

“I say, freens, did you’ll know, any of you, where my broder stops?”

The men, as might be expected, first stared at the speaker, and then burst out a-laughing in his face. They, of course, could not comprehend a word of what he said; a circumstance on the possibility of which it had never struck Donald to calculate, and to which he did not now advert. Great, therefore, was his wrath, at this, apparently, contemptuous treatment by the Spaniards. His highland blood mounted to his face, and with the same rapidity rose his highland choler. Donald, in truth, already contemplated doing battle in defence of his insulted consequence, and at once hung out his flag of defiance.

“You tam scarecrow-lookin rascals!” he sputtered out, in great fury, at the same time shaking his huge clenched brown fist in the faces of the whole group, their numbers not in the least checking his impetuosity—“You cowardly, starvation-like togs! I’ve a goot mind to make smashed potatoes o’ the whole boilin o’ ye. Tam your Spanish noses and whiskers!”

The fierce and determined air of Donald had the effect of instantly restoring the gravity of the Spaniards, who, totally at a loss to comprehend what class of the human species he represented, looked at him with a mingled expression of astonishment and respect. At length, one of their number discharged a volley of his native language at Donald; but it was, apparently, of civil and good-natured import, for it was delivered in a mild tone, and accompanied by a conciliatory smile. On Donald, the language was, of course, utterly lost—he did not comprehend a word of it; but not so the indications of a friendly disposi-

tion to which we have alluded; these he at once appreciated, and they had the effect of allaying his wrath a little, and inducing him to make another attempt at a little civil colloquy.

"Well," said Donald, now somewhat more calmly, "I was shust ask you a ceevil question, an' you laugh in my face, which is not ceevil. In my country we don't do tha to anybody, far less a stranger. Noo, may pe, you'll not know my broder, and there's no harm in that—none at all; but you should shust have say so at once, an' there would be no more apout it. Can none of you speak Gaelic?"

To this inquiry, which was understood to be such, there was a general shaking of heads amongst the Spaniards.

"Oich, oich, it must be a tam strange country where there's no Gaelic. But, never mind—you cannot help your misfortunes. I say, lads, will ye teuk a tram. Hooch, hurra! prof, prof! Let's get a dram." And Donald flung up one of his legs hilariously, while he gave utterance to these uncouth expletives, which he did in short joyous shouts. "Where will we go, lads? Did you'll know any decen' public-house, where we'll can depend on a goot tram?"

To this invitation, and to the string of queries by which it was accompanied, Donald got in reply only a repetition of that shake of the head which intimated non-comprehension. But it was an instance of the latter that surprised him more than all the others.

"Well, to be surely," he said, "if a man'll not understand the offer of a tram, he'll understand nothing, and it's no use saying more. Put maybe you'll understand the sign, if not the word." And, saying this, he raised his closed hand to his lips and threw back his head, as if taking off a *caulker* of his own mountain dew; pointing, at the same time, to a house which seemed to him to have

the appearance of one of public entertainment. To Donald's great satisfaction, he found that he had now made himself perfectly intelligible; a fact which he recognised in the smiles and nods of his auditory, and, still more unequivocally, in the general movement which they made after him to the "public-house," to which he immediately directed his steps.

At the head, then, of this troop of tatterdemallions, and walking with as stately a step as a drum-major, Donald may be said to have made his entrance into Madrid; and rather an odd first appearance of that worthy there, it certainly was. On entering the tavern or inn which he had destined for the scene of his hospitalities, he strode in much in the same style that he would have entered a public-house in Lochaber—namely, slapping the first person he met on the shoulder, and shouting some merry greeting or other appropriate to the occasion. This precisely Donald did in the present instance, to the great amazement and alarm of a very pretty Spanish girl, who was performing the duty of ushering in customers, inclusive of that of subsequently supplying their wants. On feeling the enormous paw of Donald on her shoulder, and looking at the strange attire in which he was arrayed, the girl uttered a scream of terror, and fled into the interior of the house. Unaccustomed to have his rude but hearty greetings received in this way, or to find them producing an effect so contrary to that which, in his honest warm-heartedness, he intended them to produce, Donald was rather taken aback by the alarm expressed by the girl; but soon recovering his presence of mind—

"Oich, oich!" he said, laughing, and turning to his ragged crew behind him, "ta lassie's frightened for Shon Heelanman. Puir thing! It's weel seen she's no peen procht up in Lochaber, or maype's no been lang in the way o' keepin a public. It's—

“ ‘Haut awa, bite awa,
Haut awa frae me, Tonal;
What care I for a’ your wealth,
An’ a’ that ye can gie, Tonal?’ ”

And, chanting this stanza of a well-known Scottish ditty, at the top of his voice, Donald bounced into the first open door he could find, still followed by his tail. These having taken their seats around a table which stood in the centre of the apartment, he next commenced a series of thundering raps on the board with the hilt of his dirk, accompanied by stentorian shouts of, “Hoy, lassie! House, here! Hoy, hoy, hoy!” a summons which was eventually answered by the landlord in person, the girl’s report of Donald’s appearance and salutation to herself having deterred any other of the household from obeying the call of so wild and noisy a customer.

“Well, honest man,” said Donald, on the entrance of his host, “will you pe bringing us two half mutchkins of your pest whisky. Here’s some honest lads I want to treat to a tram.”

The landlord, as might be expected, stared at this strange guest, in utter unconsciousness of the purport of his demand. Recollecting himself, however, after a moment, his professional politeness returned, and he began bowing and simpering his inability to comprehend what had been addressed to him.

“What for you’ll boo, boo, and scrape, scrape there, you tam ass!” exclaimed Donald, furiously. “Co and pring us the whisky. Two half mutchkins, I say.”

Again the polite landlord of the Golden Eagle, which was the name of the inn, bowed his non-comprehension of what was said to him

“Cot’s mercy! can you’ll not spoke English, either?” shouted Donald, despairingly, on his second rebuff, and at the same time striking the table impatiently with his

clenched fist. "Can you'll spoke Gaelic, then?" he added; and, without waiting for a reply, he repeated his demand in that language. The experiment was unsuccessful. Mine host of the Golden Eagle understood neither Gaelic nor English. Finding this, Donald had once more recourse to the dumb show of raising his hand to his mouth, as if in the act of drinking; and once more he found the sign perfectly intelligible. On its being made, the landlord instantly retired, and in a minute after returned with a couple of bottles in hand, and two very large-sized glasses, which he placed on the table. Eyeing the bottles contemptuously:—"It's no porter; it's whisky I'll order," exclaimed Donald, angrily, conceiving that it was the former beverage that had been brought him. "Porter's drink for hocs, and not for human podies." Finding it wholly impossible, however, to make this sentiment understood, Donald was compelled to content himself with the liquor which had been brought him. Under this conviction, he seized one of the bottles, filled up a glass to the brim, muttering the while "that it was tam white, strange-looking porter," started to his feet, and, holding the glass extended in his hand, shouted the health of his ragged company, in Gaelic, and bolted the contents. But the effect of this proceeding was curious. The moment the liquor, which was some of the common wine of Spain, was over Donald's throat, he stared wildly, as if he had just done some desperate deed—swallowed an adder by mistake, or committed some such awkward oversight. This expression of horror was followed by the most violent sputterings and hideous grimaces, accompanied by a prodigious assemblage of curses of all sorts, in Gaelic and English, and sometimes of an equal proportion of both.

"Oich, oich! poisoned, by Cot!—vinekar, horrid vinekar! Lanlort, I say, what cursed stuffs is this you kive us?" And again Donald sputtered with an energy and perse-

verance that nothing but a sense of the utmost disgust and loathing could have inspired. Both the landlord and Donald's own guests, at once comprehending his feelings regarding the wine, hastened, by every act and sign they could think of, to assure him that he was wrong in entertaining so unfavourable an opinion of its character and qualities. Mine host, filling up a glass, raised it to his mouth, and, sipping a little of the liquor, smacked his lips, in token of high relish of its excellences. He then handed the glass round the company, all of whom tasted and approved, after the same expressive fashion; and thus, without a word being said, a collective opinion, hollow against Donald, was obtained.

"Well, well, trink the apominations, and be curst to you!" said Donald, who perfectly understood that judgment had gone against him, "and much goot may't do you! but mysel would sooner trink the dirty bog water of Sleevrechkin. Oich, oich! the dirtis! But I say, lanlort, maype you'll have got some prandies in the house? I can make shift wi' that when there's no whisky to be cot."

Fortunately for Donald, mine host of the Golden Eagle at once understood the word brandy, and, understanding it, lost no time in placing a measure of that liquor before him; and as little time did Donald lose in swallowing an immense bumper of the inspiring alcohol.

"Ay," said Donald, with a look of great satisfaction, on performing this feat, "that's something like a human Christian's trink. No your tam vinekar, as would colic a horse." Saying this, he filled up and discussed another modicum of the brandy; his followers, in the meantime, having done the same duty by the two bottles of wine, which were subsequently replaced by other two, by the order of their hospitable entertainer. On Donald, however, his libations were now beginning to produce, in a very marked manner, their usual effects. He was first getting

into a state of high excitation; thumping the table violently with his fist, and sputtering out furious discharges of Gaelic and English, mingled in one strange and unintelligible mess of words, and seemingly oblivious of the fact that not a syllable of what he said could be comprehended by his auditory. This, then, was a circumstance which did not hinder him from entertaining his friends with a graphic description of Eddernahulish, and a very animated account of a particular deer-chase in which he had once been engaged. In short, in the inspiration of the hour, Donald seemed to have entirely forgotten every circumstance connected with his present position. He appeared to have forgotten that he was in a foreign land; forgotten the purpose that brought him there; forgotten his brother; forgotten those associated with him were Spaniards, not Atholemen; in truth, forgotten everything he should have recollected. In this happy state of obfuscation, Donald continued to roar, to drink, and to talk away precisely as he was wont to do in Rory M'Fadyen's "public" in Kilnichrochokan. From being oratorical, Donald became musical, and insisted on having a song from some of his friends; but failing to make his request intelligible, he volunteered one himself, and immediately struck up, in a strong nasal twang, and with a voice that made the whole house ring:—

“Ta Heelan hills are high, high, high,
 An' ta Heelan miles are long;
 But, then, my freens, remember you,
 Ta Heelan whisky's strong, strong, strong!
 Ta Heelan whisky's strong,

“And who shall care for ta length o' ta mila,
 Or who shall care for ta hill,
 If he shall have, 'fore he teukit ta way,
 In him's check one Heelan shill?
 In him's check one Heelan shill?”

"An' maybe he'll pe teukit twa ;
 I'll no say is no pe tree ;
 And what although it should pe four ?
 Is no pussiness you or me, me, me—
 Is no pussiness you or me."

Suiting the action to, at least, the spirit of the song, Donald tossed off another bumper of the alcohol, which had the rather odd effect of recalling him to some sense of his situation, instead of destroying, as might have been expected, any little glimmering of light on that subject which he might have previously possessed. On discussing the last glass of brandy—

"Now, lads," said Donald, "I must pe going. It's gettin late, and I must find oot my brother Tuncan Gorm, as decen' a lad as between this and Eddernahulish." Having said this, and paid his reckoning, Donald began shaking hands with his friends, one after the other, previous to leaving them ; but his friends had no intention whatever of parting with him in this way. Donald had incautiously exposed his wealth when settling with the landlord ; and of his wealth, as well as his wine, they determined on having a share. The ruffians, in short, having communicated with each other, by nods and winks, resolved to dog him ; and, when fitting place and opportunity should present themselves, to rob and murder him. Fortunately for Donald, however, they had not exchanged intelligence so cautiously as to escape his notice altogether. He had seen and taken note of two or three equivocal acts and motions of his friends ; but had had sufficient prudence, not only to avoid all remark on them, but to seem as if he had not observed them. Donald, indeed, could not well conceive what these secret signals meant ; but he felt convinced that they meant "no goot ;" and he therefore determined on keeping a sharp look-out, not only while he was in the presence of his boon companions, but after he should have

left them; for he had a vague notion that they might possibly follow him for some evil purpose.

Under this latter impression—which had occurred to him only at the close of their orgie, no suspicion unfavourable to the characters of his guests having before struck him—Donald, on parting from the latter at the door of the inn in which they had been regaling, might have been heard muttering to himself, after he had got to some little distance:—

“Tam rogues, after all, I pelieve.”

Having thus distinctly expressed his sentiments regarding his late companions, Donald pursued his way, although he was very far from knowing what that way should be. Street after street he traversed, making frequent vain inquiries for his “broder, Tuncan Gorm,” until midnight, when he suddenly found himself in a large, open space, intersected by alleys formed by magnificent trees, and adorned by playing fountains of great beauty and elegance. Donald had got into the Prado, or public promenade of Madrid; but of the Prado Donald knew nothing; and much, therefore, did he marvel at what sort of a place he had got into. The fountains, in particular, perplexed and amazed him; and it was while contemplating one of these, with a sort of bewildered curiosity, that he saw a human figure glide from one side to the other of the avenue in which the object of his contemplation was situated, and at the distance of about twenty yards. Donald was startled by the apparition; and, recollecting his former associates, clapped his right hand instinctively on the hilt of his broadsword, and his left on the butt of a pistol—one of those stuck in his belt—and in this attitude awaited the re-appearance of the skulker; but he did not make himself again visible. Donald, however, felt convinced that there was danger at hand, and he determined to keep himself prepared to encounter it.

“Some o’ ta vinekar-drinking rascals,” muttered Donald. “It was no honest man’s drink; nor no goot can come o’ a country where they swallow such apominable liquors.”

Thus reasoned Donald with himself, as he stood vigilantly scanning the localities around him, to prevent a sudden surprise. While thus engaged, four different persons, all at once, and as if they had acted by concert, started each from behind a tree, and approached Donald from four different points, with the purpose, evidently, of distracting his attention. At once perceiving their intention, and not doubting that their purposes were hostile, the intrepid Celt, to prevent himself being surrounded, hastily retreated to a wall which formed part of the structure of the fountain on which he had been gazing, and, placing his back against it, awaited, with his drawn sword in one hand and a pistol in the other, the approach of his enemies, as he had no doubt they were.

“Well, my friends,” said Donald, as they drew near him, and discovered to him four tall fellows, swathed up to the eyes in their cloaks, and each with a drawn sword in his hand, “what you’ll want with me?” No answer having been returned to this query, and the fellows continuing to press on, although now more cautiously, as they had perceived that their intended victim was armed, and stood on the defensive: “Py Shoseph!” said Donald, “you had petter keep your distance, lads, or my name’s no Tonal Gorm if I don’t gif some of you a dish of crowdy.”

And, as good as his word, he almost instantly after fired at the foremost of his assailants, and brought him down. This feat performed, instead of waiting for the attack of the other three, he instantly rushed on them sword in hand, and, by the impetuosity of his attack, and fury of his blows, rendered all their skill of fence useless. With his huge weapon and powerful arm, both of which he plied with a rapidity and force which there was no resisting, he broke

through their guards as easily as he would have beat down so many osier wands, and wounded severely at every blow. It was in vain that Donald's assailants kept retiring before him, in the hope of getting him at a disadvantage—of finding an opportunity of having a cut or a thrust at him. No time was allowed them for any such exploit. Donald kept pressing on, and showering his tremendous blows on them so thickly, that not an instant was left them for aggression in turn. They were, besides, rapidly losing relish for the contest, from the ugly blows they were getting, without a possibility of returning them. Finding, at length, that the contest was a perfectly hopeless one, Donald's assailants fairly took to their heels, and ran for it; but there was one of their number who did not run far—a few yards, when he fell down and expired. His hurts had been mortal.

“Oich, oich, lad!” said Donald, peering into the face of the dead man, “you'll no pø shust that very weel, I'm thinkin. The heelan claymore 'll not acree with your Spanish stomach. But it's goot medicine for rogues, for all that.” Having thus apostrophized the slain man, Donald sheathed his weapon, muttering as he did so: “Ta cowardly togs can fight no more's a turkey hens.”

And, cocking his bonnet proudly, he commenced the task of finding his way back to the city; a task which, after a good many unnecessary, but, from his ignorance of the localities, unavoidable deviations, he at length accomplished.

Donald's most anxious desire now was to find a “public” in which to quarter for the night; but, the hour being late, this was no easy matter. Every door was shut, and the streets lonely and deserted. At length, however, our hero stumbled on what appeared to him to be something of the kind he wanted, although he could have wished it to have been on a fully smaller and humbler scale. This was a large hotel, in which every

window was blazing with light, and the rooms were filled with mirthful music. Donald's first impression was that it was a penny wedding upon a great scale. It was, in truth, a masquerade; and as the brandy which he had drunk in the earlier part of the evening was still in his head, he proposed to himself taking a very active part in the proceedings. On entering the hotel, however, which he did boldly, he was rather surprised at the splendours of various kinds which greeted his eyes—marble stairs, gorgeous lamps, gilt cornices, &c., &c., and sundry other indications of grandeur which he had never seen equalled even in Tain or Dingwall, to say nothing of his native parish of Macharuarich, and he had been in his time in every public-house of any repute in all of them. These circumstances did not disabuse Donald of his original idea of its being a penny-wedding. He only thought that they conducted these things in greater style in Spain than in Scotland, and with this solution of the difficulty, suggested by the said splendours, Donald mounted the broad marble staircase, and stalked into the midst of a large apartment filled with dancers. The variety and elegance of the dresses of these last again staggered Donald's belief in the nature of the merry-making, and made him doubt whether he had conjectured aright. These doubts, however, did not for an instant shake his determination to have a share in the fun. It was a joyous dancing party, and that was quite enough for him. In the meantime he contented himself with staring at the strange but splendid figures by whom he was surrounded, and who were, in various corners of the apartment, gliding through the "mazy dance." But if Donald's surprise was great at the costumes which he was now so intently marking, those who displayed them were no less surprised at that which he exhibited. Donald's strange, but striking attire, in truth, had attracted all eyes; and much did those

who beheld it wonder in all the earth to what country it belonged. But simple wonder and admiration were not the only sensations which Donald's garb produced on the masquers. His kilt had other effects. It drove half the ladies screaming out of the apartment, to its wearer's great surprise and no small displeasure. The guise which Donald wore, however, and which all believed to have been donned for the occasion, was, on the whole, much approved of, and the wearer, in more than one instance, complimented for his taste in having selected so novel and striking a garb. But even his warmest applauders objected to the scantiness of the kilt, and hinted that, for decorum's sake, this part of his dress should have been carried down to his heels. This improvement on his kilt was suggested, in the most polite terms, to Donald himself, by a Spanish gentleman, who spoke a little English, and who had ascertained that our hero was a native of Great Britain, and whom he believed to be a man of note. To this suggestion Donald made no other reply than by a look of the utmost indignation and contempt. The Spanish gentleman, whose name was Don Sebastiano, seeing that his remark had given offence, hastened to apologise for the liberty he had taken—assuring Donald that he meant nothing disrespectful or insulting. This apology was just made in time, as the irritable Celt had begun to entertain the idea of challenging the Spaniard to mortal combat. As it was, however, his good nature at once gave way to the pacific overture that was made him. Seizing the apologist by the hand, with a gripe that produced some dismal contortions of countenance on the part of him on whom it was inflicted—

“Is no harm done at all, my friend. You'll not know no petter, having never peen, I dare say, in our country, or seen a heelanman pefore.”

The Spaniard declared he never had had either of these

happinesses, and concluded by inviting Donald to an adjoining apartment to have some refreshment—an invitation which Donald at once obeyed.

“Now, my good sir,” said his companion, on their entering a sort of refectory where were a variety of tables spread with abundance of the good things of this life and of Madrid, “what shall you prefer?”

“Herself’s not fery hungry, but a little thirsty,” said Donald, flinging himself down on a seat in a free-and-easy way, with his legs astride, so as to allow free suspension to his huge goat-skin purse, and doffing his bonnet, and wiping the perspiration from his forehead—“Herself’s no fery hungry, but a little thirsty; and she’ll teukit, if you please, a fery small drop of whisky and water.”

The Spaniard was nonplussed. He had never even heard of whisky in his life, and was therefore greatly at a loss to understand what sort of liquor his friend meant. Donald, perceiving his difficulty, and guessing that it was of the same nature with the one which he had already experienced, hastily transmuted his demand for whisky into one for brandy, which was immediately supplied him, when Donald, pouring into a rummer a quantity equal to at least six glasses, filled up with water, and drank the whole off, to the inexpressible amazement of his companion, who, however, although he looked unutterable things at the enormous draught, was much too polite to say anything.

Thus primed a second time, Donald, seeing his new friend engaged with some ladies who had unexpectedly joined him, returned alone to the dancing apartment, which he entered with a whoop of encouragement to the performers that startled every one present, and for an instant arrested the motions of the dancers, who could not comprehend the meaning of his uncouth cries. Regardless of this effect of his interference in the proceedings of the evening, Donald, with a countenance

beaming with hilarity, and eyes sparkling with wild and reckless glee, took up a conspicuous position in the room, and from thence commenced edifying the dancers by a series of short abrupt shouts or yells, accompanied by a vigorous clapping of his hands, at once to intimate his satisfaction with the performances, and to encourage the performers themselves to further exertions. Getting gradually, however, too much into the spirit of the thing to be content with being merely an onlooker, Donald all at once capered into the middle of the floor, snapping his fingers and thumbs, and calling out to the musicians to strike up "Caber Feigh;" and, without waiting to hear whether his call was obeyed, he commenced a vigorous exhibition of the highland fling, to the great amazement of the bystanders, who, instantly abandoning their own pursuits, crowded around him to witness this to them most extraordinary performance. Thus occupied, and thus situated—the centre of a "glittering ring"—Donald continued to execute with unabated energy the various strongly-marked movements of his national dance, amidst the loud applauses of the surrounding spectators. On concluding—

"Oich, oich!" exclaimed Donald, out of breath with his exertion, and looking laughingly round on the circle of bystanders. "Did ever I think to dance ta heelan fling in Madrid! Och, no, no! Never, by Shoseph! But, I dare say, it'll pe the first time that it was ever danced here."

