CHAPTER VI.

There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatius,
Than are dreamt of in our philosophy.
SHAKESPEARE.

YACOB'S cottage stood at the east end of the village, with its gable towards the sea. It consisted of one long apartment, divided into "but and ben" by two wooden beds or huge square boxes, with sliding doors in front, through which the sleepers entered at night, and made their exit in the morning. These "box beds" were placed towards each other, and their backs to the wall. The passage between the two beds was covered over the top with pieces of boat's boards, which formed a lame[1] for laying lines, cashies, büddies,[2] skinjups,[3] sea-boots, and other articles requiring to occupy this elevated position. On the wall, and tied with a piece of boucht,[4] hung a rack[5] for the crockery, spoons, &c. Under this rack, and close to the wall, stood an old oak table, with a very deep drawer, containing Yacob's pipe, his sealskin cash,[6] with some Dutch shag in it; sillock flees,[7] ooin treed,[8] a' auld loopick,[9] a muckle tully, a peerie gipper,[10] a pawn,[11] an' a sail needle, a tome-spinner[12] made of peat; a yarkin allishen,[13] a Norway ladle, a

1 Loft.
2 Creels made of straw and "simmits," or of dried dock stems.
3 Jacket or frock made of tanned calf or sheep skin.
4 Fishing-line.
5 A kind of press without doors for holding dishes, &c.
6 Tobacco-pouch.
7 Fishing flies.
8 Woollen thread.
9 Spoon with a short handle.
10 Small knife for gutting herring.
11 Thimble fixed in a leather band going round the hand; used by sailmakers.
12 A kind of whorl used for twisting hair-lines.
13 An outseam awl.

gruel tree,[1] a cashie-needle,[2] with a variety of smaller articles.

On the other side of the cottage, formed of two planks of drift-wood, stood a sort of bench resting on uprights, and having cross pieces fixed into the wall, and on this bench stood one old green painted sea-chest, one old-fashioned land-chest, and one well worn trunk covered with sealskin, but beginning to look bald on the lid and corners. Under this same bench, as a convenient place for setting household utensils, stood the muckle kettle, the peerie kettle, the muckle pot, and the peerie pot, one washing sae,[3] one small tub, and one reamicle.[4] The rest of the furniture of the "but-end" consisted of five oak chairs, with very high backs and fir seats, a creepy stool, two seddicks,[5] one high-backed straen[6] chair which stood in the corner, being old Mrs Yacob's private property.

In the "ben-end" the furniture consisted of the kirn, and the kirn-staff, the milk-keg standing on a chair with a piece of canvas over the top of it; then there was one barrel of oat-meal, one barrel of bere-meal, one buggie[7] with some burstin[8] in it, one groff siv,[9] one sma' siv, and a weight.[10]

The floor but and ben was formed of earth and clay, which time and sweeping had rendered quite hard and smooth.

The roof was covered with divits,[11] having straw and

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1 Porridge-stick.
2 Wooden needle for finishing the rims of "cashies" and "buddies."
3 Tub with "lugs" for lifting by.
4 Small shallow tub used for holding milk, porridge, &c.
5 A stool made of straw.
6 Made of straw.
7 Skin bag made of an entire tanned sheepskin.
8 Meal made from bere or barley toasted brown in a kettle placed over the fire and ground in a quern.
9 Coarse—a sieve with a larger size of holes.
10 Fanner made of an untanned sheepskin stretched on a large hoop, on which the grain is repeatedly thrown up and caught until the chaff or awns are separated.
11 Oblong pieces of thin dried turf for thatching houses with.

simmits on the outside. Two "lums" on the ridge served the double purpose of letting out the smoke and in the light. Against the gable wall of the but-end stood the back stane.[1] The hearth-stone was composed of several pieces of irregularly shaped flat stones raised a few inches above the floor. On this hearth-stane stood the "boiler" on the one side, and the tea-pot on the other, and the brand iron and "taings" lying in front.

As old Yacob entered, his ear caught the prelude of the coming storm. This was a kind of low crooning guttural sound the old woman indulged in when she was brimful of wrath.

A new peat fire had been put on, and the day being calm, the lazy smoke seemed more inclined to remain inside than to go out the lums, as it ought to have done. It therefore packed itself so closely "but and ben" as to form a sort of moving ceiling a few feet from the ground—dense and dark above this line, but comparatively clear below. Old Yacob, therefore, on stepping over the floor, had the upper part of his body enveloped in thick darkness, with his legs only visible, so that he was within a few feet of the hearth before his wrathful help-mate observed him.

"What's a' da reek aboot?" inquired Yacob, as he lowered his head to the level of the line of smoke, and gave two or three short coughs, showing that his bronchial tubes did not take kindly with this rather thick decoction of peat-smoke.

