

ALLAN

THE FREEBOOTER;

OR, THE

Witch of Glenross :

WITH AN ACCOUNT OF THE SUFFERINGS OF

RODERICK,

THE LAIRD OF GLENROSS,

AND HIS

BEAUTIFUL BRIDE MALVINA,

DESTRUCTION OF THE

PRINCELY HALL OF GLENROSS,

AND THE

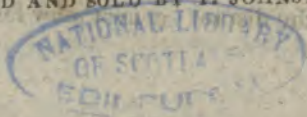
MARRIAGE OF THEIR DAUGHTER HELEN

TO THE

FREEBOOTER.

FALKIRK;

PRINTED AND SOLD BY T. JOHNSTON.



Allan, the Freebooter.

On a jutting promontory of one of the most extensive mountains of Caledonia, arose the proud turrets of Glenross Castle, rendered by nature almost impregnable by rude precipices and impreviuous wilds surrounding it on all sides, and gave an air of romantic granduer to the scene, perhaps unequalled. Roderick, although possessing almost regal power, was a prey to cares; his nights were nights of watchfulness, his days cankered with a sorrow, but ill disguised beneath the mask of revelry and magnificence. In vain did the ancient harper sing the heroic deeds of his ancestors; in vain did his vaulted halls resound with the shouts of the vassals for the prosperity of their lord; they but reminded him that he had no heir to inherit his honors, and that the ancient name of Strathmore would expire with himself; that Lady Malvina, to whom he had been wedded nine years, was grown irksome to him; her mild virtues failed to secure his esteem, and a form still the loveliest Caledonia could boast, inspired but disgust. In vain did she renew her vows to her patron saint—the day arrived on which Roderick completed his five and thirtieth year without promise of an heir: the day was spent by the assembled vassals in mirth and festivity, and as the overflowing replenished goblet passed the board, “May our lord be blessed with an heir to his virtues and honors,” burst spontaneously from every lip. Roderick, with a faint smile, bowed his head to the salutation; but the wish rankled like a barbed arrow in his heart, and toward evening he left the festive board, and stole unheeded from the castle to calm the agitation of his mind in solitude. Immersed in gloomy reflections, he bent his steps unconsciously toward a thick wood, which clothed with hardy evergreens one side of Glenross, steep, till stopped in his career by a precipice, he leaned against a clump of fir trees, and his eyes wandered over the distant scenery now fast receding in the

shades of twilight, while his thoughts were employed on the subject nearest his heart. He had stood several minutes in an attitude of listless langour, when he was suddenly aroused from his reverie by a voice which exclaimed, in a deep hollow tone that vibrated on his heart.—“Why has Roderick of Glenross left the festive board to wander amidst these shades?” He started and beheld at a few paces distance a female figure, wild and uncouthly habited, the superabundance of her black draperies almost concealed her form, yet it appeared of a gigantic height; long tresses, dark as the raven’s wing, flowed in disorder over her shoulders; one of her arms was enveloped beneath her sable habiliments, whilst the other, which was naked, held extended an ebony wand; her face appeared haggard and cadaverous; the deepening gloom obscured her features, but her fierce dark eyes possessed the power of enchantment, and she had repeated her question before Roderick could gain sufficient composure to answer her. At length, “Who art thou,” he exclaimed, “and by what right dost thou question Roderick of Glenross?” “By the right of a superior,” replied the figure: “Roderick, I know thy inmost thoughts; the want of an heir dashes with poison the balmy cup which fortune places at thy lip, yet ere the anniversary of this day, Roderick, thy ardent wish shall be accomplished; but its fulfilments will prove the bane of all thy hopes, thy child shall be thine heir, yet not thine heir, and the maturity of thy darling shall level the towers of Glenross with the dust! See! Behold!—the pride of the mighty one is fallen.—the towering falcon seeks a shelter beneath the wing of the avenging kite—the flames burst forth!—the night raven creams round the devoted battlements!—and all is accomplished!” Wildly she shrieked as if beholding what her words foretold;—terrified and appalled, Roderick cast his eyes towards the castle almost expecting to see it wrapped in flames: the turrets still frowned in gloomy grandeur, and he turned again towards the denouncer of future evils, but she was no more to be seen; he looked around, a steep precipice was before him, a

long avenue of trees surrounded with impenetrable underwood, behind. He had taken his eyes but a moment from the mysterious figure, and it had eluded him;—her wild shriek still rung in his ears, and was contrasted by the gloomy silence of all around; and it was several minutes ere he could regain his fortitude, and recal the words of the figure,—

“Your child shall be your heir,—

“Yet not your heir.

“The obscurity of this,” exclaimed Roderick, “I cannot penetrate.”

“The towering falcon shall seek shelter

“From the ravening kite.”

A falcon was the crest of the Laird of Glenross; yet this was equally inexplicable.”