From this moment Donald became a universal favourite in the room, and the established lion of the night. Wherever he went he was surrounded with an admiring group, and was overloaded with civilities of all kinds, including frequent offers of refreshment; so that he speedily found himself in most excellent quarters. There was, however, one drawback in his happiness. He could get no share in

the dancing excepting what he chose to perform solus, as there was nothing in that way to be seen in the room in the shape of a reel, nor was there a single tune played of which he could make either head or tail—nothing but “your foreign trash, with neither spunk nor music in them.” Determined, however, since his highland fling had been so much approved of, to give a specimen of the highland reel, if he could possibly make it out, Donald, as a first step, looked around him for a partner; and seeing a very handsome girl seated in one of the corners of the apartment, and apparently disengaged, he made up to her, and, making one of his best bows, solicited the honour of her joining him in a reel. Without understanding the language in which she was addressed, but guessing that it conveyed an invitation to the floor, the young lady at once arose and curtsied an acquiescence, when Donald, taking her gallantly by the hand, led her up to the front of the orchestra, in order that he might bespeak the appropriate music for the particular species of dance he contemplated. On approaching sufficiently near to the musicians—

“Fittlers,” he shouted, at the top of his voice, “I say, can you’ll kive us ‘Rothiemurchus’ Rant,’ or the ‘Trucken Wives of Fochabers?’”

Then turning to his partner, and flinging his arms about her neck in an ecstasy of Highland excitement, capering at the same time hilariously in anticipation of the coming strain—

“Them’s the tunes, my lass, for putting mettle in your heels.”

A scream from the lady with whom Donald was using these unwarrantable personal liberties, and a violent attempt on her part to escape from them, suddenly arrested Donald’s hilarity, and excited his utmost surprise. In the next instant he was surrounded by at least half-a-

dozen angry cavaliers, amongst whom there was a brandishing of swords and much violent denunciation, all directed against Donald, and excited by his unmannerly rudeness to a lady. It was some seconds before Donald could comprehend the meaning of all this wrath, or believe that he was at once the cause and the object of it. But on this becoming plain---

"Well, shentlemen," he said, "I did not mean anything wrong. No offence at all to the girl. It was just the fasimon of my country; and I'm sorry for it."

To this apology of Donald's, of which, of course, not a word was understood, the only reply was a more fierce flourishing of brands, and a greater volubility and vehemence of abuse; the effect of which was at once to arouse Donald's choler, and to urge him headlong on extremities.

"Well, well," he said, "if you'll not have satisfaction any other way than py the sword, py the sword you shall have it."

And instantly drawing, he stood ready to encounter at once the whole host of his enemies. What might have been the result of so unequal a contest, had it taken place, we cannot tell—and this simply because no encounter did take place. At the moment that Donald was awaiting the onset of the foe—a proceeding, by the way, which they were now marvellously slow in adopting, notwithstanding the fury with which they had opened the assault, a party of the king's guard, with fixed bayonets, rushed into the apartment, and bore Donald forcibly out into the street, where they left him, with angry signs that if he attempted to return, he would meet with still worse treatment. Donald had prudence enough to perceive that any attempt to resent the insult that had been offered him—seeing that it was perpetrated by a dozen men armed with musket and bayonet—would be madness, and therefore contented

himself with muttering in Gaelic some expressions of high indignation and contempt. Having delivered himself to this effect, he proudly adjusted his plaid, and stalked majestically away.

It was now so far advanced in the morning that Donald abandoned all idea of seeking for a bed, and resolved on prosecuting an assiduous search for his brother. This he accordingly commenced, and numerous were the calls at shops, and frequent the inquiries he made for Tuncan Gorm; but unavailing were they all. No one understood a word of what he addressed to them; and thus, of course, no one could give him the information he desired. It was in vain, too, that Donald carefully scanned every sign that he passed, to see that it did not bear the anxiously looked for name. On none of them did it appear. They were all, as Donald himself said, Fouros, and Beuros, and Lebranos, and Dranos, and other outlandish and unchristian-like names. Not a heeland or lowland shopkeeper amongst them. No such a decent and civilized name to be met with as Gorm, or Brolachan, or M'Fadyen, or Macharuarich, or M'Cuallisky.

Tired and disappointed, Donald, after wandering up and down the streets for several hours, bethought him of adjourning to a tavern to have something to eat, and probably something to drink also. Seeing such a house as he wanted, he entered, and desired the landlord to furnish him with some dinner. In a few seconds two dishes were placed before him; but what these dishes were, Donald could not at all make out. They resembled nothing in the edible way he had ever seen before, and the flavour was most alarming. Nevertheless, being pretty sharp-set, he resolved to try them, and for this purpose drew one of the dishes towards him, when, having peered as curiously and cautiously into it for a few seconds as if he feared it would leap up in his face and bite him, and curling his nose the

while into strong disapprobation of its odour, he lifted several spoonfuls of the black greasy mess on his plate. At this point Donald found his courage failing him; but, as his host stood behind his chair and was witness to all his proceedings, he did not like either to express the excessive disgust he was beginning to feel, nor to refuse tasting of what was set before him. Mustering all his remaining courage, therefore, he plunged his spoon with desperate violence into the nauseous mess, which seemed to Donald to be some villanous compound of garlic, rancid oil, and dough; and raising it to his lips, shut his eyes, and boldly thrust it into his mouth. Donald's resolution, however, could carry him no farther. To swallow it he found utterly impossible, now that the horrors of both taste and smell were full upon him. In this predicament, Donald had no other way for it but to give back what he had taken; and this course he instantly followed, adding a large interest, and exclaiming—

“My Cot! what sort of a country is this? Your drinks is poison, and your meats is poison, and everything is apominations apout you. Oich, oich! I wish to Cot I was back to Eddernahulish again; for I'll pe either poisoned or murdered amongst you if I remain much longer here. That's peyond all doubt.”

And having thus expressed himself, Donald started to his feet, and was about to leave the house without any farther ceremony, when the landlord adroitly planted himself between him and the door, and demanded the reckoning. Donald did not know precisely what was asked of him, but he guessed that it was a demand for payment, and this demand he was determined to resist, on the ground that what he could not eat he ought not to be called on to pay for. Full of this resolution, and having no doubt that he was right in his conjecture as to the landlord's purpose in preventing his exit—

“Pay for ta apominations!” said Donald, wrathfully. “Pay for ta poison! It’s myself will see you at Jericho first. Not a farthing, not one tam farthing, will I pay you for ta trash. So stand out of the way, my friend, before worse comes of it.”

Saying this, Donald advanced to the door, and seizing its guardian by the breast, laid him gently on his back on the floor, and stepping over his prostrate body, walked deliberately out of the house, without further interruption, mine host not thinking it advisable to excite further the choler of so dangerous a customer, and one who had just given him so satisfactory a specimen of his personal prowess. Another day had now nearly passed away, and Donald was still as far, to all appearance, from finding the object of his search as ever he had been. He was, moreover, now both hungry and thirsty; but these were evils which he soon after succeeded in obviating for the time, by a more successful foray than the last. Going into another house of entertainment, he contrived to make a demand for bread and cheese intelligible—articles which he had specially condescended on, that there might be “no mistake;” and with these and a pretty capacious measure of brandy, he managed to effect a very tolerable passover. Before leaving this house, Donald made once more the already oft but vainly-repeated inquiry, whether he knew (he was addressing his landlord) where one Duncan Gorm stopped. It did not now surprise Donald to find that his inquiry was not understood; but it did both surprise and delight him when his host, who had abruptly left the room for an instant, returned with a person who spoke very tolerable English. This man was a muleteer, and had resided for some years in London, in the service of the Spanish ambassador. His name—a most convenient one for Donald to pronounce—was Mendoza Ambrosius. On being introduced to this personage, Donald expressed the utmost

delight at finding in him one who spoke a Christian language, as he called it; and, in the joy of his heart with his good fortune, ordered in a jorum of brandy for the entertainment of himself and Mr. Ambrosius. The liquor being brought, and several horns of it discussed, Donald and his new friend got as thick as "ben' leather." And on this happy understanding being established, the former began to detail, at all the length it would admit of, the purpose of his visit to Madrid, and the occurrences that had befallen him since his arrival; prefacing these particulars with a sketch of his history, and some account of the place of his nativity; and concluding the whole by asking his companion if he could in any way assist him to find his brother, Duncan Gorm.

The muleteer replied, in the best English he could command, that he did not know the particular person inquired after, but that he knew the residences of two or three natives of Britain, some of whom, he thought it probable, might be acquainted with his brother; and that he would have much pleasure in conducting him to these persons, for the purpose of ascertaining this. Donald thanked his friend for his civility; and, in a short time thereafter, the brandy having been finished in the interim, the two set out together on their expedition of inquiry. It was a clear, moonlight night; but, although it was so, and the hour what would be considered in this country early, the streets were nearly deserted, and as lonely and quiet as if Madrid were a city of the dead. This stillness had the effect of making the smallest sound audible even at a great distance, and to this stillness it was owing that Donald and his friend suddenly heard, soon after they had set out, the clashing of swords, intermingled with occasional shouts, at a remote part of the street they were traversing.

"What's tat?" exclaimed Donald, stopping abruptly,

and cocking his ears at the well-known sound of clashing steel. His companion, accustomed to such occurrences, replied, with an air of indifference, that it was merely some street brawl.

"It'll pe these tam vinekar drinkers again," said Donald, with a lively recollection of the assault that had been made upon himself; "maybe some poor shentleman's in distress. Let us go and see, my tear sir." To this proposal, the muleteer, with a proper sense of the folly of throwing himself in the way of mischief unnecessarily, would at first by no means accede; but, on being urged by Donald, agreed to move on a little with nim towards the scene of conflict. This proceeding soon brought them near enough to the combatants to perceive that Donald's random conjecture had not been far wrong, by discovering to them one person, who, with his back to the wall, was bravely defending himself against no fewer than four assailants, all being armed with swords.

"Did not I tell you so!" exclaimed Donald, in great excitation, on seeing how matters stood. "Noo, Maister Tozy Brozey, shoulder to shoulder, my tear, and we'll assist this poor shentleman." Saying this, Donald drew his claymore, and rushed headlong on to the rescue, calling on Tozy Brozy to follow him; but Tozy Brozy's feelings and impulses carried him in a totally different direction. Fearing that his friend's interference in the squabble might have the effect of directing some of the blows his way, he fairly took to his heels, leaving Donald to do by himself what to himself seemed needful in the case. In the meantime, too much engrossed by the duty before him to mind much whether his friend followed him or not, Donald struck boldly in, in aid of the "shentleman in distress," exclaiming, as he did so—

"Fair play, my tears! Fair play's a shewel everywhere, and I suppose here too." And, saying this, with one

thundering blow that fairly split the skull of the unfortunate wight on whom it fell in twain, Donald lessened the number of the combatants by one. The person to whose aid he had thus so unexpectedly and opportunely come, seeing what an effectual ally he had got, gave a shout of triumphant joy, and, although much exhausted by the violence and length of his exertions in defending himself, instantly became the assailant in his turn. Inspired with new life and vigour, he pressed on his enemies with a fury that compelled them to give way; and, being splendidly seconded by Donald, whose tremendous blows were falling with powerful effect on those against whom they were directed, the result was, in a few seconds, the flight of the enemy; who, in rapid succession, one after the other, took to their heels, although not without carrying along with them several authentic certificates of the efficiency of Donald's claymore.

On the retreat of the bravos—for such they were—the person whom Donald had so efficiently served in his hour of need, flew towards him, and, taking him in his arms, poured out a torrent of thanks for the prompt and gallant aid he had afforded him. But, as these thanks were expressed in Spanish, they were lost on him to whom they were addressed. Not so, however, the indications of gratitude evinced in the acts by which they were accompanied. These Donald perfectly understood, and replied to them as if their sense had been conveyed to him in a language which he comprehended.

“No thanks at all, my tear sir. A Heelantman will always assist a freend where a few plows will do him goot. You would shust do the same to me, I'm sure. But,” added Donald, as he sheathed his most serviceable weapon, “this is the tam place for fechtin' I have ever seen. I thoct our own Heelants pad enough, but this is ten times worse, py Shoseph! I have no peen more than four-and-

twenty hours in Ma-a-treed, and I'll have peen in tree fecht already."

More of this speech was understood by the person to whom it was addressed, than might have been expected under all these circumstances. This person was a Spanish gentleman of rank and great wealth, of the name of Don Antonio Nunnez, whose acquirements included a very competent knowledge of the English language, which, although he spoke it but indifferently, he understood very well. Yet it certainly did require all his knowledge of it, to recognise it in the shape in which Donald presented it to him. This, however, to a certain extent, he did, and, in English, now repeated his sense of the important obligation Donald had conferred on him. But it was not to words alone that the grateful and generous Spaniard meant to confine his acknowledgments of the service that had been rendered him. Having ascertained that Donald was a perfect stranger in the city, he insisted on his going home with him, and remaining with him during his stay in Madrid, and further requesting that he would seek at his hands, and no other's, any service or obligation, of whatever nature it might be, of which he should stand in need during his stay.

To these generous proffers, Donald replied, that the greatest service that could be done him was to inform him where he could find his brother, Duncan Gorm. Don Antonio first expressed surprise to learn that Donald had a brother in Madrid, and then his sorrow that he did not know, nor had ever heard of such a person.

"He'll keep a public," said Donald.

"What is that, my friend?" inquired Don Antonio.

"Sell a shill, to be sure—I'll thocht everybody know that," said Donald, a good deal surprised at the other's ignorance.

"Shill? shill?" repeated the Spaniard—"and pray, my friend, what is a shill?"

“Cot pless me! don't you'll know what a shill is?” rejoined Donald, with increased amazement. “If you'll come with me to Eddernahulish, I'll show you what a shill is, and help you to drink it too.”

“Well, well, my friend,” said Don Antonio. “I'll get an explanation of what a ‘shill’ is from you afterwards; but, in the meantime, you'll come with me, if you please, as I am anxious to introduce you to some friends at home!”

Saying this, he took Donald's arm, in order to act as his conductor, and, after leading him through two or three streets, brought him to the door of a very large and handsome house. Don Antonio having knocked at this door, it was immediately opened by a servant in splendid livery, who, on recognising his master—for such was Donald's friend—instantly stepped aside, and respectfully admitted the pair. In the vestibule, or passage, which was exceedingly magnificent, were a number of other serving men in rich liveries, who drew themselves up on either side, in order to allow their master and his friend to pass; and much did they marvel at the strange garb in which that friend appeared. Don Antonio now conducted Donald up the broad marbled staircase, splendidly illuminated with a variety of elegant lamps, in which the vestibule terminated; and, on reaching the top of the first flight, ushered him into a large and gorgeously-furnished apartment, in which were two ladies dressed in deep mourning. To these ladies, one of whom was the mother, the other the sister of Don Antonio, the latter introduced his amazed and awe-stricken companion, as a person to whom he was indebted for his life. He then explained to his relations what had occurred, and did not fail to give Donald's promptitude and courage a due share of his laudations. With a gratitude not less earnest than his own had been, the mother and sister of Don Antonio took Donald by the

hand; the one taking the right, and the other the left, and, looking in his face, with an expression of the utmost kindness, thanked him for the great obligation he had conferred on them. These thanks were expressed in Spanish; but, on Don Antonio's mentioning that Donald was a native of Britain, and that he did not, as he rather thought, understand the Spanish language, his sister, a beautiful girl of one or two-and-twenty, repeated them, in somewhat minced, but perfectly intelligible English. Great as Donald's perturbation was at finding himself so suddenly and unexpectedly placed in a situation so much at variance with anything he had been accustomed to, it did not prevent him marking, in a very special manner, the dark sparkling eyes and rich sable tresses of Donna Nunnez, the name of Don Antonio's sister. Nor, we must add, did the former look with utter indifference on the manly form, so advantageously set off as it was by his native dress, of Donald Gorm. But of this anon. In a short time after, a supper, corresponding in elegance and splendour to all the other elegances and splendours of this lordly mansion, was served up; and, on its conclusion, Donald was conducted, by Don Antonio himself, to a sleeping apartment, furnished with the same magnificence that prevailed throughout the whole house. Having ushered him into his apartment, Donald's host bade him a kind good-night, and left him to his repose.

What Donald's feelings were on finding himself thus so superbly quartered, now that he had time to think on the subject, and could do so unrestrained by the presence of any one, we do not precisely know; but, if one might have judged by the under-breath exclamations in which he indulged, and by the looks of amazement and inquiry which he cast around him, from time to time, on the splendours by which he was surrounded, especially on the gorgeous bed, with its gilt canopy and curtains of crimson

silk, which was destined for his night's resting-place, these feelings would appear to have been, after all, fully more perplexing than pleasing. It was, in truth, just too much of a good thing; and Donald felt it to be so. But still the whole had a smack of good fortune about it that was very far from being disagreeable, and that certainly had the effect of reconciling Donald to the little discordance between former habits and present circumstances, which his position for the time excited.

While at breakfast on the following morning with Don Antonio and his mother and sister, the first asked Donald if he had any particular ties in his own country that would imperatively demand his return home; and on Donald's replying that there were none, Don Antonio immediately inquired whether he would accept a commission in the King of Spain's body-guards:—"Because," said he, "if you will, I have, I believe, influence enough to procure it for you."

Donald said he had no objection in the world to try it for a year or two, at any rate—only he would like to consult his "broder Tuncan" first.

"True, true," said Don Antonio; "I promised to assist you in finding out your relative—and I shall do so."

As good as his word in this particular, and a great deal better in many others in which Donald was interested, Don Antonio instantly set an inquiry on foot, which, in less than two hours, brought the brothers together. The sequel of our story, although containing the very essence of Donald's good fortune, is soon told. His brother, highly approving of his accepting the commission offered to him, Don Antonio lost no time in procuring him that appointment; and in less than three weeks from his arrival in Madrid, Donald Gorm figured as a captain in the King of Spain's body-guards, in which service he ultimately attained the rank of colonel, together with a title of

honour, which enabled him to ask, without fear of giving offence, and to obtain, the hand of Donna Nunnez, with a dowry second to that of no fair damsel in Spain. Donald never again returned to Eddernahulish, but continued in the country of his adoption till his death ; and in that country some of his descendants to this hour bear amongst the proudest names of which it can boast.

THE SURGEON'S TALES.

THE CURED INGRATE.

EVERY person who has studied, even in the most cursory manner, the checkered page of human life, must have observed that there are in continual operation through mankind some great secret moral agents, the powers of which are exerted within the heart, and beyond the reach of the consciousness or observation of the individual himself who is subject to their influence. There is a steadfastness of virtue in some high-minded men, which enables them to resist the insidious temptations of the bad demon; there is also a stern stability of vice often found in the unfortunate outlaw, which disregards, for a time, the voice of conscience, and spurns the whispered woeing of the good principle, "charm it never so wisely;" yet the real confessions of the hearts of those individuals would show traces enough of the agency of the unseen power to prove their want of title to an exception from the general rule which includes all the sons of Adam. We find, also, that extraordinary moral effects are often produced, in a dark and mysterious manner, from physical causes: every medical man has the power of recording, if he has had the faculty of observing, changes in the minds, principles, and feelings of patients who have come through the fiery ordeal of a terrible disease, altogether unaccountable on any rules of philosophy yet discovered.

Not many years ago, a well-dressed young woman called one evening upon me, and stated that her lady, whose

name, she said, would be communicated by herself, had been ill for some days, and wished me to visit her privately. I asked her when she required my attendance; and got for answer, that she, the messenger, would conduct me to the residence of the patient, if it was convenient for me to go at that time. I was disengaged, and agreed to accompany the young woman as soon as I had given directions to my assistant regarding the preparation of some medicines which required the application of chemical rules. To be ingenuous, I was a little curious to know the secret of this private call; for that there was a secret about it was plain, from the words, and especially the manner, of the young woman, who spoke mysteriously, and did not seem to wish any questions put to her on the subject of her mission. The night was dark, but the considerate messenger had provided a lantern; and, to anticipate my scruples, she said that the distance we had to go would not render it necessary for me to take my carriage—a five-minutes' walk being sufficient to take us to our destination.

Resigning myself to the guidance of my conductress, I requested her to lead the way, and we proceeded along two neighbouring streets of considerable length, and then turned up to —— Square—a place where the rich and fashionable part of the inhabitants of the town have their residences. At the mouth of a coach entry, which ran along the gable of a large house, and apparently led to the back offices connected with the residence, the young woman stopped, and whispered to me to take care of my feet, as she was to use the liberty of leading me along a meuse lane to a back entrance, through which I was to be conducted into the chamber of the sick lady. I obeyed her directions; and, keeping close behind her, was led along the lane, and through several turns and windings which I feared I might not again be able to trace without a guide, until we came to a back door, when the young

woman—begging my pardon for her forwardness—took hold of my hand, and led me along a dark passage, then up a stair, then along another passage, which was lighted by some wax tapers placed in recesses in the wall; at the end of which, she softly opened a door, and ushered me into a very large bedroom, the magnificence of which was only partly revealed to me by a small lamp filled with aromatic oil, whose fragrance filled the apartment. The young woman walked quickly forward to a bed, hung with light green silk damask curtains fringed with yellow, and luxuriously ornamented with a superfluity of gilding; and, drawing aside the curtains, she whispered a few words into the ear of some one lying there, apparently in distress; then hurried out of the room, leaving me standing on the floor, without introduction or explanation.

The novelty of my position deprived me for a moment of my self-possession, and I stood stationary in the middle of the room, deliberating upon whether I should call back my conductress, and ask from her some explanation, or proceed forward to the couch, where, no doubt, my services were required; but my hesitation was soon resolved, by the extraordinary appearance of an Indian-coloured female countenance, much emaciated, and lighted up with two bright orbs, occupying the interstice between the curtains, and beckoning on me, apparently with a painful effort, forward. I obeyed, and, throwing open the large folds of damask, had as full a view of my extraordinary patient as the light that emanated from the perfumed lamp, and shone feebly on her dark countenance, would permit. She beckoned to me to take a chair, which stood by the side of the bed; and, having complied with her mute request, I begged to know what was the complaint under which she laboured, that I might endeavour to yield her such relief as was in the power of our professional art. I thus limited my question to the nature of her disease, in the expectation

that she herself would clear up the mystery which hung around the manner in which I was called, and introduced to so extraordinary a scene as that which was now before me. Her great weakness seemed to require some composure, and a collecting of her scattered and reduced energies, before she could answer my simple question. I now observed more perfectly than I had yet done the character and style of the room into which I had been introduced—its furniture, ornaments, and luxuries; and, above all, the extraordinary, foreign-looking invalid who seemed to be the mistress of so much grandeur. Though a bedroom, the apartment seemed to have had lavished upon its fitting-up as much money as is often expended on a lord's drawing-room—the bed itself, the wardrobes, pier-glasses, toilets, and dressing-cases, being of the most elaborate workmanship and costly character—the pictures numerous, and magnificently framed; while on all sides were to be seen foreign ornaments, chiefly Chinese and Indian, of brilliant appearance, and devoted to purposes and uses of refined luxury of which I could form no adequate conception. On a small table, near the bed, there was a multiplicity of boxes, vials, trinkets, and bijouterie of all kinds; and fragrant mixtures, intended to perfume the apartment, were exposed in various quarters, and even scattered exuberantly on spread covers of satin, with a view to their yielding their sweets more freely, and filling all the corners of the room. In full contrast with all this array of grandeur and luxury, lay the strange-looking individual already mentioned, on the gorgeous bed. She was apparently an East Indian; and, though possessed of comely features, she was even darker than the fair Hindoos we often see in this country. The sickness under which she laboured, and which appeared to be very severe, had rendered her thin and cadaverous-looking—making the balls of her brilliant eyes assume the appearance of being protruded,

and imparting to all her features a sharp, prominent aspect, the very reverse of the natural Indian type; yet, true to her sex and the manners of her country, she was splendidly decorated, even in this state of dishabille and distress; the coverlet being of rich Indian manufacture, and resplendent with the dyes of the East—her gown and cap decorated with costly needlework—her fingers covered with a profusion of rings, while a cambric handkerchief, richly embroidered, in her right hand, had partly enveloped in its folds a large golden vinegarett, set profusely with glittering gems.