"What's a' da reek about?" echoed old Peggy, for that was her name. "Whaur ill vaige is du been a' day, du püir, simple, düless,[2] saft-head snüol,[3] dat du is, pittin' aff dy time wi' ony clashan'[4] gapeshot[5] bledder o' wind du meets wi' atween dis an' Sumbrahead. An' sae may deil sit i' der gapin

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[1] A large stone against which the fire is placed.
[2] Indolent; incapable. [3] Simpleton. [4] Gossiping.
[5] Open-mouthed.

craigs, an' little less be i' dine, an' I be hale an' weel, an' dats what am no, fir I'm a püir deein' objekd, wi' da life just blatterin'[1] in. Eh! 'my inside,'" pressing both her hands on her sides. "Dis pain 'ill tell a tale yet. Du'll be pleased when du sees my müld sark[2] on, an' my head taen aboot i' da cauld mirk[3] müld," drawing her nose downwards between her thumb and forefinger, and throwing her hands towards the fire, as if she had relieved the aggrieved organ of a considerable quantity of moisture, which the eyes had sent down just in time to give emphasis to those harrowing allusions to "muld sarks" and other spectral paraphernalia.

"Gaen stravaigin,"[4] she continued, "ower da face o' da eart like a benummed monyment, as if du hed nidder horse or coo ta lüik efter. Dere's da puir jures[5] o' kye never hed der stakes muved dis blissed day yet, nor a lempit taen fir gettin' a bone o' fish wi' nor a girspuckle[6] for da beas' meat at nicht, nor da hoes[7] an' skate rumples[8] boiled fir da grice, nor da kail howed dats gaen ower wi' shickenwirt runshick[9] an' melda,[10] nor da twa lives o' sheep dats fastened i' da ness luiked efter, nor da grain o' dry bare taen ta da mill dat's standin' rawin' an' wastin' i' da barn; yea, sürely, sürely, I'm ta be petied; left here, I may say, an' nidder can win or want, a püir beddral[11] creepin' like a wirm faeda bed ta da fire, an' wi' sic a tribe aboot me, witches an' limmers; bit Sathan 'll get his ain some day, an' he'll get dem, an' he'll scaud dem, an' sae micht he; an' Lord grant it fae my sinful hert. Da impedent jaad, Sara o' Northouse, what did shü dü dis mornin' after du guid fort,[12] comes in wi' her fair face, an' says ta me, says shü (mimicking the said Sarah), 'Peggy, will du gie me a perrie[13] air o' bland[14]

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1 Quivering; flickering. 2 Shroud. 3 Dark.
4 Wandering; rambling.
5 A term applied to cattle, and expressive of pity or sympathy.
6 Blade of grass. 7 Dog-fish *(Acanthias Vulgaris.)*
8 Tail and backbone of the skate. 9 Chickweed. 10 Weeds.
11 Bedridden. 12 Went out. 13 Small quantity.
14 Whey of butter-milk.

in dis perrie tinnie ta mak a heat drink ta wir Tamie, as he's gotten a awful torment within his stamick?' 'Yea, dat sall I,' says I, simple bein' dat I wis, whin I oucht ta brained her wi' da taings dat lay at da sheek o' da fire. Bit I tinks o' naithin' till da day whin I gengs ta peck oot da drap o' meilk dat wis standin' i' da keg, sae as to get a bit o' guid butter ta set by fir Yule, an' sae I begins ta kirn ;[1] an' I kirns, an' better kirns, an' winders dere's nae butter comin'; but it cam at last, an' dere it is. 'Sees du dat!'" raising her voice to a shrill scream, and pushing a plate with some very white looking butter in it so close up to Yacob's nose, that it left a little inverted pyramid of oleaginous matter adhering to its broad tip. This he quietly removed by raising his thick, short, honry forefinger, and rubbing it on the knee of his skin "breeks," and which he continued polishing slowly with the palm of his hand, looking abstractedly at the process, as if he were trying to solve the problem in his own mind, whether, according to the law of compensation, the indignity to his nose, with the loss of the butter, was sufficiently balanced by the benefit to his leather unmentionables.

"Lüik at dat," she continued, "lüik at dat! I say, dirt! froth. Whaur's my bonnie yallow butter noo? Whaur's my profit noo? O da diel's buckie! O da devil's witch dat shü is, I hoop shüll swee[2] i' his kettle o' brunstane yet; an' den shüll nidder get bland nor swats[3] ta weet her filthy craig wi'; an' I hoop he'll shoke her ipa da neist bland she drinks. But du'll go dis dis very nicht, whin dü comes hame fae da sillicks, an' get me twa or tree hairs aff ane o' her kye, ta lay anunder da boddom o' my meilk-keg, fir I'll hae my profit back again if I süd rive da rüif abün her head.[4]

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[1] To churn. [2] Singe; scald.

[3] A kind of weak beer, obtained by fermenting meal and "sids," or husks, the liquid being "swats;" and the solid matter which settles at the bottom of the vessel after the husks have been removed by the straining is "sowans."

[4] See Note H. Superstition of the Evil Eye.

"I widna winder ta see da trooker comin' in axin' fir a taings o' fire some mornin' whin I'm kirnin'; bit lit her come, I'll gie her a scaud. Da minnit shü grips da taings o' fire, I'll haud da kirn staff hard ipa da boddom o' da kirn, an' shü'll be burnt aff da banes afore I lit her aff.