When the long expected hour arrived, Malvina was for a time dangerously indisposed, whilst Roderick, whose agitation was too great to permit him to retire, paced impatiently the marble hall of the castle: at length he beheld Maud (a faithful old servant) slowly descending the lofty staircase: precipitately he flew to meet her—a smile lighted up her face—“Joy to my lord!” she cried. “May the race of Strathmore extend to the end of time a lovely boy and girl are added to your house!” “A boy!” repeated Roderick, “Is there indeed a boy?” “Yes, my lord, and a lovely girl.” Roderick made no answer, but instantly flew to announce the birth of his son to his vassals, whilst the existence of the girl remained unnoticed by him. The boy he called Wallace in the remembrance of one of the most renowned of his ancestors; but left the nameing of the girl to Malvina, who with a mother’s fondness, fancying a promise of superior loveliness in her darling, christened her Helen.

Roderick marched at the head of his valiant band till they neared an extensive vale which stretched itself at the feet of Ruthven Castle: they had scarcely

itted the rocky defile which led to it, before the sounds warlike tumult struck their ears, and they perceived the clan of Ruthven engaged in mortal conflict with the followers of Allan, the Freebooter, (surnamed the Invincible), the clan of Strathmore, with Roderick at their head, instantly uttered an exulting shout, and rushed multucously to the fight. The shades of evening were now fast advancing, and the Freebooters appeared likely to be the victorious party; Allan, by a pretended flight, had contrived to allure the Laird of Ruthven with his followers to a distance from the castle; a party of the freebooters which had lain in ambush then appeared and investing the walls, prevented their return.

The wounds of Allan, though dressed by a skilful surgeon; prevented his tasting repose; but the wound which rankied most at his heart, was the one his fame had sustained,—no longer could he be termed Invincible,—and as the distant sounds of revelry assailed his ear, he imprecated curses on his conqueror, and required all the strength of his guards to prevent his tearing the bandages from his wounds; and destroying by violence a life grown hateful to himself. A fortnight had nearly elapsed when Allan sent a message to Roderick, that as he felt himself sufficiently recovered for a removal, he should the next day claim the promise of freedom, which Roderick in answer assured him should be complied with.

The following morning Roderick bade adieu to Ruthven, and in safety arrived within a short distance of his own castle, when he dispatched his attendants onward to give notice of his approach. The evening was fast closing and he had just entered the wood which clothed Glenross steep, the umbrageous foliage of which closing over his head, excluded the last rays of the departing sun, and deepened the approaching twilight to the gloom of night, when his thoughts recurred to the seeming mystery which enveloped the freebooter, Roderick proceeded unconscious of his route; when suddenly something appeared to flit before him; he started involuntarily, and looking around with a sensation of alarm, a few paces

before him he beheld the mysterious figure which in the same wood had foretold to him the birth of an heir.

An indescribable terror oppressed him, and he stood silently gazed on the figure without power to address it;—her eyes were fixed upon him with a look of the most appalling and fiend-like exultation. “Roderick has done well,” she exclaimed, “he has preserved the kite that shall bear away the dove within its talents:—rememberest thou how prophetic were my words? Roderick of Glenross attend to me now!—the deed is done which at once destroys, and wraps in fancied security all thy high raised hopes.—Hark!—hearest thou not the knell of the race of Strathmore?—mighty Roderick, on one condition I will be thy friend, and all these threatened evils may be averted; tear that brilliant cross from thy bosom, trample it under thy feet—then kneel and worship me!”

The figure paused as if expecting an answer, but Roderick, enraged, instantly drew his sword. “Wretch,” he exclaimed. At that moment, a sudden film seemed to pass before his eyes, he raised his hand to his face and instantly removed it, a loud and demoniac laugh rang in his ears. but the figure had vanished.

The words of the mysterious figure rung in his ears.—“Hearest thou not the knell of the race of Strathmore?—my Boy!” he exclaimed; and as the hollow sound of the death-bell floated heavily on the gale, the heart of Roderick was cold as the icy form for which it tolled.

Roderick, imagining his worst fears confirmed, was several minutes before he could articulate “My wife—my boy,”—“Are well,” replied the weeping nurse. “for whom then are those sounds? and why does the sable banner float over the battlements of Glenross?” “Your daughter, the infant Helen,” replied Maud, “has breathed her last.” A mountain seemed taken from the breast of Roderick, and he attempted not to veil his raptures as he soothed the increasing agitation of Maud, she supported herself, as she led the way to the lady Malvina’s apartment.

Wallace had scarcely attained the age of fifteen, when

Maud was summoned to pay the debt of nature, and in her dying moments she requested to see the blooming Wallace. Roderick, who had visited her chamber, to take a last leave of so old and devoted a domestic, was present when she made her request, and anxious to gratify a wish urged with almost convulsive earnestness. He retired, and sent the youth to her chamber; the attendants were instantly dismissed, and Maud left with only the lady Malvina and her son.