The rapid survey which enabled me to gather this general estimate of what was presented to me, was nearly completed before the invalid had collected strength enough to answer my question; and she was just beginning to speak—having as yet pronounced only a few inarticulate syllables—when she was interrupted by the entrance of the same young woman who had acted as my conductress, and who now exhibited a manner the very opposite of the soft, quiet, slipping nature of her former carriage. The suddenness, and even impetuosity of her entry, was inconsistent with the character of nurse to a lady in so distressed a condition as that of her apparent mistress; but her subsequent conduct was much more incomprehensible and extraordinary; for, without speaking and without stopping, she rushed forward, and, taking me by the arm, hurried me away through the door by which I had entered, along the lighted passage, down the stair, and never stopped until she landed me on the threshold of the back-door by which I entered the house. At this time I heard the bell of, as I thought, the fore or street door of the house ringing violently; and my conductress, without saying a word, ran away as fast as the darkness would permit, leaving me, perplexed and confounded at what I had seen and heard, to find my way home in the best way I could.

In my professional capacity I had not been accustomed to any mysterious or secret practice of our art, which, being exercised ostensibly and in reality for the benefit of mankind, requires no cloak to cover its operations; and, though I was curious to know the secret of such incomprehensible proceedings, I felt no admiration of, or relish for adventures so unsuited to the life and manners of a sober, practical man. One thing, however, was clear, and seemed sufficient to reconcile my practical, every-day notions of life with this mysterious negotiation, and even to solve the doubt I entertained whether I should again trust myself as a party to the devices of secrecy—and that was, that the individual I had been thus called to see professionally was in such a condition of body as required urgently the administrations of a medical practitioner. On the following day, I resolved upon making some inquiries, with a view to ascertain who and what the individual was that occupied the house to which I had been introduced, and which, upon a survey in daylight, I could have no difficulty in tracing; but I happened to be too much occupied to be able to put my purpose into execution; and was thus obliged to remain, during the day, in a state of suspense and ignorance of the secret involved in my previous night's professional adventure. In the evening, however, and about the same hour at which the messenger called for me on the previous occasion, the same individual waited on me, with an apology for the apparently unceremonious treatment I had received, and which, she said, would be explained to my satisfaction; and a renewed request that I would again accompany her to the same house, and on the same errand. I told the messenger that I bore no great love to these secret adventures, but that I would consent, on this occasion, to make a sacrifice of my principles and feelings to the hope of being able to be of some use, in a professional way, to the distressed lady I had seen

on the previous occasion, whose situation, so far as I could judge from appearances, was not far removed from the extremity of danger. I again, accordingly, committed myself to the guidance of the young woman; and, after a repetition of the windings and evolutions of the previous visit, soon found myself again seated in the chair that stood by the gorgeous bed of the strange invalid. Everything seemed to be in the same situation as before: the lamp gave out its weak light, the perfumes exhaled their sweets, and the distressed lady exhibited the same strange contrast between her reduced sickly condition and the superb finery of her dishabille.

I had not been long seated, when she struggled to inform me, in a very weak voice, that she was much beholden to me for my attention, and grieved for the unceremonious treatment I had received on my last visit. I replied, that I laid my account with much greater personal inconvenience, in the pursuit of my profession, than any to which she had subjected or could subject me—all such considerations being, in my apprehension, of small importance in comparison with the good we had often the power of administering to individuals in distress; and begged to know the nature of the complaint under which she too evidently laboured, that I might endeavour to ameliorate her sufferings, and restore her to that health without which the riches she apparently was mistress of, could be of small avail in rendering her happy. She appeared grateful for the sentiments I expressed; and proceeded to tell me, still with the same struggling difficulty of utterance, arising from her extreme weakness, that she was the wife of Colonel P——, the proprietor of the mansion into which I had been thus secretly introduced, for reasons she would explain in the course of her narrative. She had been married to her husband, she proceeded, in the East Indies, of which country she was a native; and, having succeeded

to a large fortune on the death of her father, had given it all freely without bond, contract, or settlement, to her husband, whom she loved, honoured, and worshipped, beyond all earthly beings, and with an ardour which had never abated from the first moment she had become his wife. Nor was the affection limited to one side of the house; for she was more than satisfied that her lord and master—grateful, no doubt, for the rank, honour, riches, and independence to which she had raised him—loved her with an affection at least equal to her own. But all these advantages (and she sighed deeply as she proceeded) were of little consequence to the production of happiness, if the greatest of all blessings, health, were denied to the possessor; and that too she had enjoyed, uninterruptedly, until about a month previously, when she was seized with an illness, the nature of which she could not comprehend; and which, notwithstanding all the anxious efforts of her husband, had continued unabated to that hour.

She paused, and seemed much exhausted by the struggle she made to let me thus far into her history. The concluding part of her statement, combined with the still unexplained secrecy of my call, surprised me, and defied my powers of penetration. This lady had been dangerously ill for a month, during all which time no medical man had been called to her aid; and even now, when her body was attenuated, and her strength exhausted to the uttermost, professional assistance had been introduced into the house by stealth, as if it were against the laws to ameliorate human sufferings by curing diseases. This apparent anomaly in human conduct struck me so forcibly that I could not refrain from asking the patient, even before she recovered strength enough to answer me, what was her or her husband's reason for not calling assistance; and why that assistance was at last requested under the cloud of secrecy and apprehension.

“That I intended to explain to you,” she said, after a pause. “When I felt myself ill (and my complaint commenced by excruciating pains in my stomach, accompanied with vomiting,) I told my husband that I feared it would be necessary to call a doctor; but, ah, sir! the very thought of the necessity of medical aid to the object of so much love and tenderness, put him almost frantic. He confessed that it was a weakness; but declared his inability to conquer it. Yet, alas! his unremitting kindness has not diminished my disease. Though I have taken everything his solicitude has suggested and offered to me, my pains still continue, my appetite is entirely gone, and the weakness of my body has approached that of the helpless infant. Three days ago I thought I would have breathed my last; and parting thoughts of my native country, and the dear friends I left there to follow the fortunes of a dearer stranger, passed through my mind with the feeling of a long and everlasting farewell. My husband wept over me, and prayed for my recovery; but he could not think me so ill as to make the call of the doctor imperative; and I did not press a subject which I saw was painful to him. No, sir, I would rather have died than have produced in him the slightest uneasiness; and my object in calling you in the secret manner you have witnessed, was simply to avoid causing to him the pain of thinking that my illness was so great as to render your services absolutely necessary.”

The communication I now heard, which was spoken in broken sentences and after considerable pauses, in place of clearing up my difficulty, increased it, and added to my surprise. Some light was, no doubt, thrown on the cause which produced the secret manner of my visitation; but every other circumstance attending the unfortunate lady's case was merged in deeper gloom and mystery. The circumstance of a husband who loved his wife refusing to

call professional assistance, appeared to be not less extraordinary than the reason assigned for it—even with all the allowances, justified by a very prevailing prejudice, in some weak minds, against the extremity of calling a doctor. I had heard something of Colonel P——; that he was considered to be immensely rich, and known to be a deep gambler, but I never understood that he was a victim of weak or imaginary fears, and I was therefore inclined to doubt the truth of the reason assigned by the unsuspecting invalid, for the scrupulous delicacy of her husband's affection and solicitude. I pondered for a moment, and soon perceived that the nature of her complaint, and the kind of restoratives or medicines she might have been receiving, would, in all likelihood, yield me more information on the subject of my difficulty than I could procure from her broken sentences, which, at the best, only expressed the sentiments of a mind clouded with the prejudice of a devoted love and unbounded credulity. I proceeded, therefore, to ascertain the nature of her complaint; and soon discovered that the seat of it was, as she had said, in the region of the stomach, which not only produced to her great pain internally, but felt sore on the application of external pressure on the *præcordia*. Other symptoms of a disease in this principal organ were present: such as fits of painful vomiting after attempting to eat, her great emaciation, anxiety of countenance, thirst, restlessness, and debility; and, in ordinary circumstances, I would have been inclined to conclude that she laboured under some species of what we denominate *gastritis*, or inflammation of the stomach, though I could not account for such a disease not having been resolved and ended in much shorter time than the period which embraced her sufferings.

I next proceeded to ascertain what she had been taking in the form of medicaments; and discovered that her

husband, proceeding on the idea that her stomach laboured under weakness and required some tonic medicine, had administered to her, on several occasions, what we term *limatura ferri* (iron filings)—a remedy for cases of dyspepsia and bad stomachs, but not suited to the inflammatory disorders of the kind under which she was suffering. I asked her if she had any of the medicine lying by her, and she replied, with simplicity, that her husband generally took charge of it himself; but that he had that evening laid a small paper, containing a portion of it, on the top of a side-table, until he administered to her the dose she was in the habit of receiving, and had gone away without laying it past, according to his custom. I took up the paper, examined it, and found, according to the rapid investigation I bestowed on it, without the aid of any tests, that it possessed all the appearances of the genuine medicine. I, however, took the precaution of emptying a small portion of it into another paper, and slipping it into my pocket unobserved by the patient. I then told her that I thought she should discontinue the use of the powder, which was entirely unsuited to her ailment.

“That is a cruel advice, sir,” she cried, in a tone of great excitement. “How can I discontinue a medicine offered to me by the hands of a husband, without being able to give any reason for rejecting his kindness? I tremble to think of repaying all the attentions of that dear man with ingratitude, and wounding his sensibility by rejecting this testimony of his solicitude and affection. I cannot—I feel I cannot. The grief I would thereby produce to him would be reflected, by sympathy, on this weak frame, which is unable to struggle much longer with the pains of flesh alone, far less with the additional anguish of a wounded mind, grieved to death at causing sorrow to the man I so dearly love. Do not, oh! do not, sir, make me an ingrate.”

I was struck with the devotion of this gentle being, who actually trembled at the idea of producing uneasiness to the man whom she had raised to affluence, and who yet would not allow her the benefit of a doctor in her distress; but, while I was pleased with this exhibition of a feature in the female character I had never before seen so strongly developed, though I had read and heard much of the fidelity and affection of the women of the east, I was much chagrined at the idea that so fair and beautiful a virtue would probably prevent me from doing anything effectual for a creature who, independently of her distance from her country, had so many other claims on my sympathy. I told her that I feared I could be of little service to her if she could not resolve upon discontinuing her husband's medicine; and tried to impress upon her the necessity of conforming to my advice, if she wished to make herself well—the best mode, assuredly, of making her husband happy; but she replied that she expected I would have been able to give her something to restore her to health independently of what she got from her husband—a result she wished above all things, as she sighed for the opportunity of delighting him, by attributing to his medicines and care her restoration and happiness. I replied that that was impossible—a statement that stung her with disappointment and pain.

“Then I will take my beloved's medicines, and die!” she cried, with a low struggling voice—resigning herself to the power of her weakness.

This extraordinary resolution of a female devotee put me in mind of the immolating custom of her country-women, called the *suttee*. It was a complete *ultima ratio*, and put all my remedial plans at fault in an instant. Her extreme weakness, or her devoted resolution, prevented her from speaking, and I sat by her bedside totally at a loss what to do, whether to persevere in my attempt to get

her to renounce her husband's medicine and to conform to my prescriptions, or to leave her to the fate she seemed to court. I put several more questions to her, but received no other answer than a wave of the hand—a plain token of her wish that I should leave her to the tender mercies of her husband. I had now no alternative; and, rising, I bowed to her, and took my leave. I had some difficulty in finding my way out of the house; but, after several ineffectual turns through wrong passages, I reached the door through which I had entered, and returned home.

The extraordinary scene I had witnessed engaged my attention during the evening, but all my efforts at clearing up the mystery that enveloped the proceedings of these individuals were met by difficulties which for a time seemed insuperable. I sat cogitating and recogitating various theories and probabilities, and had several times examined the iron powder, which, for better observation, I had scattered on a sheet of white paper that lay on my table. My intention was to test it, and I waited the incoming of my assistant to aid me in my experiment. As I looked at it at intervals between my trains of thought, I was struck with a kind of glittering appearance it exhibited, and which was more observable when it caught my eye obliquely and collaterally, during the partial suspension of my perception by my cogitations. Roused by this circumstance, I proceeded instantly to a more minute investigation; and having, by means of a magnet, removed all the particles of iron, what was my surprise to find a residuum of triturated glass—one of the most searching and insidious poisons known in toxicology. Good God! what were my thoughts and feelings when the first flash of this discovery flared upon my mind—solving, in an instant, by the intensity of its painful light, all my doubts, and realizing all my suspicions. Every circumstance of this mysterious affair stood now revealed in clear relief—s

dark scheme of murder, more revolting in its features than any recorded in the malefactor's journal, was illumined and exposed by a light which exhibited not only the workings of the design itself, but the reason which led to its perpetration. This man had married the confiding and devoted foreigner for the sake of her immense wealth, which raised him in an instant from mediocrity to magnificence; and, having attained the object of his ambition, he had resolved—with a view to the concealment of the means whereby he effected his purpose, and regardless of the sacred obligation of gratitude he owed to her who had left her country, her relations, and friends, to trust herself to his protection and love—to immolate the faithful, kind-hearted, and affectionate creature, by a cruel and protracted murder. In her own country the cowardly wretch could not have braved the vengeance of her countrymen; but, in a distant land, where few might be expected to stand up for the rights of the injured foreigner, he had thought he might execute his scheme with secrecy and success. But now it was discovered! By one of those extraordinary detached traces of the finger of the Almighty, exposed to the convicting power of divine intellect, it was discovered!

The great excitement produced in my mind by this miraculous discovery prevented me for some time from calmly deliberating on the steps I ought to pursue, with the view of saving the poor foreigner from the designs of her murderer. The picture of the devoted being lying, like a queen, in the midst of the wealth she had brought to her husband, and trembling at the very thought of rejecting his poison, for fear of giving him the slightest pain—yet on the very point of being sacrificed; her wealth, love, confidence, and gentleness, repaid by death, and her body consigned, unlamented by friends—who might never hear of her fate—to foreign dust, rose continually on my

imagination, and interested my feelings to a degree incompatible with the exercise of a calm judgment. In proportion as my emotion subsided, the difficulty of my situation appeared to increase. I was, apparently, the only person who knew anything of this extraordinary purpose, and I saw the imprudence of taking upon myself the total responsibility of a report to the public authorities in a case where the chances of conviction would be diminished to nothing by the determination of the victim to save her destroyer, whom she never would believe guilty, and by the want of evidence of a direct nature that the powder I had tested was truly destined for her reception; while, in the event of an impeachment and acquittal of the culprit, I would be exposed to his vengeance, and his poor wife would be for ever subjected to his tyranny and oppression. On the other hand, I was at a loss to know how I could again get access to the sick victim, whom I had left without being requested to repeat my visit; and, even if that could be accomplished, I had many doubts whether she would pay the slightest attention or regard to my statement, that her husband, whom she seemed to prefer to her own divine Brama, designed to poison her. Yet it was clear that the poor victim behoved to be saved, in some way, from the dreadful fate which impended over her; and the necessity of some steps being taken with rapidity and efficacy, behoved to resolve scruples and doubts which otherwise might have been considered worthy of longer time and consideration.

Next day I found I had made little progress in coming to a resolution what step to pursue, yet every hour and minute that passed reproached me with cruelty, and my imagination brought continually before my eyes the poor victim swallowing the stated periodical quota of her death-drug. I could have no rest or peace of mind till something was done, at least to the extent of putting her on her

guard against the schemes of her cruel destroyer; and, after all my cogitations, resolutions, and schemes, I found myself compelled to rest satisfied with seeing her, laying before her the true nature of her danger, and leaving to the operation of the instinctive principle of self-preservation the working out of her ultimate safety. At the same hour of the evening at which my former visit was made, I repaired to the back entrance of the large mansion, and, upon rapping at the door, was fortunate enough to be answered by the young woman who acted formerly as my guide. She led me, at my request, instantly to the sick-room of her lady, who, having immediately before been seized with an attack of vomiting, was lying in a state of exhaustion approaching to the inanity of death. I spoke to her, and she languidly opened her eyes. I saw no prospect of being able to impress upon her comatose mind the awful truth I had come to communicate; yet I had no alternative but to make the attempt; and I accordingly proceeded, with as few words as possible, and in a tone of voice suited to the lethargic state of her mind and senses, to inform her that the medicines she was getting from the hands of her husband were fraught with deadly poison, which was alone the cause of all her sufferings and agonies, and would soon be the means of a painful death. These words I spoke slowly and impressively, and watched the effect of them with anxiety and solicitude. A convulsive shudder passed over her, and shook her violently. She opened her eyes, which I saw fill with tears, and fixed a steady look on my countenance.

“*It is impossible,*” she said, with a low, guttural tone, but with much emphasis; “and if it *were* possible, I would still take his medicine, and die, rather than outlive the consciousness of love and fidelity.”

These words she accompanied with a wave of her hand, as if she wished me to depart. I could not get her to

utter another syllable. I had discharged a painful duty ; and, casting a look upon her, which I verily believed would be the last I would have it in my power to bestow on this personification of fidelity and gentleness, I took my departure.

I felt myself placed in a very painful position for two or three days after this interview, arising from a conviction that I had not done enough for the salvation of this poor victim, and yet without being able to fix upon any other means of rendering her any assistance, unless I put into execution a resolution that floated in my mind, to admonish her husband, by an anonymous communication, and threaten to divulge the secret of his guilt, unless he instantly desisted from his nefarious purpose—a plan that did not receive the entire sanction of my honour, however much it enlisted the approbation of my feelings. Some further time passed, and added, with its passing minutes, to my mental disquietude. One evening, when I was sitting meditating painfully on this sombre subject, a lackey, superbly dressed, was introduced to me by my servant, and stated that he had been commanded by his master, Colonel P——, to request my attendance at his house without delay. I started at the mention of the name, and the nature of the message ; and the man stared at me, as I exhibited the irresolution of doubt and the perturbation of surprise, in place of returning him a direct answer. Recovering myself, I replied, that I would attend upon the instant ; and, indeed, I felt a greater anxiety to fly to that house on which my thoughts were painfully fixed, than I ever did to visit the most valued friend I ever attended in distress. As I hurried along, I took little time to think of the object of my call ; but I suspected, either that Colonel P—— had got some notice of my having secretly visited, in my professional capacity, his wife, and being therefore privy to his design—a state of opposing circumstances,

which he was now to endeavour in some way to counteract—or that, finding, from the extremity to which his wife was reduced, that he was necessitated to call a doctor, as a kind of cloak or cover to his cruel act, he had thus made a virtue of necessity, when, alas! it would be too late for my rendering the unfortunate creature any service. “He shall not, however, escape,” muttered I, vehemently, through my teeth, as I proceeded. “He little knows that he is now calling to his assistance the man that shall hang him.”

I soon arrived at the house, and rung the front door-bell. The same powdered lackey who had preceded me, opened the door. I was led up two pair of stairs, and found myself in the same lobby with which I had already become somewhat familiar. I proceeded forward, thinking I was destined for the sick chamber of the lady; but the servant opened a door immediately next to that of her room, and ushered me into an apartment furnished in an elegant style, but much inferior to that occupied by his wife. In a bed lay a man of a genteel, yet sinister cast of countenance, with a large aquiline nose, and piercing black eyes. He appeared very pale and feverish, and threw upon me that anxious eye which we often find in patients who are under the first access of a serious disease; as if nature, while she kept her secret from the understanding, communicated it to the feelings, whose eloquence, expressed through the senses, we can often read with great facility. I knew, in an instant, that he was committed, by a relentless hand, to suffering, in all likelihood, in the form of a fever. He told me he was Colonel P——, and that, having been very suddenly taken ill, he had become alarmed for himself, and sent for me to administer to him my professional services. I looked at him intently; but he construed my stare into the eagerness of professional investigation. At that instant, a piercing scream rang

through the house, and made my ears tingle. I asked him who had uttered that scream, which must have come from some creature in the very extremity of agony, and made an indication as if I would hasten to administer relief to the victim. In an instant, I was close and firm in the trembling clutch of the sick man, who, with a wild and confused look, begged me not to sacrifice him to any attention to the cause of this disturbance, which was produced by a servant in the house habitually given, through fits of hysterics, to the utterance of these screams. I put on an appearance of being satisfied with this statement; but I fixed my eye relentlessly on him, as he still shook, from the combined effects of his incipient disease, and his fear of my investigating the cause of the scream. I proceeded to examine into the nature of his complaint. The symptoms described by him, and detected by my observation, satisfied me that he had been seized with an attack of virulent typhus; and from the intensity of some of the indications—particularly his languor and small pulse, his loss of muscular strength, violent pains in the head, the inflammation of his eyes, the strong throbbing of his temporal arteries, his laborious respiration, parched tongue, and hot breath—I was convinced he had before him the long sands of a rough and rapid race with death. At the close of my investigation he looked anxiously and wistfully in my face, and asked me what I conceived to be the nature of his complaint. I told him at once, and with greater openness and readiness than I usually practise, that I was very much afraid he was committed for a severe course of virulent typhus. He felt the full force of an announcement which, to those who have had any experience of this kind of fevers, cannot fail to carry terror in every syllable; and falling back on his pillow, turned up his eye to heaven. At this moment, a succession of screams, or rather yells, sounded through the house; but

as I now saw that I had a chance of saving the innocent sufferer, I pretended not to regard the dreadful sounds, and purposely averted my eyes to escape the inquiring, nervous look of the sick man. I gave him some directions, promised to send some medicines, and took my leave.