"It was Mansie Gordie, honest man, dat telled me ta dü dis. Ugh! ugh! ugh! Eh! dis host 'ill finish me some day. Haand me da crum o' lickerish dats lian' ida rack yonder, Yacob."

This request was made in a low, breathless croon, as if utterly exhausted, and drawing her breath hard as she put the end of the black saccharine stalk under the only remaining stump of a far back molar.

Old Yacob paused, for he knew by experience the wisdom of remaining silent on occasions of this kind, as any remark from him, good, bad, or indifferent, would have raised another storm, which neither coughing nor want of breath might have so providentially brought to a close; he therefore merely inquired, "Hes du ony denner fir me, Peggy?"

"No I," she replied in the same weak voice. "I wisna able ta pit on fish an' taties, sae du'll just hae ta tak a' 'air o' bland an' meal afore du gengs[1] i' da ebb, an' den du'll get a cup o' tea when du comes back agen."

Old Yacob therefore rose from his seat, and lifting the "peerie kettle," which lay "whombled"[2] under the bench already described, he proceeded to prepare the bland and meal over the top of the fire, which now showed a cheerful column of flame rising from the centre.

Just as the mixture attained the proper consistency, which he knew by experience suited his taste, and as he was lifting the kettle from the crook, a voice, in a kind of timid whisper, proceeded from the entrance between the two wooden

[1] Going with the ebb-tide to find limpets.
[2] Turned buttom up.

beds, and said, "Guid day be here!"

"O guid day be ta dee," responded old Yacob. "Come in trow," he added, as a nice looking modest lass just out of her "teens" came in and sat down on a chair. She wore a white short-gown open at the bosom, a blue "claith" petticoat, and a net "mutch" on her head frilled at the sides, but plain on the forehead.

"I wis just wantin' a perrie wird wi' Peggy," explained the fair visitor.

"Peggy," ejaculated old Yacob, for the old woman had sunk back in the recesses of her fortress, the projecting sides of which left nothing in view but her feet and legs. "Peggy, here is somebody wantin' dee," and Peggy's head at once emerged beyond the ramparts.

"O I'm wae fir troublin' you, Peggy," apologised the fair visitor.

"Na! na! it's nae trouble," rejoined Peggy. "Yacob, geng de wis ben ower wi' yon;" and Yacob, obedient to the order from the seat of Government, took his kettle, and went accordingly.

As soon as he had disappeared between the wooden dormitories already described, he removed the milk-keg from its accustomed seat of honour, in order to occupy the place himself, for this was the only solitary chair in the apartment. As he shut the door, Peggy sprang from her seat with great alacrity, and seated herself on a chair close by her visitor. "What was it, my hinnie?" inquired Peggy, laying her hand confidentially on the knee of the former, and drawing in a long breath until her thin lips puckered in over her toothless gums, and the distance between her nose and chin contracted to the smallest possible demensions.

"Oh!" whispered Leezie, for such was the name of this interesting young woman, "I'm just broucht a sid[1] o' tea wi'

[1] Small quantity.

me, an' I wis just wantin' you ta luik in a cup fir me."

"O! Lord bliss dee," ejaculated Peggy, as her eyes gleamed with either the spirit of divination or love for the black double strong extract of the Chinaman's leaf. "Yea, I sall lüik in a cup fir dee; dat sall I, my bairn; an' Lord send dee as mony guid tøkens in it as I can wis dee." Saying this, Peggy hung the tea-kettle on the crook, and rinsing out the tea-pot, laid it on its side on the brand-iron, with it bottom towards the fire.[1]

"Eh! dear o' me, Leezie," continued she, "I'm failin' fast noo, an' sic a band o' deevils o' neeghbours aboot me; it's just killen' me; an' wir güidman is sic a saft düless boddie, he'll no open his mooth ta dem if dey wir pickin' da een oot o' his head. Sees du dis," showing her the plate with the butter which still bore the impress of Yacob's nose. "Dere's my pritty neeghbours! Dere's my profit! Dere's my yallow butter dat I aye got sic a name fir makin'. Dat's Sarah o' Northouse's wark. Dats what shü did dis mornin' wi gettin' a tinnie o' bland; but wir guidman is gaen ta get twa or tree hairs aff o' her coo da nicht, an' if I dunna get back my profit wi' dat, I'll sneck da limmer atween da een da first time I meet her; but da kettle is boilin' noo, an' I'll mask da sid o' tea, an' lit it stand till Yacob gengs to da ebb, fir he's just gaen in a peerie minnit."

Saying this, Peggy shook the tea from the paper which contained it into the teapot, which she placed on the hearth-stone opposite a nice opening between two half-consumed brands. When the masking process was considered complete, she took down a small cup and saucer from the rack, and filling the cup with the dark strong liquid, drank it off with great relish, giving a loud smack with her thin lips, and showing an extraordinary length of lever in the lower jaw, caused by the want of her teeth.

[1] See note I. Cup Divination.