Roderick, almost distracted at beholding a conduct so opposite to his wishes, received with pleasure an invitation from Malcolm of Ruthven, to celebrate the birthday of a daughter, which had been born to him shortly after the affair of Allan the Freebooter, and, as she was now about to complete her fourteenth year, Roderick instantly determined upon taking Wallace with him, hoping that a change of scene might restore his wonted cheerfulness. Wallace reluctantly made preparations for the journey, he would have preferred the company of his mother to the promised festivities, but the will of the laird of Glenross was absolute, and in a few days he bade adieu to his native towers, and accompanied by only two domestics, they reached the ancient Castle of Ruthven in safety. Malcolm & Gertrude received them with unfeigned pleasure; the beauty of Wallace seemed to strike them with surprise and admiration, and sending for Edwin, and their daughter Madeline, introduced the young people to each other.—Edwin was a handsome manly youth of eighteen, generous, noble, and animated, but an air of fierceness and hauteur threw a cloud over his good qualities, and cast at a distance those who would otherwise have been his warmest friends.—Madeline was a pretty interesting brunette, whose character as yet only displayed excessive gentleness and timidity. Edwin immediately attached himself to Wallace with all the enthusiastic warmth of his character, but Wallace appeared to shrink from the boisterous effusions of his friendship, and to prefer the society of the blushing Madeline. Their increasing partiality for each other gave both Roderick and Malcolm

the most unfeigned pleasure; death had rendered void their former engagement of uniting Edwin and Helen; but in Wallace and Madeline their hopes were renewed; and before they separated for the night, it was resolved that on the day that Wallace became eighteen, their union should take place.

The birth-day of Madeline was kept with the utmost festivity, and, in the evening, the heroine of the day led off the dance with the graceful Wallace, with all the hilarity of youth and innocence. Roderick & Malcolm stood observing them, sometimes their hearts glowing with pride at the admiration they excited, and forming plans for their future happiness, when they were summoned to the hall by a domestic, who informed them a courier had just arrived from Glenross, who demanded to see his lord immediately.

Roderick alarmed, hastened to the messenger, who informed him the lady Malvina was dangerously indisposed, and required his immediate presence at Glenross. The night was dark and stormy, yet Roderick determined on departing instantly, but fearful of exposing Wallace to the rigour of the night, he agreed with Malcolm to leave his son at Ruthven till the arrival of some faithful vassals, who, immediately on his reaching Glenross, he would despatch to escort him home.

When Roderick arrived at the Castle, every one appeared afraid to mention the cause of their alarm, and he demanded the reason of their fears. Andrew, the old warden, summoned sufficient courage to reply, "THE BANSHEE" my lord, "Fool," hastily replied Roderick! (every one seemed now to recover from their panic,) for all, as with one voice, cried indeed my lord, we all heard it!"—Roderick paused for a few moments, a sudden thought having crossed his mind, and he shuddered, as he inquired what they had heard. "THE BANSHEE, my lord," replied Andrew, "I asked you what were the words you pretended to hear." The words my lord; why in a voice like thunder it exclaimed!

“Woe to the race of Strathmore!”

“Woe to the Golden Falcon!”

“Woe to the turrets of Glenross!”

The appalling looks of their lord now seemed as an excuse to the trembling domestics for their own fears, and instantly surrounded him, each endeavouring to explain his own particular cause of terror. “When heard you this” questioned Roderick: “the three last nights,” replied Andrew, “it has resounded throughout every apartment of the castle, from the hours of twelve till two; except the bed-chamber of the lady Malvina, and though it has cried at her very door, she, sweet saint, never appeared to hear it: indeed old Janet, who is her head nurse says she always falls asleep just before it begins to cry, and never awakes till it vanishes. “Vanishes! has any one seen it yet?” “No, my lord, but it certainly vanishes for as soon as she old turret clock strikes two, it gives a hideous scream near the castle gate, and all is quiet again.” Roderick, tho’ shuddering at the remembrance of a prediction which now seemed about to be verified, made a strong effort to dispel the alarm he had not been able to conceal, and again demanded them to attend him to his chamber.

Some time after this a domestic running toward him, besought him to hasten to his lady, who they feared was in the agonies of death. As she beheld the entrance of her lord, she made an effort to raise herself, but the exertion was too much for her strength, and she again fainted.—After she recovered, a faint smile irradiated the pale countenance of the expiring saint; she cast her eyes towards heaven, then rested them on the crucifix; her lips quivered, a slight convulsion agitated her frame, and a heap of dust was all that remained of the once lovely Malvina. It was near evening when the vassals sent to escort Wallace arrived at Ruthven, but the youth no sooner understood the danger of his mother, than he determined on departing instantly; nor could all the persuasions of Malcolm or the fearful eyes of Madeline turn him from his purpose.

The party came to an opening which led through an

extensive forest, and Wallace, secure of the road, hastened on as fast as his steed could carry him, whilst his vassals in vain endeavoured to make their tired beasts overtake him.

He had proceeded for some time, his thoughts wholly taken up with reflections on his mother's illness, when he was startled by a shrill whistle, almost close to him, he stopped instantly, & heard it answered by another at a little distance; he would have turned his horse to retrace his steps, but was prevented by several men, who springing from the hedge that skirted the road, seized his bridle, and by threats and imprecations commanded silence. One of them turned his horse from the road, and led him rapidly through the mazes of the forest: he was led or rather dragged along with the utmost speed, till his spirits totally failing him, he fell senseless from his saddle. One of the men then giving him a hearty curse for his pusillanimity, picked him up and observing by way of extenuation, "that it was but a boy," mounted the horse, placed him before himself, and continued their route.