As I shut the door, the waiting-maid, whom I had seen before, was standing in the door of her mistress's apartment, and beckoned me in, with a look of terror and secrecy. I was as anxious to visit her gentle mistress as she was to call me. On entering, which I did slowly and silently, to escape the ear of her husband, I found the unfortunate creature in the most intense state of agony. The ground glass she had swallowed, and a great part of which, doubtless, adhered to the stomach, was too clearly the cause of her screams; but, to my surprise, I discovered, from her broken ejaculations, that the grief of her husband's illness had been able, in its strength, to fight its way to her heart, through all her bodily agonies produced by his poison. My questions regarding her own condition were answered by hysterical sobs, mixed with ejaculations of pity, and requests to know how he was, and what was the nature of the complaint by which he had been attacked—hinting, in dubious terms, that she had been the cause of his illness, by entailing upon him the necessity of attending her, and wounding his sensitive heart by her distress. My former communications to her concerning the poison, and my caution against her acceptance of it from the hands of her intended murderer, had produced no effect upon a mind predetermined to believe nothing against the man she loved and trusted beyond all mortals. She had received it again from him after my communication; the effects of it were now exhibited in her tortured, burning viscera; and yet, in the very midst of her agonies, her faith, confidence, and love stood unshaken; a noble yet

melancholy emblem of the most elevated, yet often least valued and most abused virtues of her sex. I endeavoured to answer her fevered inquiries about her husband, by telling her that he stood in great *need of her attendance*; and that, if she would agree to follow my precepts, and put herself entirely under my advice and direction, she might, in a very short time, be enabled to perform her duty of a faithful wife and a kind nurse to her distressed partner. The first perception she caught of the meaning of my communication, lighted up her eye, even in the midst of her wringing pains; and, starting up, she cried, that she would be the most abject slave to my will, and obey me in all things, if I could assure her of the blessing of being able to act as nurse and comforter to her husband. Now I saw my opportunity. On the instant I called up and despatched the waiting-maid to my home, with directions to my assistant, to send me instantly an oleaginous mixture, and some powerful emetics, which I described in a *recipe*. I waited the return of the messenger, administered the medicines, and watched for a time their operation and effects. Notwithstanding the continued attacks that had been made on her system by the doses of an active poison, I was satisfied that, if my energies were not, in some unforeseen way, thwarted and opposed, I would be able to bring this deserving wife and pattern of her sex from the brink of the grave that had been dug for her by the hand of her husband. After leaving with the waiting-maid some directions, I proceeded home, for the purpose of preparing the necessary medicines for my other patient.

I now commenced a series of regular visits to my two patients—the illness of the husband affording me the most ample scope for saving his wife. As he gradually descended into the unavoidable depths of his inexorable disease, she, by the elastic force of youth and a good con-

stitution, operating in unison with my medicines, which were administered with the greatest regularity, gradually threw off the lurking poison, and advanced to a state of comparative safety and strength. I was much pleased to observe the salutary effects of my professional interference in behalf of my interesting patient; but could scarcely credit my own perceptions, as I had exhibited to me the most undoubted proofs, that the desire to minister to the wants and comforts of her sick husband, engrossed so completely every other feeling that might have been supposed consequent upon a restoration to health, that she seemed to disregard all other considerations. Her questions about the period when she might be able to attend him were unremitting; and every hour she was essaying to walk, though her efforts often ended in weak falls, or sinkings on the ground, when some one was required to assist her in getting up and returning to bed. She entreated me to allow her to be *carried* to his bedside; where, she said, they might mix their tears and console each other; and all my arguments against the impropriety of such an obvious mode of increasing her husband's illness, and augmenting those sufferings she was so solicitous to ameliorate, were scarcely sufficient to prevent her from putting her design into execution.

The husband's disease, which often runs a course of two months, though the crisis occurs generally between the third and fourth week, progressed steadily and relentlessly, mocking, as the fevers of that type generally do, all the boasted art of our profession. His pulse rose to the alarming height of 120; he exhibited the oppression at the chest, increased thirst, blackfurred tongue, and inarticulate, muttering speech, which are considered to be unfavourable indications; and there was, besides, a clear tendency to delirium—a common, yet critical symptom—leaving, even after the patient has recovered, and often for

years, its marks in the weakened intellect. One evening I was standing by his bedside, studying his symptoms; witnessing the excess of his sufferings, and listening to the bursts of incoherent speech which, from time to time, came from him, as if expelled from his sick spirit by some internal power. He spoke often of his wife, whom he called by the name of Espras; and, in the midst of his broken ejaculations, gushes of intense feeling came on him, filling his yellow sunken eyes with rheumy tears, and producing heavy sobs, which, repressed by his loaded chest, assumed sounds unlike anything I ever heard, and beyond my power of description. I could not well understand these indications of the working of his spirit; but I fancied that, when he felt his own agonies, became conscious of what it is to suffer a certain extremity of pain, and learned, for the first time in his life, the sad experience of an inexorable disease, which presented to him the prospect of a lingering death, his mind recurred to the situation of his wife, who, as he thought, was, or might be, enduring tortures produced by his hand, transcending even his sufferings. There seemed to be less of conscience in his mental operations, than a new-born sorrow or sympathy, wrung out of a heart naturally obdurate, by the anguish of a personal experience of the pain he himself had produced in another, who had the strongest claims on his protection and love. His mind, though volatile and wandering, and not far from verging on delirium, was not yet deranged; and I was about to put a question to him concerning his wife, whom he had not directly mentioned to me, when the door opened, and the still pale and emaciated figure of Mrs. P——, dressed in a white morning gown, entered the apartment, struggling with her weakness to get forward, and clutching, in her breathless efforts, at whatever presented itself to her nerveless arms, to support her, and aid her in her progress to the

sick-bed of her husband. The bed being in the middle of a large room, she was necessitated to trust partly to the weak powers of her limbs, which having failed her, she, in an attempt to spring forward and reach it before sinking, came short of her aim, and fell with a crash on the floor, uttering, as she stumbled, a scream of sorrow, wrung from her by the sight of her husband lying extended on a bed of sickness. The noise started the invalid, who turned his eyes wildly in the direction of the disturbance; and I rushed forwards to raise in my arms the exhausted victim. I had scarcely got her placed on her feet, when she again struggled to reach the bed; and having, by my assistance, got far enough forward, she threw herself on the body of the fever-ridden patient, ejaculating, as she seized him in her arms, and bedewed his pale face with tears—

“Frederick! my honoured husband, whom I am bound to cherish and nurse as becomes the fondest of wives, why is it that I have been deprived of this luxury of the grief-stricken heart—to watch your looks, and anticipate your wants? Thanks to the blessed powers of your faith and of mine, I have you now in my arms, and no mortal shall come between me and my love! Night and day I will watch and tend you, till the assiduities of my affection weary out the effects of your cruel disease brought on you—O God!—by your grief for me, your worthless Espras.”

And she buried her head in the bosom of the sick man, and sobbed intensely. This scene, from the antithesis of its circumstances, appeared to me the most striking I had ever beheld; and, though it was my duty to prevent so exciting a cause of disturbance to the patient, I felt I had no power to stop this burst of true affection. I watched narrowly the eye of the patient; but it was too much clouded by the effects of the fever, and too nervous and fugacious, to enable me to distinguish between the effects

of disease and the working of the natural affections. But that his mind and feelings were working, and were responding to this powerful moral impulse, was proved fearfully by his rapid indistinct muttering and jabbering, mixed with deep sighs, and the peculiar sound of the repressed sobs which I have already mentioned, but cannot assimilate to any sound I ever heard. All my efforts to remove the devoted wife by entreaty were vain; she still clung to him, as if he had been on the eve of being taken from her by death. Her sobbing continued unabated, and her tears fell on his cheek. These intense expressions of love and sorrow awoke the sympathy which I thought had previously been partially excited, for I now observed that he turned away his head, while a stream of tears flowed down his face. It was now, I found, necessary, for the sake of the patient, to remove the excited lady; and I was obliged to apply a gentle force before I could accomplish my purpose. She insisted, however, upon remaining in the room, and beseeched me so piteously for this privilege, that I consented to a couch being made up for her at a little distance from the bed of her husband, whom it was her determination to tend and nurse, to the exclusion of all others. I was not, indeed, ill pleased at this resolution, for I anticipated, from her unexampled love and devotedness, an effect on the heart of her husband which might cure its vices and regenerate its affections.

On the next occasion of my stated visit, I found my patient had at last fallen into a state of absolute delirium. On a soft arm-chair, situated by his bedside, sat his wife, the picture of despair, wringing her hands, and indulging in the most extravagant demonstrations of grief and affection. The wretched man exhibited the ordinary symptoms of that unnatural excitement of the brain under which he laboured—relapsing at times into silence, then uttering a multiplicity of confused words—jabbering wildly—looking

about him, with that extraordinary expression of the eye, as if every individual present was viewed as a murderer—then starting up, and, with an overstrained and choking voice, vociferating his frenzied thoughts, and then again relapsing into silence. It is but little we can do for patients in this extreme condition; but the faith his wife reposed in professional powers that had already saved her, suggested supplications and entreaties which I told her she had better direct to a higher Dispensator of hope and relief. The tumultuous thoughts of the raving victim were still at intervals rolling forth; and, all of a sudden, I was startled by a great increase of the intensity and connectedness of his speech. He had struck the chord that sounded most fearfully in his own ears. His attempt to murder the creature who now sat and heard his wild confession, was described by himself in intelligible, though broken sentences:—

“The fortune brought me by Espras,” he vociferated, “is loaded by the burden of herself—that glass is not well ground—you are not so ill, my dear Espras, as to require a doctor—I cannot bear the thought of you labouring under that necessity—who can cure you so well as your devoted husband? Take this—fear not—why should love have suspicions? When she is gone, I shall have a wife of whom I may not be ashamed—yet, is she not a stranger in a foreign land? Has she not left her country, her relations, her friends, her gods, for me, whom she has raised to opulence? Cease, cease—I cannot stand these thoughts—there is a strife in this heart between the powers of hell and heaven—when will it terminate, and who shall rule my destiny?”

These words, which he accompanied with wild gestures, were followed by his usual indistinct muttering and jabbering. I directed my gaze upon his wife. She sat in the chair, motionless, with her eyes fixed on the ground as if

she had been struck with death in that position, and been stiffened into a rigidity which retained her in her place. The issues of her tenderness and affection seemed to have been sent back upon the heart, whose pulses they stopped. The killing pain of an ingratitude, ingeniously heightened to the highest grade of that hell-king of all human crimes, operating upon a mind rendered so sensitively susceptible of its influences, paralyzed the whole moral constitution of the devoted creature, and realized the poetical creation of despair. I felt inclined to soften the sternness of her grief, by quickening her disbelief of the raving thoughts of a fever-maniac; but I paused as I thought of the probable necessity of her suspicion for her future safety from the schemes of a murderer, whose evil desires might be resuscitated by the return of health. I could do nothing more at that time for the dreadful condition of the wretched husband, and less for the more dreadful state of the miserable wife; and the personal pain I experienced in witnessing this high-wrought scene of terror, forced me to depart, leaving the one still raving in his madness, and the other bound in the stern grasp of the most awful of all moral visitations.

I expected that on my next visit I would find such a change on my patient as would enable me to decide whether he would live or die; but he was still delirious, with the crowded thoughts of the events of his past life careering through his fevered brain, as if their restlessness and agitation were produced by the burning fires that chased them from their legitimate territory of the mind. There was, however, a change in one quarter. His wife's confidence and affection had withstood and triumphed over the attack of the previous day, and she was again occupied in hanging over her raving husband, shedding on his unconscious face the tear of pity, and supplying, by anticipation, every want that could be supposed incident

to his miserable condition. This new and additional proof of the strength of this woman's steadfastness, in her unparalleled fidelity and love, struck me even more forcibly than the previous indications she had given of this extraordinary feature in her character. But I was uncertain yet whether to construe her conduct as salutary or dangerous to her own personal interests—a circumstance depending on the further development of the sentiments of her husband. On that same evening the change suspected took place: the delirium abated, and consciousness, that had been driven forcibly from her throne, hastened to assume the sceptre of her authority. The crisis was past, and the patient began to be sensible of those attentions on the part of his devoted wife, which had not only the merit of being unremitting, but that of being sweetened by the tears of solicitude and the blandness of love. I marked attentively the first impressions made by her devotedness on the returning sense. I saw his look following her eye, which was continually inflamed and bedewed by the effects of her grief; and, after he had for a period of time fixed his half-conscious, half-wondering gaze on her, he turned it suddenly away, but not before he gave sufficient indications of sympathy and sorrow in a gush of tears. These manifestations were afterwards often repeated; but I thought I sometimes could perceive an abruptness in his manner, and a painful impatience of the minute, refined, and ingenious attentions of a highly-impassioned affection, which left me in doubt whether, after his disease was removed, sufficient reliance could be placed on the stability of his regeneration.

In my subsequent visits I kept up my study of the operations of his mind as well as the changes of his disease. His wife's attentions seemed rather to increase with the improvement of his health and her increased ability to discharge the duties of affection. He had improved so far

as to be in a condition to receive medicines for the recovery of the tone of his stomach. I seized the opportunity of his wife leaving for a short time his sick room, and, as I seated myself on her chair by the bedside, I took from my pocket the powder of iron-filings and triturated glass he had prepared for the poisoning of her who had latterly been contributing all the energies of love to the saving of his life.

“A chalybeate mixture,” said I, while I fixed my eyes on his countenance, “has been recommended for patients in your condition, for improving the power of the stomach weakened by the continued nausea of a protracted fever. Here is a powder composed of iron-filings, a good chalybeate, which I found lying in your wife’s apartment. I have none better in my laboratory, and would recommend to you a full dose of it before I depart.”

The electric effect of this statement was instantaneous and remarkable. He seemed like one who had felt the sharp sting of a musket bullet sent into his body by a hand unseen—uncertain of the nature of the wound, or of the aim by which it is produced. A sudden suspicion relieved his still fevered eye, which threw upon me the full blaze of staring wonder and terror, while an accompanying uncertainty of my intention sealed his mouth and added curiosity to his look. But I followed up my intention resolutely and determinedly.

“Here is on the table,” continued I, “a mucilaginous vehicle for its conveyance into the stomach. I shall prepare it instantly. To seize quickly the handle of an auspicious occasion is the soul of our art.”—(Approaching the bed with the medicine in my hand.)

“I cannot, I cannot take that medicine,” he cried, wildly. “What means this? Help me, Heaven, in this emergency! I cannot, I dare not take that medicine.”

“Why?” said I, still eyeing him intently. “Is it be-

cause there is ground glass in it? That cannot be; because I understand it was intended for Espras, your loving, faithful wife; and who would administer so dreadful a poison to a creature so gentle and interesting? She is, besides, a foreigner in our land; and who would treat the poor unprotected stranger with the dainty that has concealed in it a lurking death? Is this the hospitality of Britain?"

Every word was a thunderstroke to his heart. All uncertainty fled before these flaming sarcasms, which carried, on the bolt of truth, the keenness of his own poison. His pain became intense, and exhibited the peculiarity of a mixture of extreme terror, directed towards me as one that had the power of hanging him, and of intense sorrow for the injury he had produced to the wife of his bosom, whose emaciated figure, hanging over him in his distress, must have been deeply imprinted on his soul. Yet it was plain that his sorrow overcame his fear; for I saw his bosom heaving with an accumulation of hysterical emotions, which convulsed his frame in the intense manner of the aerial ball that chokes the female victim of excited nerves. The struggle lasted for several minutes, and at last a burst of dissolving tenderness, removing all the obstructions of prudence or terror, and stunning my ear with its loud sound, afforded him a temporary relief. Tears gushed down his cheeks, and groans of sorrow filled the room, and might have been heard in the apartment of his wife, whose entry, I feared, might have interrupted the extraordinary scene. Looking at me wistfully, he held out his hands, and sobbed out, in a tone of despair—

“Are you my friend, or are you my enemy?”

I answered him that I was the friend of his wife—one of the brightest patterns of female fidelity I had ever seen; and if by declaring myself his friend I would save her from the designs of the poisoner, and him from the pains of the

law and the fire of hell, I would instantly sign the bond of amity.

“You have knocked from my soul the bonds of terror,” he cried out, still sobbing; “and if I knew and were satisfied of one thing more, I would resign myself to God and my own breaking heart. Did Espras—yet why should I suspect one who rejects suspicion as others do the poison she would swallow from my hand, though labelled by the apothecary?—did Espras tell you what you have so darkly and fearfully hinted to me?”

I replied to him that, in place of telling me, the faithful unsuspecting creature had to that hour rejected and spurned the suspicion, as unworthy of her pure, confiding spirit.

“It is over!—it is over!” cried the changed man. “O God! How powerful is virtue! How strong is the force of those qualities of the heart which we men often treat as weak baubles to toy with, and throw away in our fits of proud spleen—the softness, the gentleness, the fidelity and devotedness of woman! How strangely, how wonderfully formed is the heart of man, which, disdainful of the terrors of the rope of the executioner, breaks and succumbs at the touch of the thistle-down of a woman’s love! This creature, sir, gave me my fortune, made me what I am, left for me her country and her friends, adhered to me through good and evil report—and I prepared for her a cruel death! Dreadful contrast! Who shall describe the shame, the sorrow, the humiliation of the ingrate whose crime has risen to the fearful altitude of this enormity; and who, by the tenderness and love of his devoted victim, is forced to turn his eye on the grim reward of death for love, riches, and life? Gentle, beloved, injured Espras! that emaciated form, these trembling limbs, these sunken eyes, and these weak and whispering sounds of pity and affection have touched my heart with a power that never

was vouchsafed to the tongue of eloquence. Transcending the rod of Moses, they have brought from the rock streams of blood; and every pulse is filled with tenderness and pity. Wretched fool! I was ashamed of your nativity, and of the colour you inherited from nature, and never estimated the qualities of your heart; but when shall the red-and-white beauty of England transcend my Espras in her fidelity and love, as she does in the skin-deep tints of a beguiling, treacherous face? God! what a change has come over this heart! Thanks, and prayers, and tears of blood, never can express the gratitude it owes to the great Author of our being for this miraculous return to virtue, effected by the simple means of a woman's confidence and love."

As he finished this impassioned speech, which I have repeated as correctly as my memory enabled me to commit to my note-book, he turned his eyes upwards, and remained for at least five minutes in silent prayer. As he was about finishing his wife entered. Her appearance called forth from his excited mind a burst of affection, and seizing her in his arms, he wept over her like a child. He was met as fervently by the gentle and affectionate creature, who, grateful to God for this renewed expression of her husband's love, turned up her eyes to heaven, and wept aloud. I never witnessed a scene like this. I left them to their enjoyment, and returned home.

I was subsequently a constant visitor at the house of Colonel P——; and, about eighteen months after his recovery, I officiated as accoucheur to his wife on the occasion of the birth of a son. Other children followed afterwards, and bound closer the bonds of that conjugal love which I had some hand in producing, and which I saw increase daily through a long course of years.

THE ADOPTED SON.

A TALE OF THE TIMES OF THE COVENANTERS.

“OH, for the sword of Gideon, to rid the land of tyrants, to bring down the pride of apostates, and to smite the ungodly with confusion!” muttered John Brydone to himself, as he went into the fields on the September of 1645, and beheld that the greater part of a crop of oats, which had been cut down a few days before, was carried off. John was the proprietor of about sixty acres on the south bank of the Ettrick, a little above its junction with the Tweed. At the period we speak of, the talented and ambitious Marquis of Montrose, who had long been an apostate to the cause of the Covenant—and not only an apostate, but its most powerful enemy—having, as he thought, completely crushed its adherents in Scotland, in the pride of his heart led his followers towards England, to support the tottering cause of Charles in the south, and was now with his cavalry quartered at Selkirk, while his infantry were encamped at Philiphaugh, on the opposite side of the river.

Every reader has heard of Melrose Abbey—which is still venerated in its decay, majestic in its ruins—and they have read, too, of the abode of the northern wizard, who shed the halo of his genius over the surrounding scenery. But many have heard of Melrose, of Scott, and of Abbotsford, to whom the existence of Philiphaugh is unknown. It, however, is one of those places where our forefathers laid the foundation of our freedom with the bones of its enemies, and cemented it with their own blood. If the stranger

who visits Melrose and Abbotsford pursue his journey a few miles farther, he may imagine that he is still following the source of the Tweed, until he arrive at Selkirk, when he finds that for some miles he has been upon the banks of the Ettrick, and that the Tweed is lost among the wooded hills to the north. Immediately below Selkirk, and where the forked river forms a sort of island, on the opposite side of the stream, he will see a spacious haugh, surrounded by wooded hills, and forming, if we may so speak, an amphitheatre bounded by the Ettrick, between the Yarrow and the Tweed. Such is Philiphaugh; where the arms of the Covenant triumphed, and where the sword of Montrose was blunted for ever.

Now, the sun had not yet risen, and a thick, dark mist covered the face of the earth, when, as we have said, John Brydone went out into his fields, and found that a quantity of his oats had been carried away. He doubted not but they had been taken for the use of Montrose's cavalry; and it was not for the loss of his substance that he grieved, and that his spirit was wroth, but because it was taken to assist the enemies of his country, and the persecutors of the truth; for than John Brydone, humble as he was, there was not a more dauntless or a more determined supporter of the Covenant in all Scotland. While he yet stood by the side of his field, and, from the thickness of the morning, was unable to discern objects at a few yards' distance, a party of horsemen rode up to where he stood. "Countryman," said one who appeared to be their leader, "can you inform us where the army of Montrose is encamped?"

John, taking them to be a party of the Royalists, sullenly replied—"There's mony ane asks the road they ken," and was proceeding into the field.

"Answer me!" demanded the horseman angrily, and raising a pistol in his hand—"Sir David Lesly commands you."

“Sir David Lesly!” cried John—“the champion of the truth!—the defender of the good cause! If ye be Sir David Lesly, as I trow ye be, get yer troops in readiness, and, before the mist vanish on the river, I will deliver the host o’ the Philistines into your hand.”

“See that ye play not the traitor,” said Lesly, “or the nearest tree shall be unto thee as the gallows was to Haman which he prepared for Mordecai.”

“Do even so to me, and more also,” replied John, “if ye find me false. But think ye that I look as though I bore the mark of the beast upon my forehead?” he continued, taking off his Lowland bonnet, and gazing General Lesly full in the face.

“I will trust you,” said the General; and, as he spoke, the van of his army appeared in sight.