Holding the empty cup now by the handle, she slowly drained off any remaining drop of liquid, and then proceeded to "cast" the cup. This consisted of giving it several professional taps on the palm of the left hand,—first the sides of the cup, then the bottom, and last the brim. This was to give fortune the opportunity of arranging the stalks and dots of the tea grounds into hieroglyphic pictures, which only the initiated could decipher. Then taking her spectacles from her pocket, and placing them on her nose, she held the cup out at full arm's length, exclaiming, "Eh! 'm—! my certie, der's sontin here. Dat's a bonnie cup. Yea, my dear bairn, doo hes a bonnie cup; an' may da Lord send de mony a blissen wi' it. Yea! yea! dere's a letter here just a peerie bit doon, an' den der's a ship wi' full sail; an' here's a man boddie standin' as if he just wanted ta speak ta dee. Dis man an' dee will come tagedder yet, tak du my wird for dat. An' here's a weddin' company, an' a bonnie company it is. Ay, du's gaen ta hae a lock o' bairns ta dis man, dat is du. Here der awa doon at the boddam o' da cup, puir tings, as if it wis a whilie ta dat time yet; but dere dey ir, luik du here," and Peggy pointed close to a group of black dots with her shrivelled forefinger, having a nail on it like a bird's claw; but though Leezie could not exactly see her future offspring amongst the tea grounds, the thought made her plump rosy cheeks blush deeper crimson, and she exclaimed, "Oh, Peggy, ye're makin' a füil o' me noo." "I!" rejoined Peggy; "na, na, my bairn, far be it fae me ta mak a füil o' dee. I'm just tellin' dee what I see, an' what I ken du'll see dy sell, if du's spared. Yea, and du's gaen ta hae plenty o' da warld. I didna notice dis afore, but here it is—horses, kye, sheep, and plenty o' a' thing. Eh! it is a bonnie cup indeed—a bonnie cup." "Weel, mony tanks ta you," said Leezie. "I'll just hae ta be gaen noo, as wir folk'll be winderin' whaur I am." "Oh, du's welcom, du's welcom, ta ony guid I can dü dee," rejoined Peggy; "an' Lord bliss dee for da sid o'

tea, fir it's revived me odiously.[1] Da wy dat Yacob is failed fae gaen ta da sea, an' the hens a' clockin', der's nae wy ta get a maskin' o tea unless da Lord sends it, as He's düne da day, praise be till His name."

"Weel, guid day be wi' you, den, Peggy," said Leezie, as a parting salutation on leaving the cottage.

"An' sae be wi' dee," responded Peggy, as she settled back in her well-padded chair, there to enjoy the soothing and exhilarating effects of the powerful extracts which she had earned as a reward for her soothsaying.

The reader's acquaintance with old Yacob, and more recently his wife Peggy, makes it necessary now to record some additional particulars regarding them.

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[1] Greatly.

CHAPTER VII.

My fause lover pu'd the rose,
But, ah ! he's left the thorn wi' me.

BURNS.

OLD Yacob Yunson was at this time about sixty years of age, and hale and hearty for his years. He was a short, thick-set man, with a round florid face, thin whiskers, ample forehead, and intelligent expression of countenance. Quiet and docile, in his temper, he bore his wife's unconquerable and ceaseless "yatterin," as he called it, with more than Christian forbearance ; and, with the exception of the poetical cure he attempted, as recorded in a former chapter, he never again tried the hopeless task of bringing her into subjection. They had been married for forty years, and their family consisted of an only son, who went to sea when he was eighteen years of age, but from whom they had heard no accounts for many long years. Old Yacob, as the reader has already had some means of judging, possessed a considerable amount of good common sense, quiet, pawky humour, and considerable power of observation in judging of men and things. His retentive memory had enabled him, during a long life, to acquire a complete knowledge of all the fairy tales, legends, and superstitions known in the islands ; and he was so fond of telling these, that, as has already been seen, he could never resist the temptation which the hermit's tale so often put in his way of starting on his own account, when some particular incident in the hermit's narrative recalled a tale of a similar kind to his remembrance. Regarding old Peggy, the reader must have already drawn such a correct portrait of her in his own mind, that any further description must be unnecessary, except it be to mention a few immaterial points, such as—She was 5 feet 9

inches in height, slightly bent in the shoulders, wore two binders, and two "toys"[1] on her head, in the following order:—1st, A flannel binder; 2d, a flannel toy; 3d, a muslin toy; 4th, a black binder; and over all this a large thick handkerchief when out of doors. A blue "claith" petticoat reaching a little below her knee, and a "slug"[2] of the same material, fixed with a large pin in front, completed her attire.

When old Yacob returned from the ebb, he found the door of the cottage standing slightly ajar; and as he gently pushed it open, a strange kind of sound fell upon his ear. Listening attentively, he found it proceeded from the *but* end of the cottage, and that it had a striking resemblance to Peggy's voice.