As soon as Malvina expired, Roderick retired to his own apartment, sincerely grieved at her last request. When night came he dismissed his harassed attendants to their beds, determined to watch for a repetition of the awful threatenings denounced against his race. Impatiently he paced his chamber, anxiously listening to every sound, and resolved to follow the voice in whatever part of the castle it might be heard, but the silence continued undisturbed till the bright beams of morning gleamed through the casement.

As he passed through the hall, he heard the voice of old Andrew at the gate, uttering an exclamation of horror or surprise. Hastily he went forward, and beheld the vassals whom he had dispatched for Wallace; but Wallace was not with them, and their fear-struck countenances, added to the tears which rolled down the reverend face of the old warder, spoke volumes of misery to his heart.

The untimely death of his son was the only idea that

crossed his mind, and, issuing immediate orders for his clan to assemble, he gave directions for Malvina to lie in state till his return ; and before noon, attended by a numerous band, he quitted Glenross, directing his route to the forest.

It was near evening when they reached the spot, pointed out by the attendants as the place where Wallace was torn from them. The clan separated in two divisions, and strict search was made throughout every part of the forest ; but in vain ! the fugitive could not be found, though his horse, stript of his trappings, was discovered loose in the woods.

Night arrived without any farther information, and after erecting a small tent for the shelter of their lord, the tired vassals kindled a fire, stretched themselves around it, and forgot the fatigues of the day in sound repose. Roderick stood leaning on his spear and musing on his loss, when a sudden blast of wind blew the almost expiring embers into a blaze, and by the reflection of its light, he beheld standing near the flame, the hag he had twice before beheld in the woods of Glenross. The fire cast a blue, and supernatural appearance over her figure, and as he gazed on her, Roderick's fortitude forsook him and superstitious fears blanched his cheeks.

At length he gained sufficient composure to utter " Mysterious Being, who art thou for ever the harbinger of ill, Who art thou ? " " Thy evil genius, Roderick (returned the hag), thy murmurs against the supreme disposer of all events, has given me power over thee. Roderick enjoyed not the blessings he possessed, Roderick pined for an heir :—Whom seekest thou iaird of Glenross ; the son of Strathmore ! fifteen years ago, in the woods of Glenross thou heardst his knell ! " " Slave ! —liar ! (ejaculated Roderick) what ho ! my faithful vassals, rise and secure this wretch ! " As he spoke, he approached her ; but extending her arm, she touched his spear with his hand, and brittle as glass it shivered in countless atoms, whilst spell-bound, he remained rooted to the spot, then waving her wand over the sleeping vassals, she exclaimed—" Till the sun passes

the eastern horizon, sleep on!—Roderick, when thou again beholdest me, the event of my predictions will be at hand, and the turrets of Glenross will be delivered to the flames; but already it is in part accomplished; the dove is within the gripe of the ravening kite. Return with the dawn of day to thy home, Wallace of Glenross is no more;

“Woe to the race of Strathmore.”

“Woe to the Golden Falcon,”

“Woe to the turrets of Glenross!”

As she spoke, a furious blast blew far and wide the sparkling embers of the fire, a cloud passed over the bright luminary of night, and the scene was enveloped in total darkness.

The freebooters who had seized Wallace bore him, still insensible, to the verge of the forest, and halted at the foot of the stupendous mountain, whose perpendicular and craggy sides, defied the efforts of the most adventurous to ascend. One of them then taking a bugle from his side, blew a long and shrill blast, which was answered from the summit of the precipice, and in a few moments the trunk of an old oak which grew at the foot, and appeared almost cœval with time, slowly unclosed, and discovered a long passage sufficiently wide to allow two persons to walk abreast.

The steed of Wallace was then stript of its trappings and turned loose into the wood, whilst the men bearing him in their arms, entered the aperture, which immediately closed after them. The passage was lighted by numerous lamps, at regular distances, and winding round the rock, ended in a cavern of immense extent, lofty and lighted as the passage.

The captain, who was reclining on a couch, arose at their entrance, and the men laid Wallace on the seat he had quitted. “Who have we here?” he exclaimed, “The boy you directed us to way-lay,” replied Samson, — “You are mistaken, this youth I know not: how cold he is, and how came this contusion on his forehead, did I not command you to use no violence?” “Nor did we Captain; he tumbled from his horse with fright, if he is

hurt that is the cause of it," "Where is Ambrose?" (interrupted the captain) "At supper in the cavern." replied a domestic. "Go and tell him to bring his lancets hither instantly!" "Willingly," (replied Bridget,) and hastening to Ambrose, she told him that he must go and bleed an angel that was lying dead in the Captain's cell.