John having described the situation of the enemy to Sir David, acted as their guide until they came to the Shaw Burn, when the General called a halt. Each man having partaken of a hurried repast, by order of Sir David, the word was given along the line that they should return thanks for being conducted to the place where the enemy of the Kirk and his army slept in imaginary security. The preachers at the head of the different divisions of the army gave out a psalm, and the entire host of the Covenanters, uncovering their heads, joined at the same moment in thanksgiving and praise. John Brydone was not a man of tears, but, as he joined in the psalm, they rolled down his cheeks, for his heart felt, while his tongue uttered praise, that a day of deliverance for the people of Scotland was at hand. The psalm being concluded, each preacher offered up a short but earnest prayer; and each man, grasping his weapon, was ready to lay down his life for his religion and his liberty.

John Brydone, with his bonnet in hand, approaching Sir David, said—“Now, sir, I that ken the ground, and the situation o’ the enemy, would advise ye, as a man who has

seen some service mysel', to halve your men; let the one party proceed by the river to attack them on the one side, and the other go round the hills to cut off their retreat."*

"Ye speak skilfully," said Sir David, and he gave orders as John Brydone had advised.

The Marquis of Montrose had been disappointed in reinforcements from his sovereign. Of two parties which had been sent to assist him in his raid into England, one had been routed in Yorkshire, and the other defeated on Carlisle sands, and only a few individuals from both parties joined him at Selkirk. A great part of his Highlanders had returned home to enjoy their plunder; but his army was still formidable, and he imagined that he had Scotland at his feet, and that he had nothing to fear from anything the Covenanters could bring against him. He had been writing despatches throughout the night; and he was sitting in the best house in Selkirk, penning a letter to his sovereign, when he was startled by the sounds of cannon and of musketry. He rushed to the street. The inhabitants were hurrying from their houses—many of his cavalry were mingling, half-dressed, with the crowd. "To horse!—to horse!" shouted Montrose. His command was promptly obeyed; and, in a few minutes, at the head of his cavalry, he rushed down the street leading to the river towards Philiphaugh. The mist was breaking away, and he beheld his army fleeing in every direction. The Covenanters had burst upon them as a thunderbolt. A thousand of his best troops lay dead upon the field.† He endeavoured to rally

* "But halve your men in equal parts,
Your purpose to fulfil;
Let ae half keep the water-side,
The rest gae round the hill."

Battle of Philiphaugh—Border Ballad.

† Sir Walter Scott says that "the number of slain in the field did not exceed three or four hundred." All the authorities I have seen state the number at a thousand. He also accuses Lesly of abusing his victory by slaughtering many

them, but in vain; and, cutting his way through the Covenanters, he fled at his utmost speed, and halted not until he had arrived within a short distance of where the delightful watering town of Innerleithen now stands, when he sought a temporary resting-place in the house of Lord Traquair.

John Brydone, having been furnished with a sword, had not been idle during the engagement; but, as he had fought upon foot, and the greater part of Lesly's army were cavalry, he had not joined in the pursuit; and, when the battle was over, he conceived it to be as much his duty to act the part of the Samaritan, as it had been to perform that of a soldier. He was busied, therefore, on the field in administering, as he could, to the wounded; and whether they were Cavalier or Covenanter, it was all one to John; for he was not one who could trample on a fallen foe, and in their hour of need he considered all men as brothers. He was passing within about twenty yards of a tent upon the Haugh, which had a superior appearance to the others—it was larger, and the cloth which covered it was of a finer quality; when his attention was arrested by a sound unlike all that belonged to a battle-field—the wailing and the cries of an infant! He looked around, and near him lay the dead body of a lady, and on her breast, locked in her cold arms, a child of a few months old was struggling. He ran towards them—he perceived that the lady was dead—he took the child in his arms—he held it to his bosom—he kissed its cheek—“Puir thing!—puir thing!” said John; “the innocent hae been left to perish among the unrighteous.” He was bearing away the child, patting its cheek, and caressing it as he went, and forgetting the soldier in the nurse, when he said unto himself—“Puir innocent!—an' belike yer wrang-headed faither is fleeing for his life, an' thinking about ye

of his prisoners in cold blood. Now, it is true that a hundred of the Irish adventurers were shot; but this was in pursuance of an act of both Parliaments, and not from any private revenge on the part of General Lesly.

an' yer mother as he flees! Weel, ye may be claimed some day, an' I maun do a' in my power to gie an account o' ye." So John turned back towards the lifeless body of the child's mother; and he perceived that she wore a costly ring upon her finger, and bracelets on her arms; she also held a small parcel, resembling a book, in her hands, as though she had fled with it, without being able to conceal it, and almost at the door of her tent she had fallen with her child in her arms, and her treasure in her hand. John stooped upon the ground, and took the ring from her finger, and the bracelets from her arms; he took also the packet from her hands, and in it he found other jewels, and a purse of gold pieces. "These may find thee a faither, pair thing," said he; "or if they do not, they may befriend thee when John Brydone cannot."

He carried home the child to his own house, and his wife having at that time an infant daughter at her breast, she took the foundling from her husband's arms, and became unto it as a mother, nursing it with her own child. But John told not his wife of the purse, nor the ring, nor the rich jewels.

The child had been in their keeping for several weeks, but no one appeared to claim him. "The bairn may hae been baptized," said John; "but it wud be after the fashion o' the sons o' Belial; but he is a brand plucked from the burning—he is my bairn noo, and I shall be unto him as a faither—I'll tak upon me the vows—and, as though he were flesh o' my ain flesh, I will fulfil them." So the child was baptized. In consequence of his having been found on Philiphaugh, and of the victory there gained, he was called Philip; and as John had adopted him as his son, he bore also the name of Brydone. It is unnecessary for us to follow the foundling through his years of boyhood. John had two children—a son named Daniel, and Mary, who was nursed at his mother's breast with the orphan

Philip. As the boy grew up, he called his protectors by the name of father and mother; but he knew they were not such, for John had shown him the spot upon the Haugh where he had found him wailing on the bosom of his dead mother. Frequently, too, when he quarrelled with his play-fellows, they would call him the "Philiphaugh foundling," and "the Cavalier's brat;" and on such occasions Mary was wont to take his part, and, weeping, say "he was her brother." As he grew up, however, it grieved his protector to observe that he manifested but little of the piety, and less of the sedateness of his own children. "What is born i' the bane, isna easily rooted oot o' the flesh," said John; and in secret he prayed and wept that his adopted son might be brought to a knowledge of the truth. The days of the Commonwealth had come, and John and his son Daniel rejoiced in the triumphs of the Parliamentary armies, and the success of its fleets; but, while they spoke, Philip would mutter between his teeth—"It is the triumph of murderers!" He believed that but for the ascendancy of the Commonwealth, he might have obtained some tidings of his family; and this led him to hate a cause which the activity of his spirit might have tempted him to embrace.

Mary Brydone had always been dear to him; and, as he grew towards manhood, he gazed on her beautiful features with delight; but it was not the calm delight of a brother contemplating the fair face of a sister; for Philip's heart glowed as he gazed, and the blush gathered on his cheek. One summer evening they were returning from the fields together, the sun was sinking in the west, the Ettrick murmured along by their side, and the voice of the wood-dove was heard from the copse-wood which covered the hills.

"Why are you so sad, brother Philip?" said Mary; "would you hide anything from your own sister?"

"Do not call me *brother*, Mary," said he earnestly—"do not call me *brother*!"

“Who would call you brother, Philip, if I did not?” returned she affectionately.

“Let Daniel call me brother,” said he, eagerly; “but not you—not you!”

She burst into tears. “When did I offend you, Philip,” she added, “that I may not call you brother?”

“Never, Mary!—never!” he exclaimed; “call me Philip—*your* Philip!—anything but brother!” He took her hand within his—he pressed it to his bosom. “Mary,” he added, “I have neither father, mother, brother, nor kindred—I am alone in the world—let there be something that I can call *mine*—something that will love me in return! Do you understand me, Mary?”

“You are cruel, Philip,” said she, sobbing as she spoke; “you know I love you—I have always loved you!”

“Yes! as you love Daniel—as you love your father; but not as”——

“You love Mr. Duncan,” he would have said; but his heart upbraided him for the suspicion, and he was silent. It is here necessary to inform the reader that Mr. Duncan was a preacher of the Covenant, and John Brydone revered him much. He was much older than Mary, but his heart cleaved to her, and he had asked her father’s consent to become his son-in-law. John, though a stern man, was not one who would force the inclination of his daughter; but Mr. Duncan was, as he expressed it, “one of the faithful in Israel,” and his proposal was pleasing to him. Mary, however, regarded the preacher with awe, but not with affection.

Mary felt that she understood Philip—that she loved him, and not as a brother. She hid her face upon his shoulder, and her hand returned the pressure of his. They entered the house together, and her father perceived that his daughter’s face was troubled. The manner of both was changed. He was a shrewd man as well as a stern man, and he also suspected the cause.

“Philip,” said he calmly, “for twenty years hae I protected ye, an’ watched ower ye wi’ a faither’s care, an’ I fear that, in return for my care, ye hae brought sorrow into the bosom o’ my family, an’ instilled disobedience into the flesh o’ my ain flesh. But though ye hae cleaved—as it maun hae been inherent in your bluid—into the principles o’ the sons o’ this warld, yet, as I ne’er found ye guilty o’ a falsehood, an’ as I believe ye incapable o’ ane, tell me truly, why is your countenance an’ that o’ Mary changed—and why are ye baith troubled to look me straight in the face? Answer me—hae ye taught her to forget that she is your sister?”

“Yes!” answered Philip; “and can it offend the man who saved me, who has watched over me, and sheltered me from infancy till now, that I should wish to be his son in more than in name?”

“It does offend me, Philip,” said the Covenanter; “even unto death it offends me! I hae consented that my dochter shall gie her hand to a guid an’ a godly man, who will look after her weelfare baith here and hereafter. And ye kenned this—she kenned it, and she didna refuse; but ye hae come like the son o’ darkness, an’ sawn tares amang the wheat.”

“Father,” said Philip, “if you will still allow me to call you by that name—foundling though I am—unknown as I am—in what am I worse than him to whom you would sacrifice your daughter’s happiness?”

“Sacrifice her happiness!” interrupted the old man; “hoo daur ye speak o’ happiness, wha kens nae meanin’ for the word but the vain pleasures o’ this sinfu’ warld! Think ye that, as a faither, an’ as ane that has my offspring to answer for, that I daur sacrifice the eternal happiness o’ my bairn, for the gratification o’ a temporary feelin’ which ye encourage the day and may extinguish the morn? Na, sir; they wha wad ken what true happiness is, maun first learn to crucify human passions. “Mary,” added he,

sternly, turning to his daughter, "repeat the fifth commandment."

She had been weeping before, and she now wept aloud.

"Repeat it!" replied her father yet more sternly.

"Honour thy father and thy mother," added she, sobbing as she spoke.

"See, then, bairn," replied her father, "that ye remember that commandment in yer heart, as weel as on yer tongue. Remember, too, that o' a' the commands, it's the only ane to which a promise is attached; and, noo, mark what I say, an', as ye wadna disobey me, see, at yer peril, that ye ne'er permit this young man to speak to ye again, save only as a brither."

"Sir," said Philip, "we have grown up together like twin tendrils on the same vine, and can ye wonder that our hearts have become entwined round each other, or that they can tear asunder because ye command it! Or, could I look on the face of an angel"——

"Out on ye, blasphemers!" interrupted the Covenanter—"wad ye apply siccan epithets to a bairn o' mine? Once for all, hear me, Philip; there are but twa ways o't, and ye can tak yer choice. It's the first time I hae spoken to ye roughly, but it isna the first time my spirit has mourned ower ye. I hae tried to lead ye in the right path; ye hae had baith precept and example afore ye; but the leaven o' this world—the leaven o' the persecutors o' the Kirk and the Covenant—was in yer very bluid; an' I believe, if opportunity had offered, ye wad hae drawn yer sword in the unholy cause. A' that I could say, an' a' that I could do, religion has ne'er had ony place in yer heart; but ye hae yearned aboot yer faither, and ye hae mourned aboot yer mother—an' that was natural aneugh—but oh! ye hae also desired to cling to the cauld formality o' Episcopacy, as they nae doot did: an' should ye e'er discover that yer parents hae been Papists, I believe that ye wad become ane too!

An' aften, when the conversation turned upon the apostate Montrose, or the gallant Lesly, I hae seen ye manifest the spirit an' the very look o' a persecutor. Were I to gie up my dochter to such a man, I should be worse than the heathen wha sacrifice their offspring to the abomination o' idols. Noo, Philip, as I hae tauld ye, there are but twa ways o't. Either this very hour gie me your solemn promise that ye will think o' Mary as to be yer wife nae mair, or, wi' the risin' o' to-morrow's sun, leave this house for ever!"

"Sir," said Philip bitterly, "your last command I can obey, though it would be with a sad heart—though it would be in despair—your first I cannot—I will not!"

"You must—you *shall!*" replied the Covenanter.

"Never," answered Philip.

"Then," replied the old man, "leave the roof that has sheltered ye frae yer cradle!"

"I will!" said Philip, and the tears ran down his cheeks. He walked towards Mary, and, with a faltering voice, said—"Farewell, Mary!—Farewell! I did not expect this; but do not forget me—do not give your hand to another—and we shall meet again!"

"You shall not!" interrupted the inexorable old man.

Mary implored her father, for her sake, and for the sake of her departed mother, who had loved Philip as her own son, that he would not drive him from the house, and Daniel, too, entreated; but their supplications were vain.

"Farewell, then!" said Philip; "and, though I depart in misery, let it not be with thy curse, but let the blessing of him who has been to me a father until now, go with me."

"The blessin' o' Heaven be wi' ye and around ye, Philip!" groaned the Covenanter, struggling to conceal a tear: "but, if ye will follow the dictates o' yer rebellious heart and leave us, tak wi' ye yer property."

"My property!" replied Philip.

"Yer property," returned the old man. "Twenty years has it lain in that drawer, an' during that time eyes hae not seen it, nor fingers touched it. It will assist ye noo; an' when ye enter the warld, may throw some light upon yer parentage."

He went to a small drawer, and, unlocking it, took out the jewels, the bracelet, the ring, and the purse of gold, and, placing them in Philip's hands, exclaimed—"Fareweel!—fareweel!—but it maun be!" and he turned away his head.

"O Mary!" cried Philip, "keep—keep this in remembrance of me," as he attempted to place the ring in her hand.

"Awa, sir!" exclaimed the old man, vehemently, "wad ye bribe my bairn into disobedience, by the ornaments o' folly an' iniquity! Awa, ye son o' Belial, an' provoke me not to wrath!"

Philip groaned, he dashed his hand upon his brow, and rushed from the house. Mary wept long and bitterly, and Daniel walked to and fro across the room, mourning for one whom he loved as a brother. The old man went out into the fields to conceal the agony of his spirit; and, when he had wandered for a while, he communed with himself, saying, "I hae dune foolishly, an' an ungodly action hae I performed this nicht; I hae driven oot a young man upon a wicked warld, wi' a' his sins an' his follies on his head; an', if evil come upon him, or he plunge into the paths o' wickedness, his bluid an' his guilt will be laid at my hands! Puir Philip!" he added; "after a', he had a kind heart!" And the stern old man drew the sleeve of his coat across his eyes. In this frame of mind he returned to the house. "Has Philip not come back?" said he, as he entered. His son shook his head sorrowfully, and Mary sobbed more bitterly.

"Rin ye awa doun to Melrose, Daniel," said he, "an'

I'll awa up to Selkirk, an' inquire for him, an' bring him back. Yer faither has allowed passion to get the better o' him, an' to owercome baith the man an' the Christian."

"Run, Daniel, run!" cried Mary eagerly. And the old man and his son went out in search of him.

Their inquiries were fruitless. Days, weeks, and months rolled on, but nothing more was heard of poor Philip. Mary refused to be comforted; and the exhortations, the kindness, and the tenderness shown towards her by the Rev. Mr. Duncan, if not hateful, were disagreeable. Dark thoughts, too, had taken possession of her father's mind, and he frequently sank into melancholy; for the thought haunted him that his adopted son, on being driven from his house, had laid violent hands upon his own life; and this idea embittered every day of his existence.

More than ten years had passed since Philip had left the house of John Brydone. The Commonwealth was at an end, and the second Charles had been recalled; but exile had not taught him wisdom, nor the fate of his father discretion. He madly attempted to be the lord and ruler of the people's conscience, as well as King of Britain. He was a libertine with some virtues—a bigot without religion. In the pride, or rather folly of his heart, he attempted to force Prelacy upon the people of Scotland; and he let his bloodhounds loose, to hunt the followers of the Covenant from hill to hill, to murder them on their own hearths, and, with the blood of his victims, to blot out the word *conscience* from the vocabulary of Scotchmen. The Covenanters sought their God in the desert and on the mountains which He had reared; they worshipped him in the temples which His own hands had framed; and there the persecutor sought them, the destroyer found them, and the sword of the tyrant was bathed in the blood of the worshipper! Even the family altar was profaned; and to raise the voice of prayer and praise in the cottage to the King of kings, was held to

be as treason against him who professed to represent Him on earth. At this period, too, Graham of Claverhouse—whom some have painted as an angel, but whose actions were worthy of a fiend—at the head of his troopers, who were called by the profane, *the ruling elders of the kirk*, was carrying death and cold-blooded cruelty throughout the land.

Now, it was on a winter night in the year 1677, a party of troopers were passing near the house of old John Brydone, and he was known to them not only as being one who was a defender of the Covenant, but also as one who harboured the preachers, and whose house was regarded as a conventicle.

“Let us rouse the old psalm-singing heretic who lives here from his knees,” said one of the troopers.

“Ay, let us stir him up,” said the sergeant who had the command of the party; “he is an old offender, and I don’t see we can make a better night’s work than drag him along, bag and baggage, to the captain. I have heard as how it was he that betrayed our commander’s kinsman, the gallant Montrose.”

“Hark! hark!—softly! softly!” said another, “let us dismount—hear how the nasal drawl of the conventicle moans through the air! My horse pricks his ears at the sound already. We shall catch them in the act.”

Eight of the party dismounted, and, having given their horses in charge to four of their comrades, who remained behind, walked on tiptoe to the door of the cottage. They heard the words given and sung—

“When cruel men against us rose
To make of us their prey!”

“Why, they are singing treason,” said one of the troopers. “What more do we need?”

The sergeant placed his forefinger on his lips, and for about ten minutes they continued to listen. The song

of praise ceased, and a person commenced to read a chapter. They heard him also expound to his hearers as he read.

"It is enough," said the sergeant; and, placing their shoulders against the door, it was burst open. "You are our prisoners!" exclaimed the troopers, each man grasping a sword in his right hand, and a pistol in the left.

"It is the will of Heaven!" said the Rev. Mr. Duncan; for it was he who had been reading and expounding the Scriptures; "but, if ye stretch forth your hands against a hair o' our heads, He, without whom a sparrow cannot fall to the ground, shall remember it against ye at the great day o' reckoning, when the trooper will be stripped of his armour, and his right hand shall be a witness against him!"

The soldiers burst into a laugh of derision. "No more of your homily, reverend oracle," said the sergeant; "I have an excellent recipe for short sermons here; utter another word and you shall have it!" The troopers laughed again, and the sergeant, as he spoke, held his pistol in the face of the preacher.

Besides the clergyman, there were in the room old John Brydone, his son Daniel, and Mary.

"Well, old greybeard," said the sergeant, addressing John, "you have been reported as a dangerous and disaffected Presbyterian knave, as we find you to be; you are also accused of being a harbourer and an accomplice of the preachers of sedition; and, lo! we have found also that your house is used as a conventicle. We have caught you in the act, and we shall take every soul of you as evidence against yourselves. So come along, old boy—I should only be doing my duty by blowing your brains against the wall; but that is a ceremony which our commander may wish to see performed in his own presence!"

"Sir," said John, "I neither fear ye nor your armed

men. Tak me to the bloody Claverhouse, if you will, and at the day o' judgment it shall be said—' *Let the murderers o' John Brydone stand forth!*'"

"Let us despatch them at once," said one of the troopers.

"Nay," said the sergeant; "bind them together, and drive them before us to the captain: I don't know but he may wish to *do justice* to them with his own hand."

"The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel," groaned Mr. Duncan.

Mary wrung her hands—"Oh, spare my father!" she cried.

"Wheesht, Mary!" said the old man; "as soon wad a camel pass through the eye o' a needle, as ye wad find compassion in the hands o' these men!"

"Bind the girl and the preacher together," said the sergeant.

"Nay, by your leave, sergeant," interrupted one of the troopers, "I wouldn't be the man to lift a hand against a pretty girl like that, if you would give me a regiment for it."

"Ay, ay, Macdonald," replied the sergeant—"this comes of your serving under that canting fellow, Lieutenant Mowbray—he has no love for the service; and confound me if I don't believe he is half a Roundhead in his heart. Tie the hands of the girl, I command you."

"I will not!" returned Macdonald; "and hang me if any one else shall!" And, with his sword in his hand, he placed himself between Mary and his comrades.

"If you do not bind her hands, I shall cause others to bind yours," said the sergeant.

"They may try that who dare!" returned the soldier, who was the most powerful man of the party; "but what I've said I'll stand to."

"You shall answer for this to-morrow," said the sergeant, sullenly, who feared to provoke a quarrel with the trooper

"I will answer it," replied the other.

John Brydone, his son Daniel, and the Rev. Mr. Duncan, were bound together with strong cords, and driven from the house. They were fastened, also, to the horses of the troopers. As they were dragged along, the cries and the lamentations of Mary followed them; and the troopers laughed at her wailing, or answered her cries with mockery, till the sound of her grief became inaudible in the distance, when again they imitated her cries, to harrow up the feelings of her father.

Claverhouse, and a party of his troops, were then in the neighbourhood of Traquair; and before that man, who knew not what mercy was, John Brydone, and his son, and the preacher were brought. It was on the afternoon of the day following that on which they had been made prisoners, that Claverhouse ordered them to be brought forth. He was sitting, with wine before him, in the midst of his officers; and amongst them was Lieutenant Mowbray, whose name was alluded to by the sergeant.

"Well, knaves!" began Claverhouse, "ye have been singing, praying, preaching, and holding conventicles.—Do ye know how Grahame of Claverhouse rewards such rebels?"

As the prisoners entered, Lieutenant Mowbray turned away his head, and placed his hand upon his brow.

"Sir," said John, addressing Claverhouse, "I'm neither knave nor rebel—I hae lifted up my voice to the God o' my faithers, according to my conscience; and, unworthy as I am o' the least o' His benefits, for threescore years and ten he has been my shepherd and deliverer, and, if it be good in His sight, He will deliver me now. My trust is in Him, and I fear neither the frown nor the sword o' the persecutor."