Peering round the corner of the wooden bed, he saw a remarkable phenomenon—Peggy engaged in a musical performance. She was humming an old ballad, nodding her head, and beating time to the measure with her foot on the hearthstone. Old Yacob could not account for it, because he was equally ignorant of the fortune-telling business and of the exhilarating effects which the strong tea had produced on Peggy's susceptibilities, and which had thus caused "a time of singing to be heard in the land."

Fortunately, he had come just in nick of time to hear her commence the ballad a second time; and placing himself quietly at the head of the bed next the door, he stood there still till she had got to the end of it. It was

THE FAUSE KNIGHT.[3]

Knight Emir proved fause to his lady love,
Emiralo Mralandie;
An' she bore to him o' bonnie bairnies twa,
Doon by the green booth sidie.

[1] A hood or "mutch" of white muslin, without frills. [2] Short gown.

[3] This is an imitation of an old ballad which the author believes to be of Scottish origin; but his early recollection only retains the refrain and the affecting incidents of the death and burial of the innocents. He regrets that the want of original Shetland songs and ballads has in this, as in other cases, forced him to depend so much on his own resources.

She wrung her hands, an' she grat fu' sair,
Emiralo Mralandie ;
An' she tore out the locks o' her gowden hair,
Doon by the green booth sidie.

She's ta'en out a peerie penknife,
Emiralo Mralandie ;
An' she's ta'en awa the bonnie bairnie's life,
Doon by the green booth sidie.

She's lifted up a marrable stane,
Emiralo Mralandie ;
An' she's buried them there, a' by their lane,
Doon by the green booth sidie.

Here an' there she wandered awa,
Emiralo Mralandie ;
Makin' mane sair for her bairnies twa,
Doon by the green booth sidie.

Winter was past and simmer cam fair,
Emiralo Mralandie ;
An' the ladie sat doon wi' sair dool an' care,
Doon by the green booth sidie.

Bonnie birdies sang sweet sangs, I ween,
Emiralo Mralandie ;
An' twa bonnie bairnies played on the green,
Doon by the green booth sidie.

Bonnie bairnies twa, I wish ye were mine,
Emiralo Mralandie ;
My love for you never would tine,
Doon by the green booth sidie.

I would dress you in robes o' silk,
Emiralo Mralandie ;
And feed you wi' the forrow cow's milk,
Doon by the green booth sidie.

O ! mother cruel, once we were thine,
Emiralo Mrolandie ;
But by thy penknife our lives did tine,
Doon by the green booth sidie.

Now we are dressed in robes of white,
Emiralo Mralandie;
And have no need of the forrow cow's milk,
Doon by the green booth sidie.

Come away, mother, and join us there,
Emiralo Mralandie;
And leave a' your dool, and sorrow, and care,
Doon by the green booth sidie.

What news is ye tell to me,
Emiralo Mralandie?
A ladie found dead by a rowan tree,
Doon by the green booth sidie.

Lift her tentilly, she's cauld as snaw,
Emiralo Mralandie;
And lay her beside her bonnie bairnies twa,
Doon by the green booth sidie.

O! malison upon yon fause knight,
Emiralo Mralandie;
An' may he fa' in a bluidy fight,
Doon by the green booth sidie.

In the burdies' nests be locks o' his hair,
Emiralo Mralandie;
And the ravens pick a' his banes bare,
Doon by the green booth sidie.

"Eh dear O me!" sighed Peggy, as she finished the last stanza; "I'm forcin' a smile upo' da face o' affliction. Der's little singin' a my mind, though ance upon a day I wis light-hearted an' hallegirt[1] enough, bit lammit ye're, dat's awa noo." This soliloquy was rehearsed for old Yacob's edification (for she had just observed him emerge from his hiding-place), and it was intended to make him believe that the singing was purely accidental, and had no connection whatever with the exhilarating effects of strong tea. For, though she was prepared at any time to act on the offensive, and could bombard the patient

[1] Sprightly.

and enduring Yacob for hours, without any sense of fear or compunction, yet, upon the question of smuggled tea and cup-reading, she took great pains to dissemble and keep in the dark, and this for two reasons. First, that old Yacob had been instructed by the ruling elder of the district to report any case of cup-reading that came under his observation, in order that the offender might be admonished ; and second, the locker of the green chest contained certain well-kept, reek-stained coins, bearing a foreign image and superscription, which Peggy knew by experience could never be got into circulation in exchange for the "black leaf," if old Yacob knew of any contraband supplies of said article coming from other quarters.

The green chest was a fortress which all Mrs Yacob's engineering could never enable her to penetrate, nor could her heaviest artillery force the governor to surrender the key, or even let her peep within its walls ; she therefore had to make a virtue of necessity, and practically own submission before any supplies could be drawn from the military chest, and this took place only on very rare occasions ; for, as Yacob had been unable to increase his financial resources, he wisely demurred to reduce them, unless for very pressing and important reasons.

CHAPTER VIII.

But you and I have shaken hands,
Till growing winters lay me low;
My paths are in the fields, I know,
And thine in undiscovered lands.—TENNYSON.