Whilst he prepared his lancets, the Captain took off the bonnet of the insensible youth, and his redundant auburn tresses fell loose over his shoulders. Bridget, who could not conceal her admiration, now offered her services, and proceeding to take off his jacket, screamed with surprise, as the bosom of his shirt falling open discovered that Wallace, the heir of Glenross, was a woman, and one of the loveliest of her sex.

The surprize of all present did not prevent Ambrose from performing his operation with great dexterity: the blood flowed freely and in a few minutes, Wallace (or as we shall in future call her, Helen) gave signs of returning animation. The Captain then made all except Bridget quite the apartment, and in a few minutes she opened her eyes, and gazed wildly around her. The Captain was so much lost in admiration, and Bridget in astonishment, they hesitated to address her, but their earnest gaze drew her attention to her own disordered person, which she no sooner perceived, but guessed the discovery which had been made, she uttered a scream of terror and surprize, and relapsed into a state of insensibility. Ambrose was again summoned, but for some time his skill was exerted in vain, as she fell from one fainting fit into another, till nature being exhausted, she became quiet.

It was a late hour of the morning, when the effects of the potion she had taken, ceased; and she awoke weak and feeble, and looked wildly around without comprehending what had befallen her, but the sight of Bridget brought to her memory the events of the preceding evening, the death of Malvina also crossed her mind, and hastily starting from her bed, she exclaimed, "Oh! if you have either pity or humanity, suffer me to

quit this place, let me instantly depart for Glenross." "Oh! the virgin!" returned Bridget, "I fear it will be a long time lady, before you see Glenross; you are a prisoner here for life!" "For life!" (repeated Helen), "Yes, lady, for life! No female that enters these caverns ever again quite them, except upon two occasions, to be married, or be buried, and in the first place they go no further than a little chapel in the centre of the forest, and instantly return; for should they attempt to escape, our men are all sworn, and must plunge their dirks into the bosom of the fugitive;" (Helen shuddered), "And the priest—Oh! he is a holy man, and lives in a hermitage close by, devoted to a life of penance, he belongs to the clan of our lord, and is a great friend of his, moreover," "Your lord!" interrupted Helen, "What did I say my lord?" replied Bridget, in confusion, "our Captain, I meant." "Well, no matter, can I see this Captain?" "Oh yes, I dare say you can my lady, I will go and enquire."

He was a man, who appeared about six-and-twenty, tall, muscular, and formed with such symmetry, that his every movement was easy and graceful, and during the repast which had been previously prepared, he glanced his eyes towards her, and the heart of the experienced Helen felt their power, and surrendered itself without a struggle for liberty.

As soon as their repast was finished, the Captain entreated to know what unfortunate accident had forced her to assume the disguise he saw her in, and when she assured him, it was the dress she had worn from her birth, his looks expressed her astonishment. In as concise a manner as possible, she then informed him, that her twin brother dying in his infancy, her mother dreading the excess of her lord's grief and disappointment, had yielded to the entreaties of her nurse, and substituted me, her female infant, in his room: she added, that the continual attention necessary to conceal the secret, had undermined the health of her mother, to whom she was going when his men seized, and brought her to the cavern. He then enquired her name; from habit, she

answered, "Wallace, the only child of Roderick Stratlimore, laird of Glenross." She had scarcely uttered her name, when he started from his seat, and clasping his hands, paced the room in the utmost agony, whilst the amazing Helen gazed at him with emotions of fear and surprise. In a few moments the violence of his grief appeared to soften; "Unfortunate Name!" he exclaimed, "Art thou always, the harbinger of misery to thy possessor; then coming towards her, he took both her hands in his, and continued, "but happily that is not thy real name, tell it me, and if you would avoid the sight of a maniac, never again let me hear the other. What is thy own name?" "Helen," she replied. "Lovely Helen," he returned, "I once received an obligation from thy father, I have often wished to repay it. Oh! might the felicity be mine of forming the future happiness of his daughter."—"Have you long resided here?" she ventured to ask. A cloud overcast his intelligent countenance, as he answered more than twenty years."

The following morning she was awakened by Bridget, who came to summon her to breakfast. Helen felt herself extremely depressed, and entered the breakfast room with an air so languid, and a face so pale, as must have attracted the attention of the Captain, who was waiting for her had not his own agitation been so great, as to prevent his noticing her. The breakfast passed almost in silence; as soon as it was ended the captain placed himself by her side, and taking her hand, said.—"Lovely Helen, know you that your beauty has caused as much admiration, as that of your celebrated namesake? Lovely Helen," he continued sinking on his knees before her, "May the unhappy man at your feet, hope for the love of the high born heiress of Glenross? And Helen at length avowed that his situation alone prevented her returning his love, adding, "Can the daughter of Roderick Strathmore ally herself to a leader of banditti? "My father was a victim to the cruelty and injustice of the English Monarch. The greatest blot in the character of Edward is, the untimely death of Wallace!" "Wallace," repeated Helen, "Wallace the defender of Scotland,

the brave William Wallace?" "The same," he replied. "the Soldiers of the English-king were sent to seize him in his paternal dwelling; he escaped, but his innocent wife fell a victim to the unrelenting fury of the merciless fiends, who persecuted him, they plunged their daggers in her heart and departed. My father had been idolized by his clan, no wonder then, seeing in me his living image, that their attachment was enthusiastic.