"Have done, grey-headed babbler!" cried Claverhouse.

Lieutenant Mowbray, who still sat with his face from the prisoners, raised his handkerchief to his eyes.

"Captain," said Mr. Duncan, "there's a day coming when ye shall stand before the great Judge, as we now stand before you; and when the remembrance o' this day, and the blood o' the righteous which ye hae shed, shall be written with letters o' fire on yer ain conscience, and recorded against ye; and ye shall call upon the rocks and mountains to cover ye"——

"Silence!" exclaimed Claverhouse. "Away with them!" he added, waving his hand to his troopers—"shoot them before sunrise!"

Shortly after the prisoners had been conveyed from the presence of Claverhouse, Lieutenant Mowbray withdrew; and having sent for the soldier who had interfered on behalf of Mary—"Macdonald," he began, "you were present yesterday when the prisoners, who are to die to-morrow, were taken. Where did you find them?"

"In the old man's house," replied the soldier; and he related all that he had seen, and how he had interfered to save the daughter. The heart of the officer was touched, and he walked across his room, as one whose spirit was troubled. "You did well, Macdonald!" said he, at length—"you did well!" He was again silent, and again he added—"And you found the preacher in the old man's house—you found HIM there!" There was an anxious wildness in the tone of the lieutenant.

"We found him there," replied the soldier.

The officer was again silent—again he thoughtfully paced across the floor of his apartment. At length, turning to the soldier, he added—"I can trust you, Macdonald. When night has set in, take your horse and ride to the house of the elder prisoner, and tell his daughter—the maiden whom you saved—to have horses in readiness for her father, her brother, and—and her—her *husband!*" said the lieutenant, faltering as he spoke; and when he had pronounced the word *husband*, he again paused, as though

his heart were full. The soldier was retiring—"Stay," added the officer, "tell her, her father, her brother, and—the preacher, shall not die; before daybreak she shall see them again; and give her this ring as a token that ye speak truly."

He took a ring from his finger, and gave it into the hands of the soldier.

It was drawing towards midnight. The troops of Claverhouse were quartered around the country, and his three prisoners, still bound to each other, were confined in a small farm-house, from which the inhabitants had been expelled. They could hear the heavy and measured tread of the sentinel pacing backward and forward in front of the house; the sound of his footsteps seemed to measure out the moments between them and eternity. After they had sung a psalm and prayed together—"I am auld," said John Brydone, "and I fear not to die, but rather glory to lay down my life for the great cause; but, oh, Daniel! my heart yearns that yer bluid also should be shed—had they only spared ye, to hae been a protector to our puir Mary!—or had I no driven Philip frae the house"——

"Mention not the name of the cast-away," said the minister.

"Dinna mourn, faither," answered Daniel, "an arm mair powerful than that of man will be her supporter and protector."

"Amen!" responded Mr. Duncan. "She has aye been cauld to me, and has turned the ear o' the deaf adder to the voice o' my affection; but even noo, when my thochts should be elsewhere, the thocht o' her burns in my heart like a coal."

While they yet spoke, a soldier, wrapt up in a cloak, approached the sentinel, and said—

"It is a cold night, brother."

"Piercing," replied the other, striking his feet upon the ground.

"You are welcome to a mouthful of my spirit-warmer," added the first, taking a bottle from beneath his cloak.

"Thank ye!" rejoined the sentinel; "but I don't know your voice. You don't belong to our corps, I think."

"No," answered the other; "but it matters not for that—brother soldiers should give and take."

The sentinel took the bottle and raised it to his lips; he drank, and swore the liquor was excellent.

"Drink again," said the other; "you are welcome; it is as good as a double cloak around you." And the sentinel drank again.

"Good night, comrade," said the trooper. "Good night," replied the sentinel; and the stranger passed on.

Within half an hour, the same soldier, still muffled up in his cloak, returned. The sentinel had fallen against the door of the house, and was fast asleep. The stranger proceeded to the window—he raised it—he entered. "Fear nothing," he whispered to the prisoners, who were bound to staples that had been driven into the opposite wall of the room. He cut the cords with which their hands and their feet were fastened.

"Heaven reward ye for the mercy o' yer heart, and the courage o' this deed," said John.

"Say nothing," whispered their deliverer, "but follow me."

Each man crept from the window, and the stranger again closed it behind them. "Follow me, and speak not," whispered he again; and, walking at his utmost speed, he conducted them for several miles across the hills; but still he spoke not. Old John marvelled at the manner of their deliverer; and he marvelled yet more when he led them to Philiphaugh, and to the very spot where, more than thirty years before, he had found the child on the bosom of its dead mother; and there the stranger stood still, and, turning round to those he had delivered—"Here

we part," said he; "hasten to your own house, but tarry not. You will find horses in readiness, and flee into Westmoreland; inquire there for the person to whom this letter is addressed; he will protect you." And he put a sealed letter into the hands of the old man, and, at the same time, placed a purse in the hands of Daniel, saying, "This will bear your expenses by the way—Farewell!—farewell!" They would have detained him, but he burst away, again exclaiming, as he ran—"Farewell!"

"This is a marvellous deliverance," said John; "it is a mystery, an' for him to leave us on this spot—on *this very spot*—where puir Philip"——And here the heart of the old man failed him.

We need not describe the rage of Claverhouse, when he found, on the following day, that the prisoners had escaped; and how he examined and threatened the sentinels with death, and cast suspicious glances upon Lieutenant Mowbray; but he feared to accuse him, or quarrel with him openly.

As John, with the preacher and his son, approached the house, Mary heard their footsteps, rushed out to meet them, and fell weeping upon her father's neck. "My bairn!" cried the old man; "we are restored to ye as from the dead! Providence has dealt wi' us in mercy an' in mystery."

His four farm-horses were in readiness for their flight; and Mary told him how the same soldier who had saved her from sharing their fate, had come to their house at midnight, and assured her that they should not die, and to prepare for their flight; "and," added she, "in token that he who had sent him would keep his promise towards you, he gave me this ring, requesting me to wear it for your deliverer's sake."

"It is Philip's ring!" cried the old man, striking his hand before his eyes—"it is Philip's ring!"

“*My Philip’s!*” exclaimed Mary; “oh, then, he lives! —he lives!”

The preacher leaned his brow against the walls of the cottage and groaned.

“It is still a mystery,” said the old man, yet pressing his hands before his eyes in agony; “but it is—it maun be him. It was Philip that saved us—that conducted us to the very spot where I found him! But, oh,” he added, “I wad rather I had died, than lived to ken that he has drawn his sword in the ranks o’ the oppressor, and to murder the followers after the truth.”

“Oh, dinna think that o’ him, father!” exclaimed Mary; “Philip wadna—he couldna draw his sword but to defend the helpless!”

Knowing that they had been pursued and sought after, they hastened their flight to England, to seek the refuge to which their deliverer had directed them. But as they drew near to the Borders, the Rev. Mr. Duncan suddenly exclaimed—“Now, here we must part—part for ever! It is not meet that I should follow ye farther. When the sheep are pursued by the wolves, the shepherd should not flee from them. Farewell, dear friends—and, oh! farewell to you, Mary! Had it been sinful to hae loved you, I would hae been a guilty man this day—for, oh! beyond a’ that is under the sun, ye hae been dear to my heart, and your remembrance has mingled wi’ my very devotions. But I maun root it up, though, in so doing, I tear my very heart-strings. Fareweel!—fareweel! Peace be wi’ you—and may ye be a’ happier than will ever be the earthly lot o’ Andrew Duncan!”

The tears fell upon Mary’s cheeks; for, though she could not love, she respected the preacher, and she esteemed him for his worth. Her father and brother entreated him to accompany them. “No! no!” he answered; “I see how this flight will end. Go—there is

happiness in store for you; but my portion is with the dispersed and the persecuted." And he turned and left them.

Lieutenant Mowbray was disgusted with the cold-blooded butchery of the service in which he was engaged; and, a few days after the escape of John Brydone and his son, he threw up his commission, and proceeded to Dumfriesshire. It was a Sabbath evening, and near nightfall; he had wandered into the fields alone, for his spirit was heavy. Sounds of rude laughter broke upon his ear; and, mingled with the sound of mirth, was a voice as if in earnest prayer. He hurried to a small wood from whence the sounds proceeded, and there he beheld four troopers, with their pistols in their hands, and before them was a man, who appeared to be a preacher, bound to a tree.

"Come, old Psalmody!" cried one of the troopers, raising his pistol, and addressing their intended victim, who was engaged in prayer; "make ready—we have other jobs on hand—and we gave you time to speak a prayer, but not to preach."

Mowbray rushed forward. He sprang between the troopers and their victim. "Hold! ye murderers, hold!" he exclaimed. "Is it thus that ye disgrace the name of soldiers by washing your hands in the blood of the innocent?"

They knew Mowbray, and they muttered, "You are no officer of ours now; he is our prisoner, and our orders are to shoot every conventicle knave who falls into our hands."

"Shame on him who would give such orders!" said Mowbray; "and shame on those who would execute them! There," added he, "there is money! I will ransom him."

With an imprecation, they took the money that was offered them, and left their prisoner to Mowbray. He

approached the tree where they had bound him—he started back—it was the Rev. Andrew Duncan!

“Rash man!” exclaimed Mowbray, as he again stepped forward to unloose the cords that bound him. “Why have ye again cast yourself into the hands of the men who seek your blood? Do you hold your life so cheap, that, in one week, ye would risk to sell it twice? Why did not ye, with your father, your brother, and your *wife*, flee into England, where protection was promised!”

“My father!—my brother!—my wife!—mine!—mine!” repeated the preacher wildly. “There are no such names for my tongue to utter!—none!—none to drop their love as morning dew upon the solitary soul o’ Andrew Duncan!”

“Are they murdered?” exclaimed Mowbray, suddenly, in a voice of agony.

“Murdered!” said the preacher, with increased bewilderment. “What do you mean?—or wha do you mean?”

“Tell me,” cried Mowbray, eagerly; “are not you the husband of Mary Brydone?”

“Me?—me!” cried the preacher. “No!—no!—I loved her as the laverock loves the blue lift in spring, and her shadow cam between me and my ain soul—but she wadna hearken unto my voice—she is nae wife o’ mine!”

“Thank Heaven!” exclaimed Mowbray; and he clasped his hands together.

It is necessary, however, that we now accompany John Brydone and his family in their flight into Westmoreland. The letter which their deliverer had put into their hands was addressed to a Sir Frederic Mowbray; and, when they arrived at the house of the old knight, the heart of the aged Covenanter almost failed him for a moment; for it was a proud-looking mansion, and those whom he saw around wore the dress of the Cavaliers.

"Who are ye?" inquired the servant who admitted them to the house.

"Deliver this letter into the hands of your master," said the Covenanter; "our business is with him."

"It is the handwriting of Master Edward," said the servant, as he took the letter into his hand; and, having conducted them to a room, he delivered it to Sir Frederic.

In a few minutes the old knight hurried into the room, where the Covenanter, and his son and his daughter, stood. "Welcome, thrice welcome!" he cried, grasping the hand of the old man; "here you shall find a resting-place and a home, with no one to make you afraid."

He ordered wine and food to be placed before them, and he sat down with them.

Now John marvelled at the kindness of his host, and his heart burned within him; and, in the midst of all, he thought of the long-lost Philip, and how he had driven him from his house—and his cheek glowed and his heart throbbed with anxiety. His son marvelled also, and Mary's bosom swelled with strange thoughts—tears gathered in her eyes, and she raised the ring that had been the token of her father's deliverance to her lips.

"Oh, sir," said the Covenanter, "pardon the freedom o' a plain blunt man, and o' ane whose bosom is burning wi' anxiety; but there is a mystery, there is *something* attending my deliverance, an' the letter, and your kindness, that I canna see through—and I hope, and I fear—and I canna—I *daurna* comprehend how it is!—but, as it were, the past—the lang bygone past, and the present, appear to hae met thegither! It is makin' my head dizzy wi' wonder, for there seems in a' this a something that concerns you, and that concerns me, and *one* that I mayna name."

"Your perplexity," said Sir Frederic, "may be best relieved, by stating to you, in a few words, one or two circumstances of my history. Having, from family afflic-

tion, left this country, until within these four years, I held a commission in the army of the Prince of Orange. I was present at the battle of Seneff; it was my last engagement; and in the regiment which I commanded, there was a young Scottish volunteer, to whose bravery, during the battle, I owed my life. In admiration and gratitude for his conduct, I sent for him after the victory, to present him to the prince. He came. I questioned him respecting his birth and his family. He was silent—he burst into tears. I urged him to speak. He said, of his real name he knew nothing—of his family he knew nothing—all that he knew was, that he had been the adopted son of a good and a Christian man, who had found him on Philiphaugh, on the lifeless bosom of his mother!”

“Merciful Heaven! my puir, injured Philip!” exclaimed the aged Covenanter, wringing his hands.

“My brother!” cried Daniel eagerly. Mary wept.

“Oh, sir!” continued Sir Frederic, “words cannot paint my feelings as he spoke! I had been at the battle of Philiphaugh! and, not dreaming that a conflict was at hand, my beloved wife, with our infant boy, my little Edward, had joined me but the day before. At the first noise of Lesly’s onset, I rushed from our tent—I left my loved ones there! Our army was stricken with confusion—I never beheld them again! I grasped the hand of the youth—I gazed in his face as though my soul would have leaped from my eyelids. ‘Do not deceive me!’ I cried; and he drew from his bosom the ring and the bracelets of my Elizabeth!”

Here the old knight paused and wept, and tears ran down the cheeks of John Brydone, and the cheeks of his children.

They had not been many days in Westmoreland, and they were seated around the hospitable hearth of the good knight in peace, when two horsemen arrived at the door.

“It is our friend, Mr. Duncan, and a stranger!” said the Covenanter, as he beheld them from the window.

“They are welcome—for your sake, they are welcome,” said Sir Frederic; and while he yet spoke, the strangers entered. “My son, my son!” he continued, and hurried forward to meet him.

“Say also your *daughter!*” said Edward Mowbray, as he approached towards Mary, and pressed her to his breast.

“Philip!—my own Philip!” exclaimed Mary, and speech failed her.

“My brother!” said Daniel.

“He was dead, and is alive again—he was lost, and is found,” exclaimed John. “O, Philip, man! do ye forgie me?”

The adopted son pressed the hand of his foster-father.

“It is enough,” replied the Covenanter.

“Yes, he forgives you!” exclaimed Mr. Duncan; “and he has forgiven me. When we were in prison and in bonds waiting for death, he risked his life to deliver us, and he did deliver us; and a second time he has rescued me from the sword of the destroyer, and from the power of the men who thirsted for my blood. He is no enemy o’ the Covenant—he is the defender o’ the persecuted; and the blessing o’ Andrew Duncan is all he can bequeath, for a life twice saved, upon his deliverer, and Mary Brydone.”

Need we say that Mary bestowed her hand upon Edward Mowbray? but, in the fondness of her heart, she still called him “her Philip!”

THE FORTUNES OF WILLIAM WIGHTON.

MY departure from Edinburgh was sudden and mysterious; and it was high time that I was away, for I was but a reckless boy at the best. My uncle was both sore vexed and weary of me, for I was never out of one mishap until I was into another; but one illumination night in the city put them all into the rear—I had, by it, got far ahead of all my former exploits. Very early next morning, I got notice from a friend that the bailies were very desirous of an interview with me; and, to do me more honour, I was to be escorted into their presence. I had no inclination for such honour, particularly at this time. I saw that our discourse could not be equally agreeable to both parties; besides they, I knew, would put questions to me I could not well answer to their satisfaction—though, after all, there was more of devilry than roguery in anything I had been engaged in.

I was not long in making up my mind; for I saw Archibald Campbell and two of the town-guard at the head of the close as I stepped out at the stair-foot. I had no doubt that I was the person they wished to honour with their accompaniment to the civic authorities. I was out at the bottom of the close like thought. I believe they never got sight of me. I kept in hiding all day—neither my uncle nor any of my friends knew where I was to be found. After it was dark, I ventured into town; but no farther than the Low Calton, where dwelt an old servant of my father's, who had been my nurse after the death of my mother. She was a widow, and lived in one of the ground flats, where she kept a small retail shop. Poor

creature! she loved me as if I had been her own child, and wept when I told her the dilemma I was in. She promised to conceal me until the storm blew over, and to make my peace once more with my uncle, if I would promise to be a good boy in future. She made ready for me a comfortable supper, and a bed in her small back room. Weary sitting alone, I went to rest, and soon fell into a sound sleep. I had lain thus, I know not how long, when I was roused by a loud noise, as if some person or persons had fallen on the floor above; and voices in angry altercation struck my ear.

The weather being cold, my nurse had put on a fire in the grate, which still burned bright, and gave the room a cheerful appearance. I looked up—the angry voices continued, and there was a continued beating upon the floor at intervals, and, apparently, a great struggling, as if two people were engaged in wrestling. I attempted to fall asleep again, but in vain. For half an hour there had been little intermission of the noise. The ceiling of the room was composed only of the flooring of the story above; so that the thumping and scuffling were most annoying, reminding one of the sound of a drum overhead. I rose in anger from my bed, and, seizing the poker, beat up upon the ceiling pretty smartly. The sound ceased for a short space, and I crept into bed again. I was just on the point of falling asleep when the beating and struggling were renewed, and with them my anger. I rose from bed in great fury, resolved at least to make those who annoyed me rise from the floor. I looked round for something sharp, to prick them through the joinings of the flooring-deals. By bad luck, I found upon the mantel-piece an old worn knife, with a thin and sharp point. I mounted upon the table, and thus reached the ceiling with my hand. The irritating noise seemed to increase. I placed the point in one of the joints, and gave a push up—it

would not enter. I exerted my strength, when—I shall never forget that moment—it ran up to the hilt!—a heavy groan followed; I drew it back covered with blood! I stood upon the table stupefied with horror, gazing upon the ensanguined blade; two or three heavy drops of blood fell upon my face and went into my eyes. I leaped from the table, and placed the knife where I had found it. The noise ceased; but heavy drops of blood continued to fall and coagulate upon the floor at my feet. I felt stupefied with fear and anguish—my eyes were riveted upon the blood which—drop, drop, drop—fell upon the floor. I had stood thus for some time before the danger I was in occurred to me. I started, hastily put on my clothes, and, opening the window, leapt out, fled by the back of the houses, past the Methodist chapel, up the back stairs into Shakspeare square, and along Princes' street; nor did I slacken my pace until I was a considerable way out of town.

I was now miserable. The night was dark as a dungeon; but not half so dark as my own thoughts. I had deprived a fellow-creature of life! In vain did I say to myself that it was done with no evil intention on my part. I had been too rash in using the knife; and my conscience was against me. I was at this very time, also, in hiding for my rashness and folly in other respects. I trembled at the first appearance of day, lest I should be apprehended as a murderer. Dawn found me in the neighbourhood of Bathgate. Cold and weary as I was, I dared not approach a house or the public road, but lay concealed in a wood all day, under sensations of the utmost horror. Towards evening, I cautiously emerged from my hiding-place. Compelled by hunger, I entered a lonely house at a distance from the public road, and, for payment, obtained some refreshment, and got my benumbed limbs warmed. During my stay, I avoided all unnecessary conversation.

I trembled lest they would speak of the murder in Edinburgh; for, had they done so, my agitation must have betrayed me. After being refreshed, I left the hospitable people, and pursued, under cover of the night, my route to Glasgow, which I reached a short time after day-break. Avoiding the public streets, I entered the first change-house I found open at this early hour, where I obtained a warm breakfast and a bed, of both which I stood greatly in need. I soon fell asleep, in spite of the agitation of my mind; but my dreams were far more horrifying than my waking thoughts, dreadful as they were. I awoke early in the afternoon, feverish and unrefreshed.

After some time spent in summoning up resolution, I requested my landlady to procure for me a sight of any of the Edinburgh newspapers of the day before. She brought one to me. My agitation was so great that I dared not trust myself to take it out of her hand, lest she had perceived the tremor I was in; but requested her to lay it down, while I appeared to be busy adjusting my dress—carefully, all the time, keeping my back to her. I had two objects in view: I wished to see the shipping-list, as it was my aim to leave the country for America by the first opportunity; and, secondly, to see what account the public had got of my untoward adventure. I felt conscious that all the city was in commotion about it, and the authorities despatched for my apprehension; for I had no doubt that my nurse would at once declare her innocence, and tell who had done the deed. With an anxiety I want words to express, I grasped the paper as soon as the landlady retired, and hurried over its columns until I reached the last. During the interval, I believe I scarcely breathed; I looked it over once more with care; I felt as if a load had been lifted from my breast—there was not in the whole paper a single word of a death by violence

or accident. I thought it strange, but rejoiced. I felt that I was not in such imminent danger of being apprehended; but my mind was still racked almost to distraction.

I remained in my lodging for several days, very ill, both from a severe cold I had caught and distress of mind. I had seen every paper during the time. Still there was nothing in them applicable to my case. I was bewildered, and knew not what to think. Had the occurrences of that fearful night, I thought, been only a delusion—some horrid dream or nightmare? Alas! the large drops of blood that still stained my shirt, which, in my confusion, I had not changed, drove from my mind the consoling hope; they were damning evidence of a terrible reality. My mind reverted back to its former agony, which became so aggravated by the silence of the public prints that I was rendered desperate. The silence gave a mystery to the whole occurrence, more unendurable than if I had found it narrated in the most aggravated language, and my person described, with a reward for my apprehension.

As soon as my sickness had a little abated, and I was able to go out, I went in the evening, a little before ten o'clock, to the neighbourhood of where the coach from Edinburgh stopped. I walked about until its arrival, shunning observation as much as possible. At length it came. No one descended from it whom I recollected ever to have seen. Rendered desperate, I followed two travellers into a public-house which they entered, along with the guard. For some time, I sat an attentive listener to their conversation. It was on indifferent subjects; and I watched an opportunity to join in their talk. Speaking with an air of indifference, I turned the conversation to the subject I had so much at heart—the local news of the city. They gave me what little they had; but not one word of it concerned my situation. I inquired at the

guard if he would, next morning, be so kind as take a letter to Edinburgh, for Widow Neil, in the Low Calton.

“With pleasure,” he said—“I know her well, as I live close by her shop; but, poor woman, she has been very unwell for these two or three days past. There has been some strange talk of a young lad who vanished from her house, no one can tell how; she is likely to get into trouble from the circumstance, for it is surmised he has been murdered in her house, and his body carried off, as there was a quantity of blood upon the floor. No one suspects her of it; but still it is considered strange that she should have heard no noise, and can give no account of the affair.”