NEXT day old Yacob faithfully kept his appointment with the hermit, leaving Peggy still breathing threatenings and slaughter against Sarah o' Northouse for abstracting her butter profit, and against himself for not being more expert in obtaining the hair-charm from the said Sarah's cow; for in this important enterprise he had failed, owing to that wide-awake individual coming upon him just at the moment he was in the act of applying the shears to crummie's side.

As old Yacob lifted the wooden latch of the hermit's door, the latter rose to meet him, and, shaking him cordially by the hand, said, "How are you, my friend?"

"O brawly, brawly!" responded Yacob; "only we've hed a awful storm sin' I saw you last."

"Indeed," replied the hermit; "I did not hear it. Was it during the night?"

"Ay," said Yacob; "it wis baith last nicht an' dis mornin', an da dunder wis a' inside da hoose, an' no upo' da rüif like a norwast storm; lammit ye're, it's da auld wife I'm meanin; it's little a rivin' storm frichtens me whin my hoose is ta'en aboot, my screws fastied,[1] my boat i' da winter noust, wi' meal i' da barrel, and flesh i' da rüif. Bit da inside storm, Mr Ollason, is no sae weel tholed; though it doesna blaw your boat or your corn awa, it blaws awa what pits you mair aboot; an' dats your peace o' mind, your comfort, an' a da happiness your ain fireside micht gie you. Da auld wife tinks da neeghbours is geen aff wi' her profit, and I tink shüll set da toon in a lowe, if shü does na get it back again. You, dat's a man o'

[1] Corn stacks anchored with ropes and stones.

eddication, Mr Ollison, what is your opinion aboot witchcraft?"

"My friend," replied the hermit, "that is a subject my education can help me but little in, for one of the greatest abuses of learning is the attempt to explain the unexplainable. A true philosopher will become humble as he advances in knowledge; because just by his increase in knowledge he is able to measure his ignorance. The great field of the unknown is ever widening, as, step by step, he attains to the highest altitude of intellectual power; while, on the other hand, the self-conceited pigmy in mental growth rushes in where angels fear to tread, declaring that nothing exists in heaven or earth, but what is dreamed of in his philosophy. If in the material universe, where man has only matter to deal with, he is baffled in every step he takes beyond a certain limit, how much more must this be the case when the subject of his study is *spirit*, which his natural eyes cannot see, nor his natural faculties comprehend; for the natural cannot understand the supernatural.

"The sceptic may say he does not believe in the supernatural, because his natural senses do not perceive it. But a man born blind might as well say that the sun does not shine, because he does not see its light. The disbelief in his case arises from his incapacity to see; and is it not the incapacity of the human eye, as an organ constructed by the Creator to see natural objects, which prevents it from seeing the supernatural?

"When Elisha's servant saw his master and himself surrounded by a great host, he saw all that could be seen by his natural powers of vision; but when he saw horses and chariots of fire forming a bright and impenetrable cordon around them both, he saw with supernatural eyes; and so, if our eyes were at this moment endowed with such miraculous power, we should see the earth, air, and sea teeming with countless supernatural beings.

"Those beings, we have reason to believe, are representatives of the two great powers in the world—Good and Evil. If

man seeks the aid of the Good, he will obtain it; for he knows not how near unseen hands are to help him in trouble and temptation; and, on the other hand, if a man seek the aid of the agents of Evil, he will obtain such aid; and this is my explanation of witchcraft, and in this view of it there is nothing inconsistent with human reason.

"A man can only occupy two positions in this great question. If he says, 'I do not believe in the existence of anything but matter, nor of anything I cannot handle with my hands, and see with my eyes;' then I say to him, 'Account to me for the forms which matter has assumed in the material world around us. Dead matter cannot of itself move; it cannot by its own act mould itself into shapes of beauty, and adjust itself to fulfil wise and beneficent purposes. There must have been spirit exerting itself upon matter before this world, so full of varied beauty and wonderful adaption of means to an end, could come into existence as we now see it.'

"If on the other hand, a man says, 'I believe in the existence of spiritual power in the world, and also that the creation of the universe could not have taken place without such a power; but I do not believe in witchcraft, or any of those superstitions believed in by the ignorant; to such a man I say, 'My friend, if you admit the existence of spirit in any one of its manifestations, you admit all that I contend for; and your disbelief in what you are pleased to call superstition, so far from doing honour to your judgment, involves you in a contradiction which one of those unlearned persons you despise would have sagacity enough to see.

"Do you know the spiritual world so well that you can draw a line between what you call the possible and the impossible? or, when you speak of spiritual powers or spiritual beings, has the word "impossible" any meaning but such as your weak fancy gives it? If none of us knows what a spirit can do, how idle it is to attempt to square our beliefs with our

experience, when that experience really teaches us nothing regarding the nature of spiritual beings. Our experience gives us knowledge of what can be accomplished by natural means, and of what springs from natural causes ; and therefore all that is above Nature, and all that cannot possibly be accomplished by any of her known laws, must be attributable to supernatural power ; and nothing is more absurd or unphilosophical than for any man to attempt to limit the operation of a power which he does not understand. My belief in the existence of a spirit world gives me great comfort, and sustains me in my solitude, because I believe the object of my soul was torn from me by a supernatural power ; and that, although my natural eyes cannot see her, yet she may be very near me, and one day shall be restored to me. But more of this by-and-by. I am afraid I am wearying you with my philosophical arguments."