As I grew to manhood the oft-told story of my father's wrongs, and the remembrance of my oath, inspired me with ideas of revenge; I trained my followers and waged war on all who had been enemies of my father, both far and near.

Whilst attacking the castle of Ruthven, who had been one of Wallace's most deadly enemies, I was conquered, and wounded by the hand of the laird of Glenross, who with true magnanimity giving me my life and liberty, I foreswore my enmity, and returned to this retreat; the shame of being conquered, made me resolve to decline warfare in future, and since that time, I have acted on the defensive only: the game of the neighbouring forests chiefly supply us with food, nor do my men ever molest the traveller, but when necessity compels them to exact a small return of that which lawless power has deprived us of." He ceased, and the tears of Helen was the best eulogium she could bestow on the memory of the brave, but unfortunate Wallace. In the course of the day it was resolved that their union should take place, before the expiration of the week, in the little chapel of the forest, and father Austin undertook to procure female habiliments for the bride, who was on that occasion to assume, for the first time, the dress of her sex, and in forming plans for the felicity of the future, the day flew away unheeded.

As soon as the shades of twilight wrapt their steps in security, Allan threw a large mantle around the form of Helen, and taking her hand, led her from the cavern, followed by father Austin and several of the band, all well armed, but to Helen's great disappointment, Bridget was not suffered to attend her farther than the entrance

assage. This incident brought her to remembrance, that on her return, she herself would be a prisoner for life within these rocky caverns; she trembled and almost fainting leaned on the arm of Allan. The cold evening breeze whistled shrilly through the luxuriant foliage, and they proceeded in silence, till Helen fancied she observed several figures cross the extremity of an avenue they were emerging from, and concealed themselves in the underwood: Allan, informed of her apprehensions, halted, whilst he sent several of the band to reconnoitre the spot; they searched narrowly, but no human being was to be descried, and Helen almost convinced that her fears had formed the shadowy figures she fancied she had beheld, drew the hood of her mantle closer over her face and proceeded in silence.

They soon reached the chapel, and Allan placed himself by her on a low bench, just within the entrance, endeavoured to sooth and re-assure her, whilst the band directed by father Austin, placed lights round the altar.

In a few minutes Helen became more composed, and throwing off her mantle, gave her hand to Allan to lead her to the altar; at this instant, the door of the chapel was closed with violence, Helen shrieked, and threw herself into the expanded arms of Allan, whilst the band drawing their swords rushed out tumultuously to ascertain the cause, they instantly returned, and gave as their opinions that the wind alone had caused the noise. The venerable father had commenced the ceremony, which was almost immediately interrupted by the chapel door being thrown violently open, and a commanding voice loudly exclaimed, "Forbear!" Panic struck, the whole croupe cast their eyes toward the portal, and beheld a tall martial figure wrapt in a dark mantal, hastily approached them. When he arrived at the altar, he threw off his cloak, and with horror both Helen and Allan recognized the laird of Glenross: his form appeared dilated with passion. "Approach," he cried, and a numerous retinue of armed men rushed up the aisle: "seize the traitor," he exclaimed, drawing his sword and pointing to the astonished Allan; "seize the wretch who would ally the

noble blood of Strathmore to beggary and infamy." He repeated his command, but his men, awed by the looks of the band, hesitated to obey; when raising his glittering falcon he fiercely approached the still immoveable Allan; his action aroused Helen from the torpor which had seized her, and with a piercing shriek, she flung herself between them, and fell lifeless at the feet of her father. Roderick gazed upon her with emotion, and again commanded the seizure of Allan; the trusty band then drew their weapons, and placed themselves before their beloved chief, who would not draw his sword against the father of his betrothed bride, in whom he wished to behold a friend, rather than an enemy; the sacred fane now become the scene of fierce contention, but the servant of religion was respected still, and father Austin, partly by persuasion and partly by force, succeeded in drawing Allan from the spot, and his band reached the cave in safety. As Roderick beheld the lovely form of his daughter lying at his feet, the feelings of nature awakened in his bosom, he raised her in his arms, and, as he gazed on her transcendent loveliness, his keen regrets for a male heir were almost obliterated.

[As soon as the ceremony of Malvina's funeral was ended, Roderick retired to his chamber, he remained there alone till the following morning, pensively ruminating on the sudden and mysterious occurrences which had attended the loss both of his wife and son, when Andrew, the old warder, begged permission to enter to announce that a strange black looking man at the gate craved vehemently to see the laird of Glenross on business of the first importance. Roderick instantly refused his request, but upon the warder saying, from some questions the fellow had put to him, he believed he brought intelligence of his young lord, he as precipitately ordered him to be instantly brought before him. The warder then retired, and quickly returned with Donaldblain, (for it was him who had secretly left the cave,) and briefly unfolded to Roderick his daughter's disguise, and that she was upon the following evening to

become the wife of Allan, in the chapel of the forest. Scarcely could Roderick give credence to the tale.—Conviction at length flashed on his mind;—a thousand recollections confirmed it, and, indignant at the intended insult he flew to the hall, giving orders for the assemblage of his vassals the following morning, and for the careful ending of his friendly informer. Tho fiercest love for Helen had implanted itself in the ferocious soul of Donald-blain, and tempted him to use this means of tearing her from the arms of his rebel.]