This statement of the guard surprised me exceedingly. Why was the affair mentioned in so partial and unsatisfactory a manner? Why was I, a murderer, suspected of being myself murdered? Why did not this lead to an investigation, which must have exposed the whole horrid mystery of the death of the individual up stairs? I could not understand it. My mind became the more perplexed, the more I thought of it. Yet, so far, I had no reason to complain. Nothing had been said in any respect implicating me. Perhaps I had killed nobody; perhaps I had only wounded some one who did not know whence the stab came; or perhaps the person killed or wounded was an outlaw, and no discovery could be made of his situation. All these thoughts rushed through my mind as I sat beside the men. I at last left them, being afraid to put further questions.

I went to my lodgings and considered what I should do. I conceived it safest to write no letters to my friends, or say anything further on the subject. I meditated upon the propriety of going to America, and had nearly made up my mind to that step. Every day, the mysterious affair became more and more disagreeable and painful to

æe. I gave up making further inquiries, and even carefully avoided, for a time, associating with any person or reading any newspaper. I gradually became easier, as time, which brought no explanation to me, passed over; but the thought still lay at the bottom of my heart, that I was a murderer.

I went one day to a merchant's counting-house, to take my passage for America. The man looked at me attentively. I shook with fear, but he soon relieved me by asking—"Why I intended to leave so good a country for so bad a one?" I replied, that I could get no employment here. My appearance had pleased him. He offered me a situation in his office. I accepted it. I continued in Glasgow, happy and respected, for several years, and, to all likelihood, was to have settled there for life. I was on the point of marriage with a young woman, as I thought, every way worthy of the love I had for her. Her parents were satisfied; the day of our nuptials was fixed—the house was taken and furnished wherein we were to reside, and everything prepared. In the delirium of love, I thought myself the happiest of men, and even forgot the affair of the murder.

It was on the Monday preceding our union—which was to take place in her father's house on the Friday evening—that business of the utmost importance called me to the town of Ayr. I took a hasty farewell of my bride, and set off, resolved to be back upon the Thursday at farthest. Early in the forenoon of Tuesday, I got everything arranged to my satisfaction; but was too late for the first coach. To amuse myself in the best manner I could, until the coach should set off again, I wandered down to the harbour; and, while there, it was my misfortune to meet an old acquaintance, Alexander Cameron, the son of a barber in the Luckenbooths. Glad to see each other, we shook hands most cordially; and, after chatting about

“auld langsyne” until we were weary wandering upon the pier, I proposed to adjourn to my inn. To this proposal he at once acceded, on condition that I should go on board of his vessel afterwards, when he would return the visit in the evening. To this I had no objection to make. The time passed on until the dusk. We left the inn; but, instead of proceeding to the harbour, we struck off into the country for some time, and then made the coast at a small bay, where I could just discern, through the twilight, a small lugger-rigged vessel at anchor. I felt rather uneasy, and began to hesitate; when my friend, turning round, said—

“That is my vessel, and as fine a crew mans her as ever walked a deck;—we will be on board in a minute.”

I wished, yet knew not how, to refuse. He made a loud call; a boat with two men pushed from under a point, and we were rowing towards the vessel ere I could summon resolution to refuse. I remained on board not above an hour. I was treated in the most kindly manner. When I was coming away, Cameron said—

“I have requested this visit from the confidence I feel in your honour. I ask you not, to promise not to deceive me—I am sure you will not. My time is very uncertain upon this coast, and I have papers of the utmost importance, which I wish to leave in safe hands. We are too late to arrange them to-night; but be so kind as promise to be at the same spot where we embarked to-morrow morning, at what hour you please, and I will deliver them to you. Should it ever be in my power to serve you, I will not flinch from the duty of gratitude, cost what it may.”

There was a something so sincere and earnest in his manner, that I could not refuse. I said, that as I left Ayr on the morrow, I would make it an early hour—say, six o'clock; which pleased him. We shook hands and parted,

when I was put on shore, and returned to my inn, where I ruminated upon what the charge could be I was going to receive from my old friend in so unexpected a manner.

I was up betimes, and at the spot by the appointed hour. The boat was in waiting; but Cameron was not with her. I was disappointed, and told one of the men so; he replied that the captain expected me on board to breakfast. With a reluctance much stronger than I had felt the preceding night, I consented to go on board. I found him in the cabin, and the breakfast ready for me. We sat down, and began to converse about the papers. Scarce was the second cup filled out, when a voice called down the companion, "Captain, the cutter!" Cameron leaped from the table, and ran on deck. I heard a loud noise of cordage and bustle; but could not conceive what it was, until the motion of the vessel too plainly told that she was under way. I rose in haste to get upon deck; but the cover was secured. I knocked and called; but no one paid any attention to my efforts. I stood thus knocking, and calling at the stretch of my voice, for half an hour, in vain. I returned to my seat, and sat down, overcome with anger and chagrin. Here was I again placed in a disagreeable dilemma—evidently going far out to sea, when I ought to be on my way to Glasgow to my wedding. In the middle of my ravings, I heard first one shot, then another; but still the ripple of the water and the noise overhead continued. I was now convinced that I was on board of a smuggling lugger, and that Cameron was either sole proprietor or captain. I wished with all my heart that the cutter might overtake and capture us, that I might be set ashore; but all my wishes were vain—we still held on our way at a furious rate. As I heard no more shots, I knew that we had left the cutter at a greater distance. Again, therefore, I strove to gain a hearing, but in vain: I then strove to force the hatch, but it

resisted all my efforts. I yielded myself at length to my fate; for the way of the vessel was not in the least abated.

Towards night, I could find, by the pitching of the vessel and the increased noise above, that the wind had increased fearfully, and that it blew a storm. It was with difficulty that I could keep my seat, so much did she pitch. During the whole night and following day, I was so sick that I thought I would have died. I had no light; there was no human creature to give me a mouthful of water; and I could not help myself even to rise from the floor of the cabin, on which I had sunk. The agony of my mind was extreme: the day following was to have been that of my marriage; I was at sea, and knew not where I was. I blamed myself for my easy, complying temper; my misery increased; and, could I have stood on my feet, I know not what I might have done in my desperate situation. Thus I spent a second night; and the day which I had thought was to shine on my happiness, dawned on my misery.

Towards the afternoon, the motion of the vessel ceased, and I heard the anchor drop. Immediately the hatch was opened, and Cameron came to me. I rose in anger, so great that I could not give it utterance. Had I not been so weak from sickness, I would have flown and strangled him. He made a thousand apologies for what had happened. I saw that his concern was real; my anger subsided into melancholy, and my first utterance was employed to inquire where we were.

"I am sorry to say," replied he, "that I cannot but feel really grieved to inform you that we are at present a few leagues off Flushing."

"Good God!" I exclaimed, as I buried my face in my hands, while I actually wept for shame—"I am utterly undone! What will my beloved Eliza say? How shall

I ever appear again before her and her friends? Even now, perhaps, she is dressing to be my wife, or weeping in the arms of her bridesmaid. The thought will drive me mad. For God's sake, Cameron, get under way, and land me again either at Greenock or where you first took me up, or I am utterly undone. Do this, and I will forget all I have suffered and am suffering."

"I would, upon my soul," he said, "were it in my power, though I should die in a jail; but, while this gale lasts, it were folly to attempt it. Besides, I am not sole proprietor of the lugger—I am only captain. My crew are sharers in the cargo. I would not get their consent. The thought of the evil I was unintentionally doing you, gave me more concern than the fear of capture. Had the storm not come on, I would have risked all to have landed you somewhere in Scotland; but it was so severe, and blowing from the land, that there was no use to attempt it. I hope, however, the weather will now moderate, and the wind shift, when I will run you back, or procure you a passage in the first craft that leaves for Scotland."

I made no answer to him, I was so absorbed in my own reflections. I walked the deck like one distracted, praying for a change in the weather. For other three days it blew, with less or more violence, from the same point—during which time I scarcely ever ate or drank, and never went to bed. On the forenoon of Monday, the wind shifted. I went immediately ashore in the boat, and found a brig getting under way for Leith. I stepped on board, and took farewell of Captain Cameron, whom I never saw again, and wish I had never seen him in my life.

After a tedious passage of nine days, during which we had baffling winds and calms, we reached Leith Roads about seven in the evening. It was low water, and the brig could not enter the harbour for several hours. I was put ashore in the boat, and hastened up to the Black Bull

Inn, in order to secure a seat in the mail for Glasgow, which was to start in a few minutes. As I came up Leith Walk, my feelings became of a mixed nature. I thought of Widow Niel and the murder, as I looked over at the Calton; then my mind reverted to my bride. I got into the coach, and was soon on the way to Glasgow. I laid myself back in a corner, and kept a stubborn silence. I could not endure to enter into conversation with my fellow-travellers: I scarce heard them speak—my mind was so distracted by what had befallen me, and what might be the result.

Pale, weary, and exhausted, I reached my lodgings between three and four o'clock of the morning of the seventeenth day from that in which I had left it in joy and hope. After I had knocked, and was answered, my landlady almost fainted at the sight of me. She had believed me dead; and my appearance was not calculated to do away the impression, I looked so ghastly from anxiety and the want of sleep. Her joy was extreme when she found her mistake. I undressed and threw myself on my bed, where I soon fell into a sound sleep, the first I had enjoyed since my involuntary voyage.

I did not awake until about eight o'clock, when I arose and dressed. I did not haste to Eliza, as my heart urged me, lest my sudden appearance should have been fatal to her. I wrote her a note, informing her I was in health, and would call and explain all after breakfast. I sent off my card, and immediately waited upon my employers. They were more surprised than pleased at my return. Another had been placed in my situation, and they did not choose to pay him off when I might think proper to return after my unaccountable absence. My soul fired at the base insinuation; my voice rose, as I demanded to know if they doubted my veracity. With an expression of countenance that spoke daggers, one of them said—

“We doubt, at least, your prudence in going on board an unknown vessel; but let us proceed to business—we have found all your books correct to a farthing, and here is an order for your salary up to your leaving. Good morning!”

I received it indignantly; and, bowing stiffly, left them. I was not much cast down at this turn my affairs had taken so unexpectedly. I had no doubt of finding a warm reception from Eliza, hurried to her parent's house, and rung the bell for admittance. Judge my astonishment when her brother opened the door, with a look as if we had never met, and inquired what I wanted. The blood mounted to my face—I essayed to speak; but my tongue refused its office; I felt bewildered, and stood more like a statue than a man. In the most insulting manner, he said—“There is no one here who wishes any intercourse with you.” And he shut the door upon me.

Of everything that befell me for a length of time, from this moment, I am utterly unconscious; when I again awoke to consciousness, I was in bed at my lodgings, with my kind landlady seated at my bedside. I was so weak and reduced I could scarce turn myself; the agitation I had undergone, and the cruel receptions I had met on my return, had been too much for my mind to bear; a brain fever had been the consequence, and my life had been despaired of for several days. I would have questioned my landlady; but she urged silence upon me, and refused to answer my inquiries. I soon after learned all. I had been utterly neglected by those to whom I might have looked for aid or consolation; but the bitterest thought of all was, that Eliza should cast me off without inquiry or explanation. I could not bring my mind to believe she did so of her own accord. She must, I thought, be either cruelly deceived or under restraint; for she and her friends could not but know the situation I was in. I vainly strove to call my wounded pride to my aid, and drive her from

my thoughts; but the more I strove, the firmer hold she took of me. As soon as I could hold my pen, I wrote to her in the most moving terms; and, after stating the whole truth and what I had suffered, begged an interview, were it to be our last—for my life or death, I said, appeared to depend upon her answer. In the afternoon I received one: it was my own letter, which had been opened, and enclosed in an envelope. The writing was in her own hand. Cruel woman! all it contained was, that she had read, and now returned my letter as of her own accord, and by the approbation of her friends; for she was firmly resolved to have no communication with one who had used her so cruelly, and exposed her to the ridicule of her friends and acquaintances. This unjust answer had quite an opposite effect from what I could have conceived a few hours before; pity and contempt for the fickle creature took the place of love; my mind became once more tranquil; I recovered rapidly, and soon began to walk about and enjoy the sweets of summer. I met my fickle fair by accident more than once in my walks, and found I could pass her as if we had never met. Her brother I had often a mind to have horsewhipped; but the thought that I would only give greater publicity to my unfortunate adventure, and be looked upon as the guilty aggressor, prevented me from gratifying my wish.

Glasgow had now become hateful to me, otherwise I would have commenced manufacturer upon my own account, as was my intention had I married Eliza. In as short a period as convenient, I sold off the furniture of the house I had taken, at little or no loss, and found that I still was master of a considerable sum. Having made a present to my landlady for her care of me, I bade a long adieu to Glasgow, and proceeded by the coach to Leeds, where I procured a situation in a house with which our Glasgow house had had many transactions.

As I fear I am getting prolix, I shall hurry over the next few years I remained in Leeds. I became a partner of the house; our transactions were very extensive, more particularly in the United States of America, where we were deeply engaged in the cotton trade. It was judged necessary that one of the firm should be on the spot, to extend the business as much as possible. The others being married men, I at once volunteered to take this department upon myself, and made arrangements accordingly. I proceeded towards Liverpool by easy stages on horseback, as the coaches at that period were not so regular as they are at present.

On the second day after my leaving Leeds, the afternoon became extremely wet towards evening; so that I resolved to remain all night in the first respectable inn I came to. I dismounted, and found it completely filled with travellers, who had arrived a short time before. It was with considerable difficulty I prevailed upon the hostess to allow me to remain. She had not a spare bed; all had been already engaged; the weather continued still wet and boisterous, and I resolved to proceed no farther that night, whether I could obtain a bed or not. I, at length, arranged with her that I should pass the night by the fireside, seated in an arm-chair. Matters were thus all set to rights, and supper over, when a loud knocking was heard at the door. An additional stranger entered the kitchen where I sat, drenched with rain and benumbed with cold; and, after many difficulties upon the side of the hostess, the same arrangements were made for him.

As our situations were so similar, we soon became very intimate. I felt much interest in him. He was of a frank and lively turn in conversation, and exceedingly well informed on every subject we started. A shrewd eccentricity in the style and matter of his remarks, forced the conviction upon his hearers, that he was a man of no mean

capacity; there was also a restless inquietude in his manner, which gave him the appearance of having a slight shade of insanity. At one time his bright black eye was lighted up with joy and hilarity, as he chanted a few lines of some convivial song. In a few minutes, a change came over him, and furtive, timid glances stole from under his long dark eyelashes. Then would follow a glance so fierce, that it required a firm mind to endure it unmoved. These looks became more frequent as his libations continued; for he had consumed a great quantity of liquor, and seemed to me to be in that frame of mind when one strives in vain to forget his identity.

The other inmates of the house had long retired, and all was hushed save the voice of my companion. I felt no inclination to sleep; the various scenes of my life were floating over my mind, as I gazed into the bright fire that glowed before me, while the storm raged without. My companion had at length sunk into a troubled slumber; his head resting upon his hand, which was supported by the table, and his intelligent face half turned from me. While I sat thus, my attention was roused by a low, indistinct murmuring from the sleeper: he was evidently dreaming—for, although there were a few disjointed words here and there pronounced, he still slept soundly.

Gradually his articulation became more distinct and his countenance animated; but his eyes were closed. I became much interested; for this was the first instance of a dreamer talking in his sleep I had ever witnessed. I watched him. A gleam of joy and pleasure played around his well-formed mouth, while the few inarticulate sounds he uttered resembled distant shouts of youthful glee. Gradually the tones became connected sentences; care and anxiety, at times, came over his countenance; in heart-touching language, he bade farewell to his parent and the beloved scenes of his youth; large drops of moisture stole from under his closed

eyelids. The transitions of his mind were so quick, that it required my utmost attention to follow them; but I never heard such true eloquence as came from this dreamer. I had seen most of the performers of our modern stage, and appreciated their talents; but what I at this time witnessed, in the actings of genuine nature, surpassed all their efforts.

Gradually the shades of innocence departed from his countenance; his language became adulterated by slang phrases, and his features assumed a fiendish cast that made me shudder. He showed that he was familiar with the worst of company; care and anxiety gradually crept over his countenance; he had, it seemed, commenced a system of fraud upon his employers and been detected; grief and despair threw over him their frightful shadows; pale and dejected, he pleaded for mercy, for the sake of his father, in the most abject terms. He now spoke with energy and connection—it was to his companions in jail; but hope had fled, and a shameful death seemed to him inevitable.

His trial came on. He proceeded to court—his lips appeared pale and parched—a convulsive quiver agitated the lower muscles of his face and neck—he seemed to breathe with difficulty—his head sank lower upon the hand that supported it—he had been condemned—he was now in his solitary cell—his murmurs breathed repentance and devotion—his sufferings appeared to be so intense that large drops of perspiration stood upon his forehead—he was engaged with the clergyman, preparing for death. Remembering what I had suffered in my own dreams, I resolved to awake him, and, to do so, gave the arm that lay upon the table a gentle shake. A shudder passed over his frame, and he sank upon the floor.

All that I have narrated had occurred in a space of time remarkably short. I rose to lift him to his seat, and make an apology for the surprise I had given him; but he was quite unconscious. The noise of his fall had alarmed the

landlady, who, with several of the guests, entered as I was stooping with him in my arms, attempting to raise him. I was so much shocked when I found the state he was in, that I let him drop, and recoiled back in horror, exclaiming, "Good God! have I killed him! Send for a surgeon." The idea that I had endeavoured to awake him in an improper time came with strong conviction upon me, and forced the words out of my mouth.

They raised him up and placed him on his seat. I could not offer the smallest assistance. Every effort was used to restore him in vain, and a surgeon sent for, but life had fled. During all this time I had remained in a stupor of mind; suspicion fell upon me that I had murdered him; I had been alone with him, and seen stooping over the body when they entered; and my exclamation at the time, and my confusion, were all construed as sure tokens of my guilt. I was strictly guarded until a coroner's inquest could be held upon the body.

I told the whole circumstances as they had occurred; but my narrative made not the smallest impression. I was not believed—an incredulous smile, or a dubious shake of the head, was all that I obtained from my auditors. I then kept silence, and refused to enter into any further explanation, conscious that my innocence would be made manifest at the inquest, which must meet as soon as the necessary steps could be taken. I was already tried and condemned by those around me—every circumstance was turned against me, and the most prominent was that I was Scotch. Many remarks were made, all to the prejudice of my country, but aimed at me. My heart burned to retort their unjust abuse; but I was too indignant to trust myself to utter the thoughts that swelled my heart almost to bursting.

The surgeon had come, and was busy examining the body of the unfortunate individual, when a new traveller

arrived. He appeared to be about sixty years of age, of a pleasing countenance, which was, however, shaded by anxiety and grief. Sick and weary of those around me, I had ceased to regard them, but I raised my eyes as the new comer entered; and was at once struck by a strong resemblance, as I thought, between him and the deceased. The stranger appeared to take no interest in what was going on, but urged the landlady to make haste and procure him some refreshment, while his horse was being fed. He was in the utmost hurry to depart, as important business required his immediate attendance in London. The loquacious landlady forced him to listen to a most exaggerated account of the horrid murder which the Scotchman had committed in her house. The story was so much distorted by her inventions, that I could not have recognized the event, if the time and place, and her often pointing to me and the bed on which the body was laid, had not identified it. I could perceive a faint shudder come over his frame, as she finished her romance. The surgeon came from his examination of the body. He was a man well advanced in years, of an intelligent and benevolent cast of countenance. She inquired with what instrument the murder had been perpetrated.

"My good lady," said the surgeon, "I can find no marks of violence upon the body, and I cannot say whether the individual met his death by violence or the visitation of God."

"Oh, sir," cried the hostess, "I am certain he was murdered; for I saw them struggling on the floor as I entered the room; and he said himself that he had murdered him."

"Peace, good woman," said the surgeon, who turned to me, and requested to know the particulars from myself; "for I am persuaded," he continued, "that no outward violence has been sustained by the deceased."

I once more began to narrate to him the whole circumstance. As I proceeded with the dream, the stranger suddenly became riveted in his attention; his eyes were fixed upon me; the muscles of his face were strangely agitated, as if he was restraining some strong emotion; wonder and anxiety were strongly expressed by turns, until I mentioned one of the names I had heard in the dream. Uttering a heart-rending groan, or rather scream, he rose from his seat and staggered to the bed, where he fell upon the inanimate body, and sobbed audibly as he kissed the cold forehead, and parted the long brown hair that covered it.

"Oh, Charles," he cried, "my son, my dear lost son! have I found you thus, who was once the stay and hope of my heart!"

There was not a dry eye in the room after this burst of agonized nature. He rose from the bed and approached me. Looking mildly in my face, he said—

"Stranger, be so good as continue your account of this sad accident; for both our sakes, I hope you are innocent of any violence upon my son."

Overcome by his manner, in kindness to him I suggested that it would be better were only the surgeon and himself present at the recital. Several of those present protested loudly against my proposal, saying I would make my escape if I was not guarded. My anger now rose—I could restrain myself no longer—I cast an indignant glance around, and, in a voice at its utmost pitch, dared any one present to say I had used violence against the unfortunate young man. All remained silent. In a calmer manner, I declared I had no wish to depart, urgent as my business was, until the inquest was over; and, if they doubted my word, they were welcome to keep strict watch at the door and windows.

The old man perceived the kindness of my motive for

withdrawing with him, and his looks spoke his gratitude as we retired.

I once more stated every circumstance as it had occurred, from the time of his son's arrival until he fell from the chair. As I repeated the words I could make out in the early part of the dream, his father wept like a child, and said—"Would to God he had never left me!" When I came to the London part, he groaned aloud and wrung his hands. I was inclined more than once to stop; but he motioned me to proceed, while tears choked his utterance. When I had made an end, he clasped his hands, and, raising his face to heaven, said—"I thank Thee, Father of mercies! Thy will be done. He was the last of five of Thy gifts. I am now childless, and have nothing more worth living for but to obey Thy will. I thank Thee that in his last moments it can be said of him as it was of thy apostle—'Behold, he prayeth!'"

For some time we remained silent, reverencing the old man's grief. The surgeon first broke silence:—"Stranger," he said, "I have not a doubt of your innocence of any intention to injure the person of the deceased, but your humane intention to awaken him was certainly the immediate cause of his death; for, had you tried to rouse him from sleep, either sooner or later in his dream, all might have been well. The gentle shake you gave his arm, in all likelihood, was felt as the fatal fall of the platform or push of the executioner, which caused, from fright, a sudden collapse of the heart, that put a final stop to the circulation and caused immediate death. We regret it; but cannot say there was any bad intention on your part."