"Na, na ! no ye, Mr Ollison." said Yacob ; "though your subject is maybe just a kennan ower learned for da likes o' me ; yet I hae a kind a guid groff guess whaur ye ir, an' I'm shüre a' ye hae said is as soond as da Gospel ; but I'm wearyin' muckle for the rest o' your ain story. I tink ye left aff whaur you an' her wis sittin' doon i' da banks in a bonnie moonlicht nicht, lüikin at da mün, an' winderin aboot da starns."

"Yes," replied the hermit, "I left off there. Well, at Hallowmas I commenced my duties as a teacher, and, though too young for such an office, I endeavoured by close attention and a full knowledge of what I taught, to make up for what I wanted in years and experience ; and the result was, that I gave great satisfaction to all connected with the school ; and as time went on the number of my scholars increased as well as my income. I can truly say at this time I enjoyed unalloyed happiness. Esteemed by all who knew me, successful in everything I undertook, I would have been happy even in that enjoyment which the gratification of a noble ambition gives, but my highest source of happiness was the pure and ardent

affection I felt for my Lelah, and that soft sweet response which my love met with in her own bosom.

"She left the school about the same time as I did, as her father, though a well-to-do fisherman, could not afford to spare his children from work longer than they were able fairly to read, write, and count. When our attachment became known to the family (though we managed to conceal it for nearly two years from the time I first saw her), her parents seemed highly pleased, and I met with a cordial welcome whenever I choosed to call, which I did as often as I could make a reasonable excuse for doing so. When seated by the fireside on a winter evening, entertaining and astonishing the old man with my great stores of knowledge, how happy I felt to be so near my Lelah; and how can I describe her at this time when her ripened charms were just in the full glory of womanhood? Her merry laugh, so rich and full of the most exuberant mirth, was music in mine enraptured ear. How it thrilled my soul with a fulness of inexpressible delight! That voice, I hear it still; but, oh! is it possible that I shall hear it no more for ever? Oh God, why hast thou dealt with me thus? I can bear this no longer." And the hermit covered his face with his hands, and groaned in an agony of grief.

"Eh! laek o' me," exclaimed old Yacob, "I'm wae to see you, Mr Ollason, takin' on sae. Dünna distress yoursell dis wy; it bracks my heart to see you. Pit your trust i' the Lord; He can help you oot o' a' your troubles yet, an' mebbe bring her back ta you agen."

"Yes, I know He will," cried the hermit, quickly recovering himself, and dashing away the tears which his grief had wrung from him. "I know I shall yet behold her; but whether in mortal form, or as a bright spirit, I know not. I will wait patiently, and God's will be done. I thank you for your sympathy, my kind friend, and I will try and not again allow my feelings to overcome me so far.

"As I was telling you, my days and years during this happy period of my life glided on like a placid stream winding its way through a flowery land. Sunshine was ever on my path, and hope beckoned me on with fascinating smiles. I knew no care, and dreamed of no sorrow; but, alas! clouds and darkness were gathering on the horizon of the future, and the sunshine of my life was soon to fade in the valley of the shadow of death.

"My dear mother was suddenly taken from me, and her gentle voice was hushed in the silence of the grave before I could fully realize my loss. She was one of the most patient and gentle of her sex, and in her youth had been a woman of great beauty; and though years and sorrow had dimmed the lustre of her charms, they had also mellowed into greater beauty and loveliness the brighter ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, a loving heart, and a soul ennobled by a true and living faith. How well I do remember her, with her widow's cap, her soft gentle voice, her sweet kind looks, her words of tenderness and love, when listening to anything I had to tell her about my success at school, or of any other way in which I had distinguished myself. She studied all my wants with more than a mother's care, gliding noiselessly about the house, and doing a great deal with little apparent effort. So happy did she make home to me (for my aunt's house was indeed a home in every sense of the word), that I felt grieved and disappointed whenever I came home and found her not there to meet me.

"Her gentle and uncomplaining nature would not permit her to say she was ill so long as she was able to go about, for she always had such a delicacy of feeling and unwillingness to give trouble to any one; and thus a slow and insidious disease laid waste her frail constitution, and, like the cankerworm at the root of a tender plant, it was only when the last tendril was severed that she drooped and died.

"I had noticed some weeks before her last illness that her step was less elastic, and her movements less active than was

her wont; but though I saw this, I could not entertain the dreadful thought that she was really suffering from any serious ailment.

"It was autumn, and now just about six years since we had come to live with my aunt. I shall never forget that sad evening when I returned from the school—that evening whose lengthening shadows were gathering around me the gloom of my first sorrow.

"On entering the cottage, and missing my mother's loving welcome and her dearly-loved form, which my eyes always sought for, I eagerly inquired for her, when my aunt informed me she was in bed. I hurriedly approached her bedside, and said, 'Mother, why are you lying thus?'