When they arrived at Glenross castle, she immediately retired to her apartment; she had remained alone nearly two hours, when the door of her apartment opened, and old Janet, an attached and favorite servant of the Lady Malvina's, entered, bearing a small tray with refreshments, the old woman placed the breakfast on the table, and then approached Helen, viewed her very attentively for several minutes, then lifting up her eyes, exclaimed in a tone of astonishment, "is it indeed possible, that I live to see the heir of Glenross changed into a woman?—ah well a day, sad doings, sadoings, no wonder we all heard the BANSIE! —Old Maud was a good friend of mine, but I pray the holy virgin that I may never see her again, for I am certain she cannot rest in her grave after such a wicked action; our good lady too, who could have thought it, I am not surprised she could not die in peace," "Die!" exclaimed Helen, starting from her couch, "of what lady are you spoken of?" "Your mother, my lord," replied the old woman, "heaven help me, my lady, I should have said, but I am sure I shall never recollect it" "Die!" interrupted Helen, "did you say my mother was dead?" "Aye, alas the day, and buried too," replied Janet. A terrific shriek was the only answer that Helen made to this unwelcome intelligence, but hastily springing to the floor, she flew to the apartment of her mother, to ascertain the truth of old Janet's report; all here was cold and dreary, the rooms was stript of their accustomed furniture, and above the canopy under which the body of Malvina had reposed, still waved the sable plumes; this confirm-

ation of the dreadful intelligence struck like a bolt of ice to the heart of Helen, and she fell senseless on the floor. For several days Helen remained too ill to quit her apartment, and was left intirely to the care of old Janet : but at the expiration of a week, Roderick—unannounced, entered the room ; Helen instantly arose, and threw herself weeping on her knees before him ; he gently raised her, and seating her on the couch, placed himself beside her : he continued silent, and Helen raising her tearful eyes to his face, beheld him gazing on her with a smile. This unexpected kindness completely subdued the heart of the innocent girl, and she threw herself into his expanded arms ; he pressed her to his heart, saying, “ be calm my love, I come to sooth, not to wound your lacerated feelings, you have been an innocent imposter, and ought not to suffer on that account ; for the future we will avoid a subject so replete with disappointment and mortification ; with regard to your intended marriage with the freebooter, I doubtless look upon it in the right light—force and necessity, and congratulate myself that I arrived in time, to save you from the dreadful degradation.”

An hour before Helen thought her misery complete, she now found it might receive addition ; but toward evening, old Janet pressed her to walk up the battlements to enjoy the fresh air. When they reached the summit of the battlement, Janet enquired if she had seen the pilgrims, Helen answered in the affirmative. “ I did not like to begin the subject before,” replied Janet, “ but they arrived at the castle last night, and they have brought word that our blessed lady is a saint in heaven.” Helen’s tears flowed at the mention of her mother, and she besought Janet to explain her meaning. “ Why I can tell you no more lady, when they were both doing penance at the shrine of Saint Sybil, when our dear lady Malvina appeared to them, and told them their sins shou’d be forgiven them, if they came to Glenross, and watched nightly at her tomb nine following nights. Our lord believes it, and has given orders, that thy shall have free admission to the chapel nightly. She had scarcely reached the foot of the grand staircase, when one of the

pilgrims hastily following her, exclaimed, "Lady you have dropped your rosary," and placing one in her hand, retired; Janet was so occupied in gazing after the pilgrim, that Helen had time to slip a small folded paper, attached to the rosary, into her bosom unseen. "Did you observe his face?" inquired Janet. Helen was so much agitated, that she could scarcely answer in the negative. "Heaven bless us, how handsome he is," continued the old woman.

As she was left alone, with a trembling hand she examined her note, it contained only these few words, "If you have not forgotten a banished man, be a lady Malvina's tomb at ten this night." As Helen tremblingly opened the door of her apartment, and ventured forth, she left her lamp burning in her chamber, fearing that its rays might betray her steps. She reached the gallery unobserved, and fastening the door after her, sat herself for a few moments on a seat to recover her breath, which fright had almost deprived her of. When she had reached the aisle, she observed in the distance the lofty white marble tomb of Malvina; numerous lights were burning around it, and kneeling at its base were the counterfeit pilgrims. But light as were her motions, they were heard by the watchful ear of love, and starting from the ground, one of the pilgrims was instantly by her side, and throwing off his disguise, she beheld Allan the son of Wallace.