I thanked the surgeon for the justice he had done me in his remarks; and then addressing the bereaved father, I begged his forgiveness for my unfortunate interference with his son; I only did so to put a period to his dream,

as his sufferings appeared to me to be of the most acute description.

He stretched out his hand, and grasping mine, which he held for some time, while he strove to overcome his emotions, he at length said—

“Young man, from my heart I acquit you of every evil intention, and believe you from evidence that cannot be called in question. What you have told coincides with facts I already possess. For some time back the conduct of Charles gave me serious cause of uneasiness; but I knew not half the extent of his excesses, although his requests for money were incessant. I supplied them as far as was in my power; for he accompanied them with dutiful acknowledgments and plausible reasons. Until of late I had fulfilled his every wish; but I found I could no longer comply with prudence. Alas! you have let me at length understand that the gaming-table was the gulf that swallowed up all. I had for some time resolved to go personally and reason with him upon the folly of his extravagances; but, unfortunately, delayed it from day to day and week to week. I felt it to be my duty as a parent; but my heart shrunk from it. Fatal delay! Oh, that I had done as my duty urged me!” (Here his feelings overpowered him for a few minutes.) “Had I only gone even a few days before I received that fatal letter that at once roused me from my guilty supineness,” (here he drew a letter from his pocket and gave it me,) “he might have been saved! Read it.”

I complied. It was as follows:—

“WORTHY FRIEND,—I scarce know how to communicate the information; but, I fear, no one here will do so in so gentle a manner. Your son Charles, I am grieved to say, has not been acting as I could have wished for this some time back. One of the partners called here this morning to inquire after him, as he had absconded from their

service on account of some irregularity that had been discovered in his cash entries, and made me afraid, by his manner, that there might be something worse. Do, for your own and his sake, come to town as quickly as possible. In the meantime, I shall do all in my power to avert any evil that may threaten.—Adieu!

“JOHN WALKER.”

“I was on my way,” he proceeded, “to save my poor Charles from shame, had even the workhouse been my only refuge at the close of my days. Alas! as he told in his dream, I fear he had forfeited his life by that fatal act, forgery, for which there is no pardon with man. If so, the present dispensation is one of mercy, for which I bless His name, who in all things doeth right.”

My heart ached for the pious old man. We left the room, he leaning upon my arm. The surgeon and parent both pronounced me innocent of the young man's death. Those who still remained in the house, more particularly the hostess, appeared disappointed, and did not scruple to hint their doubts. Until the coroner's inquest sat, which was in the afternoon, the father of the stranger never left my side, but seemed to take a melancholy pleasure in conversing about his son. The jury, after a patient investigation, returned their verdict, “Died by the visitation of God.”

I immediately bade farewell to the surgeon and the parent of the young man, and proceeded for Liverpool, musing upon my strange destiny. It appeared to me that I was haunted by some fatality, which plunged me constantly into misfortune. I rejoiced that I was on the point of leaving Britain, and hoped that in America I should be freed from my bad fortune.

When I arrived in Liverpool I found the packet on the eve of sailing; and, with all expedition, I made everything ready and went on board. We were to sail with the

morning tide. There were a good many passengers; but all of them appeared to be every-day personages—all less or more studious about their own comforts. After an agreeable voyage of five weeks, we arrived safe, and all in good health, in Charleston. In a few months I completed our arrangement satisfactorily, and began to make preparations for my return to England again. A circumstance, however, occurred, which overturned all my plans for a time, and gave a new turn to my thoughts. Was it possible that, after the way in which I had been cast off before by one of the bewitching sex, I could ever do more than look upon them again with indifference? I did not hate or shun their company, but a feeling pretty much akin to contempt, often stole over me as I recollected my old injury. I could feel the sensation at times give way for a few hours in the company of some females, and again return with redoubled force upon the slightest occasion, such as a single word or look. I was prejudiced, and resolved not again to submit to the power of the sex. But vain are the resolves of man. This continued struggle, I really believe, was the reason of my again falling more violently in love than ever, and that, too, against my own will. When I strove to discover faults, I only found perfections.

I had boarded in the house of a widow lady who had three daughters, none of them exceeding twelve years of age. A governess, one of the sweetest creatures that I had ever seen, or shall ever see again, had the charge of them. On the second evening after my arrival, I retired to my apartment, overcome by heat and fatigue. I lay listlessly thinking of Auld Reekie, the mysterious murder, and all the strange occurrences of my past life. My attention was awakened by a voice the sweetest I had ever heard. I listened in rapture. It was only a few notes, as the singer was trying the pitch of her voice, and soon

ceased. I was wondering which of the family it could be who sang so well, when I heard one of the daughters say, "Do, governess, sing me one sang, and I will be a good girl all to-morrow. Pray do!" I became all attention—again the voice fell upon my ear. It was low and plaintive—the air was familiar to me—my whole soul became entranced—the tear-drop swam in my eyes—it was one of Scotland's sweetest ditties—"The Broom o' the Cowdenknowes." No one who has not heard, unexpected, in a foreign land the songs he loved in his youth, can appreciate the thrill of pleasing ecstasy that carries the mind, as it were, out of the body, when the ears catch the well-known sounds.

Next day I was all anxiety to see the individual who had so fascinated me the evening before. I found her all that my imagination had pictured her. A new feeling possessed me. In vain I called pride to my aid—I could not drive her from my thoughts. Sleeping or waking, her voice and form were ever present. I left the town for a time to free myself from these unwelcome feelings, pleasing as they were. I felt angry at myself for harbouring them, but all my endeavours were vain—go where I would, I was with my Mary on the Cowdenknowes.

I know not how it was. I had loved with more ardour in my first passion, and been more the victim of impulse; a dreamy sensation occupied my mind, and my whole existence seemed concentrated in her alone; now, my mind felt cool and collected—I weighed every fault and excellence; still I was hurried on, and felt like one placed in a boat in the current of a river, pulling hard to get out of the stream in vain. I at length laid down my oars, and yielded to the impulse. In short, I made up my mind to win the esteem and love of Mary; nor did I strive in vain. My humble attentions were kindly received, and dear to my heart is the remembrance of the timely advances I first

detected in her full black eyes. For some weeks I sought an opportunity to declare my love. She evidently shunned being alone with me; and I often could discern, when I came upon her by surprise, that she had been weeping. Some secret sorrow evidently oppressed her mind, and, at times, I have seen her beautiful face suffused with scarlet and her eyes become wet with tears, when my pompous landlady spoke of the ladies of Europe and "the true white-blooded females of America." I dreamed not at this time of the cause; but the truth dawned upon me afterwards.

It was on a delightful evening, after one of the most sultry days in this climate, I had wandered into the garden to enjoy the evening breeze, with which nothing in these northern climes will bear comparison; the fire-flies sported in myriads around, and gave animation to the scene; the fragrance of plants and the melody of birds filled the senses to repletion. I wanted only the presence of Mary to be completely happy. I heard a low warbling at a short distance, from a bower covered with clustering vines. It was Mary's voice! I stood overpowered with pleasure—she sung again one of our Scottish tunes.

As the last faint cadence died away, I entered the arbour; the noise of my approach made her start from her seat; she was hurrying away in confusion, when I gently seized her hand, and requested her to remain, if it were only for a few moments, as I had something to impart of the utmost importance to us both. She stood; her face was averted from my gaze; I felt her hand tremble in mine. Now that the opportunity I so much desired had been obtained, my resolution began to fail me. We had stood thus for sometime.

"Sir, I must not stay here longer," she said. "Good evening!"

"Mary," said I, "I love you. May I hope to gain your regard by any length of service? Allow me to hope, and I shall be content."

"I must not listen to this language," she replied. "Do not hope. There is a barrier between us that cannot be removed. I cannot be yours. I am unworthy of your regard. Alas! I am a child of misfortune."

"Then," said I, "my hopes of happiness are fled for ever. So young, so beautiful, with a soul so elevated as I know yours to be, you can have done nothing to render you unworthy of me. For heaven's sake, tell me what that fatal barrier is. Is it love?"

"I thank you," she replied. "You do me but justice. A thought has never dwelt upon my mind for which I have cause to blush; but Nature has placed a gulf between you and me, you will not pass." She paused, and the tears swam in her eyes.

"For mercy's sake, proceed!" I said.

"*There is black blood in these veins,*" she cried, in agony.

A load was at once removed from my mind. I raised her hand to my lips:—"Mary, my love, this is no bar. I come from a country where the aristocracy of blood is unknown, where nothing degrades man in the eyes of his fellow-man but vice."

Why more? Mary consented to be mine, and we were shortly after wed. I was blessed in the possession of one of the most gentle of beings.

We had been married about six or seven weeks, when business called me from Charleston to one of the northern States. I resolved to take Mary with me, as I was to go by sea; and our arrangements were completed. The vessel was to sail on the following day. I was seated with her, enjoying the cool of the evening, when a stranger called and requested to see me on business of importance. I immediately went to him, and was struck with the coarseness of his manners, and his vulgar importance. I bowed, and asked his business.

"You have a woman in this house," said he, "called Mary De Lyle, I guess."

"I do not understand the purport of your question," said I. "What do you mean?"

"My meaning is pretty clear," said he. "Mary De Lyle is in this house, and she 's my property. If you offer to carry her out of the State, I will have her sent to jail, and you fined. That is right a-head, I guess."

"Wretch," said I, in a voice hoarse with rage, "get out of my house, or I will crush you to death. Begone!"

I believe I would have done him some fearful injury, had he not precipitately made his escape. In a frame of mind I want words to express, I hurried to Mary, and sank upon a seat, with my face buried in my hands. She, poor thing, came trembling to my side, and implored me to tell her what was the matter. I could only answer by my groans. At length, I looked imploringly in her face:—

"Mary, is it possible that you are a slave?" said I.

She uttered a piercing shriek, and sank inanimate at my feet. I lifted her upon the sofa; but it was long before she gave symptoms of returning life.

As soon as I could leave her, I went to a friend to ask his advice and assistance. Through him, I learned that what I feared was but too true. By the usages and laws of the State, she was still a slave, and liable to be hurried from me and sold to the highest bidder, or doomed to any drudgery her master might put her to, and even flogged at will. There was only one remedy that could be applied; and the specific was dollars. My friend was so kind as negotiate with the ruffian. One thousand was demanded, and cheerfully paid. I carried the manumission home to my sorrowing Mary. From her I learned, as she lay in bed—her beautiful face buried in the clothes, and her voice choked by sobs—that the wretch who had called on me was her own father, whose avarice could not let slip this

opportunity of extorting money. With an inconsistency often found in man, he had given Mary one of the best of educations, and for long treated her as a favoured child, during the life of her mother, who was one of his slaves, a woman of colour, and with some accomplishments, which she had acquired in a genteel family. At her death, Mary had gone as governess to my landlady; but, until the day of her father's claim, she had never dreamed of being a slave. I allowed the vessel to sail without me, wound up my affairs, and bade adieu for ever to the slave States. 'Tis now twenty years since I purchased a wife, after I had won her love, and I bless the day she was made mine; for I have had uninterrupted happiness in her and her offspring. The slave is now the happy wife and mother of five lovely children, who rejoice in their mother. After remaining some years in Leeds, I returned to Edinburgh. Widow Neil was dead; but one day I discovered, by mere chance, that the murder I committed in her house was on a sheep.

MY BLACK COAT;

OR,

THE BREAKING OF THE BRIDE'S CHINA.

GENTLE reader, the simple circumstances I am about to relate to you, hang upon what is termed—a bad omen. There are few amongst the uneducated who have not a degree of faith in omens; and even amongst the better educated and well informed there are many who, while they profess to disbelieve them, and, indeed, do disbelieve them, yet feel them in their hours of solitude. I have known individuals who, in the hour of danger, would have braved the cannon's mouth, or defied death to his teeth, who, nevertheless, would have buried their heads in the bedclothes at the howling of a dog at midnight, or spent a sleepless night from hearing the tick, tick, of the spider, or the untiring song of the kitchen-fire musician—the jolly little cricket. The age of omens, however, is drawing to a close; for truth in its progress is trampling delusion of every kind under its feet; yet, after all, though a belief in omens is a superstition, it is one that carries with it a portion of the poetry of our nature. But to proceed with our story.

Several years ago I was on my way from B—— to Edinburgh; and being as familiar with every cottage, tree, shrub, and whin-bush on the Dunbar and Lauder roads as with the face of an acquaintance, I made choice of the less-frequented path by Longformacus. I always took a secret pleasure in contemplating the dreariness of wild spreading desolation; and, next to looking on the

sea when its waves dance to the music of a hurricane, I loved to gaze on the heath-covered wilderness, where the blue horizon only girded its purple bosom. It was no season to look upon the heath in the beauty of barrenness, yet I purposely diverged from the main road. About an hour, therefore, after I had descended from the region of the Lammermoors, and entered the Lothians, I became sensible I was pursuing a path which was not forwarding my footsteps to Edinburgh. It was December; the sun had just gone down; I was not very partial to travelling in darkness, neither did I wish to trust to chance for finding a comfortable restingplace for the night. Perceiving a farm-steading and water-mill about a quarter of a mile from the road, I resolved to turn towards them, and make inquiry respecting the right path, or, at least, to request to be directed to the nearest inn.

The "town," as the three or four houses and mill were called, was all bustle and confusion. The female inhabitants were cleaning and scouring, and running to and fro. I quickly learned that all this note of preparation arose from the "maister" being to be married within three days. Seeing me a stranger, he came from his house towards me. He was a tall, stout, good-looking, jolly-faced farmer and miller. His manner of accosting me partook more of kindness than civility; and his inquiries were not free from the familiar, prying curiosity which prevails in every corner of our island, and, I must say, in the north in particular.

"Where do you come fra, na—if it be a fair question?" inquired he.

"From B——," was the brief and merely civil reply.

"An' hae ye come frae there the day?" he continued.

"Yes," was the answer.

"Ay, man, an' ye come frae B——, do ye?" added he; "then, nae doot, ye'll ken a person they ca' Mr. ——?"

“Did he come originally from Dunse?” returned I, mentioning also the occupation of the person referred to.

“The vera same,” rejoined the miller; “are ye acquainted wi’ him, sir?”

“I ought to be,” replied I; “the person you speak of is merely my father.”

“Your faither!” exclaimed he, opening his mouth and eyes to their full width, and standing for a moment the picture of surprise—“Gude gracious! ye dinna say sae!—is he really your faither? Losh, man, do you no ken, then, that I’m your cousin! Ye’ve heard o’ your cousin, Willie Stewart.”

“Fifty times,” replied I.

“Weel, I’m the vera man,” said he—“Gie’s your hand; for, ’odsake, man, I’m as glad as glad can be. This is real extraordinar’. I’ve often heard o’ you—it will be you that writes the buiks—faith ye’ll be able to mak something o’ this. But come awa’ into the house—ye dinna stir a mile far’er for a week, at ony rate.”

So saying, and still grasping my hand, he led me to the farm-house. On crossing the threshold—

“Here, lassie,” he cried, in a voice that made roof and rafters ring, “bring ben the speerits, and get on the kettle—here’s a cousin that I ne’er saw in my life afore.”

A few minutes served mutually to confirm and explain our newly-discovered relationship.

“Man,” said he, as we were filling a second glass, “ye’ve just come in the very nick o’ time; an’ I’ll tell ye how. Ye see I’m gaun to be married the day after the horn; an’ no haein’ a friend o’ ony kin-kind in this quarter, I had to ask an acquaintance to be the best man. Now, this was vexin’ me mair than ye can think, particularly, ye see, because the sweetheart has aye been hinting to me that it wadna be lucky for me no to hae a bluid relation for a best man. For that matter, indeed, luck

here, luck there, I no care the toss up o' a ha'penny about omens mysel'; but now that ye've fortunately come, I'm a great deal easier, an' it will be ae craik out o' the way, for it will please her; an' ye may guess, between you an' me, that she's worth the pleasin', or I wadna had her; so I'll just step ower an' tell the ither lad that I hae a cousin come to be my best man, an' he'll think naething o't."

On the morning of the third day, the bride and her friends arrived. She was the only child of a Lammermoor farmer, and was in truth a real mountain flower—a heath blossom; for the rude health that laughed upon her cheeks approached nearer the hue of the heather-bell, than the rose and vermillion of which poets speak. She was comely withal, possessing an appearance of considerable strength, and was rather above the middle size—in short, she was the very belle ideal of a miller's wife!

But to go on. Twelve couple accompanied the happy miller and his bride to the manse, independent of the married, middle-aged, and grey-haired visitors, who followed behind and by our side. We were thus proceeding onward to the house of the minister, whose blessing was to make a couple happy, and the arm of the blooming bride was through mine, when I heard a voice, or rather let me say a sound, like the croak of a raven, exclaim—

"Mercy on us! saw ye e'er the like o' that!—the best man, I'll declare, has a black coat on!"

"An' that's no lucky!" replied another.

"Lucky!" responded the raven voice—"just perfectly awfu'! I wadna it had happened at the weddin' o' a bairn o' mine for the king's dominions."

I observed the bride steal a glance at my shoulder; I felt, or thought I felt, as if she shrunk from my arm; and when I spoke to her, her speech faltered. I found that my cousin, in avoiding one omen, had stumbled upon another, in my black coat. I was wroth with the rural

prophetess, and turned round to behold her. Her little grey eyes, twinkling through spectacles, were wink, winking upon my ill-fated coat. She was a crooked (forgive me for saying an ugly), little, old woman; she was "bearded like a pard," and walked with a crooked stick mounted with silver. (On the very spot* where she then was, the last witch in Scotland was burned.) I turned from the grinning sibyl with disgust.

On the previous day, and during part of the night, the rain had fallen heavily, and the Broxburn was swollen to the magnitude of a little river. The manse lay on the opposite side of the burn, which was generally crossed by the aid of stepping-stones, but on the day in question the tops of the stones were barely visible. On crossing the burn the foot of the bride slipped, and the bridegroom, in his eagerness to assist her, slipped also—knee-deep in the water. The raven voice was again heard—it was another omen.

The kitchen was the only room in the manse large enough to contain the spectators assembled to witness the ceremony, which passed over smoothly enough, save that, when the clergyman was about to join the hands of the parties, I drew off the glove of the bride a second or two before the bridesmaid performed a similar operation on the hand of the bridegroom. I heard the whisper of the crooked old woman, and saw that the eyes of the other women were upon me. I felt that I had committed another omen, and almost resolved to renounce wearing "blacks" for the future. The ceremony, however, was concluded; we returned from the manse, and everything was forgotten, save mirth and music, till the hour arrived for tea.

The bride's mother had boasted of her "daughter's double set o' real china" during the afternoon; and the

* The last person burned for witchcraft in Scotland was at Spot—the scene of our present story

female part of the company evidently felt anxious to examine the costly crockery. A young woman was entering with a tray and the tea equipage—another, similarly laden, followed behind her. The “sneck” of the door caught the handle of the tray, and down went china, waiting-maid, and all! The fall startled her companion—their feet became entangled—both embraced the floor, and the china from both trays lay scattered around them in a thousand shapes and sizes! This was an omen with a vengeance! I could not avoid stealing a look at the sleeve of my black coat. The bearded old woman seemed inspired. She declared the luck of the house was broken! Of the double set of real china not a cup was left—not an odd saucer. The bridegroom bore the misfortune as a man; and, gently drawing the head of his young partner towards him, said—

“Never mind them, hinny—let them gang—we’ll get mair.”

The bride, poor thing, shed a tear; but the miller threw his arm round her neck, stole a kiss, and she blushed and smiled.

It was evident, however, that every one of the company regarded this as a real omen. The mill-loft was prepared for the joyous dance; but scarce had the fantastic toes (some of them were not light ones) begun to move through the mazy rounds, when the loft-floor broke down beneath the bounding feet of the happy-hearted miller; for, unfortunately, he considered not that his goodly body was heavier than his spirits. It was omen upon omen—the work of breaking had begun—the “luck” of the young couple was departed.

Three days after the wedding, one of the miller’s carts was got in readiness to carry home the bride’s mother. On crossing the unlucky burn, to which we have already alluded, the horse stumbled, fell, and broke its

knee, and had to be taken back, and another put in its place.

“Mair breakings!” exclaimed the now almost heart-broken old woman. “Oh, dear sake! how will a’ this end for my puir bairn!”

I remained with my new-found relatives about a week; and while there the miller sent his boy for payment of an account of thirty pounds, he having to make up money to pay a corn-factor at the Haddington market on the following day. In the evening the boy returned.

“Weel, callant,” inquired the miller, “hae ye gotten the siller?”

“No,” replied the youth.

“Mercy me!” exclaimed my cousin, hastily, “hae ye no gotten the siller? Wha did ye see, or what did they say?”

“I saw the wife,” returned the boy; “an’ she said—‘Siller! laddie, what’s brought ye here for siller?—I dare say your maister’s daft! Do ye no ken we’re broken! I’m sure a’body kens that we broke yesterday!”

“The mischief break them!” exclaimed the miller, rising and walking hurriedly across the room—“this is breaking in earnest.”

I may not here particularize the breakings that followed. One misfortune succeeded another, till the miller broke also. All that he had was put under the hammer, and he wandered forth with his young wife a broken man.

Some years afterwards, I met with him in a different part of the country. He had the management of extensive flour mills. He was again doing well, and had money in his master’s hands. At last there seemed to be an end of the breakings. We were sitting together when a third person entered, with a rueful countenance.

“Willie,” said he, with the tone of a speaking sepulchre, “hae ye heard the news?”

"What news, now?" inquired the miller, seriously.

"The maister's broken!" rejoined the other.

"An' my fifty pound?" responded my cousin, in a voice of horror.

"Are broken wi' him," returned the stranger. "Oh, gude gracious!" cried the young wife, wringing her hands, "I'm sure I wish I were out o' this world!—will ever thir breakings be done!—what tempted my mother to buy me the cheena?"

"Or me to wear a black coat at your wedding," thought I.

A few weeks afterwards a letter arrived, announcing that death had suddenly broken the thread of life of her aged father, and her mother requested them to come and take charge of the farm which was now theirs. They went. The old man had made money on the hills. They got the better of the broken china and of my black coat. Fortune broke in upon them. My cousin declared that omens were nonsense, and his wife added that she "really thought there was naething in them, But it was lang an' mony a day," she added, "or I could get your black coat and my mother's cheena out o' my mind."

They began to prosper and they prosper still.



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