The following day Malcolm of Ruthven and his son Edwin arrived at Glenross, and Helen received her father's commands to appear at the banquet, which passed almost in silence, excepting Edwin's entreating a private audience, which, as he had Roderick's sanction for soliciting Helen, dared not refuse. Edwin availed himself of the opportunity, and pleaded his passion with fervour; but retired more offended at her coolness, than enchanted by her beauties; and half resolved by quitting the castle to avoid an union with a woman, who, however lovely, had not a heart to bestow on him. Helen effected indisposition, and obtained her father's permission to retire. Before her window was a small balcony

filled with aromatic plants, and while she was gazing on the last rays of the departing sun, she was startled by the fall of an arrow amidst the flowers; but more so at beholding a folded paper affixed to its point; with a hasty hand she took the billet, when she beheld one of the pilgrims descending from the battlements of a turret that commanded her apartment, and was at no loss to divine from whom the letter came, but wondering at its import she tremblingly unfolded it; the writing was same she had seen before; and it contained only these lines. "A circumstance has occurred that renders it necessary for us to meet at an hour later than the time appointed; when the clock strikes eleven, fail not to meet the future guardian of your life."

Roderick in the meanwhile felt his spirits unusually depressed, and dismissed his attendants, seated himself on a couch, and remained buried in painful rumination till the chapel clock tolled eleven. Starting at the lateness of the hour, he was about to retire to rest; when a loud peal of thunder, followed by a scream, arrested his step, & instantly the hag entered his apartment. Her looks were wild, and her garments floated loosely on the ground. Roderick remembered her prophecy. When thou next beholdest me the event of my predictions will be at hand; and he stood motionless as a statue, while in a deep hollow voice she repeated,

"Woe to the race of Strathmore!

"Woe to the Golden Falcon!

"Woe to the turrets of Glenross!"

Then extending her wand, she exclaimed, "Follow me!" Roderick drawing his sword, snatched up the lamp and obeyed her command. With a rapid step she led the way to the chapel; but at the portal uttered a wild and hideous scream, she sunk into the earth and vanished. Roderick's feelings were wound up to a degree of phrenzy; he dashed the lamp from him, and proceeded. The tapers around Malvina's tomb, gave sufficient light to his path, and a distant hollow voice directed him to the altar. he approached and beheld a scene, which for a moment paralyzed his frame. Before the sacred spot knelt the

lovely form of Helen, and a man in a pilgrim's habit, whilst a reverend friar was reading the marriage ceremony. Frantic with rage, Roderick rushed up the steps of the altar, and before his presence was perceived, plunged his sword deep into the heart of the pilgrim; who, with a dreadful groan, instantly expired: the act was instantaneous, and Helen, uttering a loud shriek, fell senseless on the marble pavement. At the moment of her fall, a bugle was heard to resound throughout the vaulted fabric, and a party of armed men rushed up the aisle, and to the amazement of father Austin, he beheld habited as the laird of his clan, Allan. The reverend father cast his eyes upon the breathless body before him; in the agonies of death his disguise had fallen off, and he beheld Donaldblain disguised as Allan, who had learned the hour of their appointed marriage, and determined to substitute himself in the room of Allan:—the agitation of all parties prevented a discovery of the imposture, and Helen had just received the ring that made her the wife of Donaldblain, when her father's sword punished his arrogance.

Allan was without the chapel, waiting for the striking of the appointed hour, when he beheld Roderick enter the portal: not doubting but his plan was discovered and the seizure of Helen meditated, instantly blew his bugle which summoned his trusty clansmen to his rescue.

The band enraged at beholding one of their number lying dead upon the ground, and the laird of Glenross with the sanguinary instrument in his hand, attacked him with the greatest fury, and he was wounded before Allan could throw himself between them.

The sound of the bugle had alarmed the inhabitants of the castle, who with Edwin, Malcolm and their retainers, rushed to the scene of action, where they beheld Allan, (wounded by one of Roderick's partisans,) fall before the altar; Allan's clansmen, irritated and enraged, with burning brands set fire to the castle, and ere the morning dawned, a heap of ruins was nearly all that remained of the once princely hall of Glenross.

Edwin having learned from one of Allan's vassals he had conquered, the real cause of the tumult, hurried to the chapel where he had last seen Roderick. This part of the edifice had suffered much less than any other part, and beside the altar he found Roderick extended weak and bleeding: Helen was kneeling beside him, viewing with looks of distraction and horror the breathless form of Allan, which lay apparently dead at her feet. Edwin had them separately borne to those apartments that had suffered least, and every care bestowed on them. Allan was only faint from loss of blood, time and strict attention restored both him and Roderick to perfect health, and renewed the faded bloom of Helen.

The laird of Glenross learning from Allan the history of himself and family, with his prior engagement to Helen, generously presented his daughter to Allan, as his bride, who relinquished his vow of seclusion from society, and the clan of Wallace was incorporated with that of Strathmore.

The stately towers of Glenross shortly rose again more magnificent from their ruins, and Helen presented the enraptured Roderick with a grandson, which was called Roderick Wallace Strathmore, to perpetuate the name of both the families, on the anniversary of the day that made her the wife of **ALLAN THE FREEBOOTER.**