"'Because I am ill, my dear," she answered in a soft whisper, and added, 'I fear, my dear boy, I shall never get better any more.'

"These words—the prophetic meaning of which I saw in the hectic flush of her cheek, and in that strange mysterious look of her countenance—made my heart sink within me. I grasped her hand, and bent over her, while the hot scalding tears fell thick and fast upon the snow-white coverlet.

"'O mother! say not so,' I cried, in a voice choked with emotion. 'You will get better; I am sure you will.'

"'O! no, my son,' she replied in a voice of surpassing tenderness, and with an expression of heavenly calm in her countenance. 'Death is no deceiver. He tells me that yonder sun, which now so sweetly sinks beneath the Wart, I shall never more behold. Open the window, love,' she added, 'and let in the cool evening air, that I may feel it; and draw the curtains aside, that I may see the fading light, for soon I shall see it no more; but a sun of brighter ray shall arise and light my path across the dark waters of Jordan; and then I shall be where there is no need of the light of the sun, or of the moon, for the Lamb who dwells in the midst of the throne is

the light thereof, and He shall wipe away all tears from our eyes.'

"'O! mother,' I again broke forth in an agony of tears; 'why will you speak so? How can I live without you? How can I come home, and not find you to welcome me? I cannot bear it! I cannot live if you are taken from me! O! let me run for a doctor; he can do something for you; I am sure he can.'

"'My son,' said she, in a solemn and impressive manner, and laying her hand gently upon my arm, 'you have always obeyed me, and you have been a brave and noble boy: it has been my happiness in life to see those qualities growing with your years; and surely as you love me, you will not grieve me now by disobeying me when I have most need of your love and obedience.'

"'O! mother,' I exclaimed, 'I will not disobey you; I will submit, and do whatever you wish me.'

"'Well, then, my dear son,' she replied, 'sit down calmly and listen to me, because I have something to say to you which will be of importance to you after I am gone. What I have now to tell you I might have told you years ago, but I wished to do nothing that could in any way decrease the influence of the great lesson of life you have learned so well, viz., the lesson of self-reliance; and I have therefore now no fear that any knowledge of the superior position in society which awaits you will change your principles, or tempt you to deviate from the path which it has been my highest earthly pleasure to see you walk in. Know, then, that you are the true and undisputed heir of your grand-father's property. It was made to you by will shortly after you were born; and this is the reason you were named Ollison, after your grandfather, and not your father's name, because this was your grand-father's wish, and we complied with it. I have long been aware of the attachment which has grown up between you and the dear child who is the object of your affections. She is worthy of you, and it is my hope that this attachment may continue until riper years

bring that happy union which you both look forward to. Then, and not till then, you must enter upon possession of your property. At present it is in good hands, and therefore put the knowledge of it from your thoughts, and follow the same course of self-culture and self-reliance which you have followed so closely all your life; but, above all, my dear son, she added solemnly, make celestial wisdom your early only choice. Follow the example of the meek and lowly Jesus, and seek to put your trust in that blood of atonement which He shed for the remission of sins, and then at last you shall be able to say, as I do now, "O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory?"

"With those words she clasped her hands and looked up as if she saw bright angels hovering near, and waiting to carry her to the Celestial City. Then she gently closed her eyes, and in a whisper scarcely audible she breathed, 'Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.' I at once beckoned my aunt into the room, for I knew her gentle spirit was about to depart. At that moment a ray of light from the departing sun fell on her face, but she knew it not. A brighter light was dazzling her enraptured spirit with the effulgence of its glory, and shone through her countenance in an expression of heavenly beauty. Never before had I seen her look so lovely; for the moment I seemed to forget that she was dying—a few moments more, and one soft, long drawn sigh, a passing shadow over her calm and peaceful countenance, and all was still. She lay as if in a peaceful slumber. Life's battle was over, and her triumphant spirit was now soaring aloft on the wings of faith and love, to join the blessed throng of the redeemed around the throne on high, where there is joy for evermore, and where they sing the song of Moses and the Lamb. Sympathising neighbours were soon in the chamber of death, and friendly hands tenderly closed the eyes and composed the limbs for rest—rest to remain unbroken until the resurrection morn.

"Alas! for the uncertainty of life's fairest prospects. In one short week, how great a change! At the beginning of that week I was gliding down the stream of life in bright anticipation of the future, and putting the evil day far away; but ere that week run its course, the cold sod had closed over all that was mortal of my beloved mother. O how can I describe the sense of desolation which oppressed me!—now when her gentle voice could be heard no more, and her loved form no more seen when I returned home at evenings, and when I missed that joyous welcome which I had so long been accustomed to receive; but for my beloved Lelah, how cheerfully could I have resigned life, and all its concerns, and followed my dear mother to the tomb! but God has wisely ordered it so, that our sorrows shall yield to the gladdening influences of life, and that the dark shower shall be followed by the bright sunshine.

"Gradually the natural buoyancy of my spirits returned, and my Lelah became more than ever the sun and centre of my being.

"She mourned my loss with all the affection of a sister, and oft when we met alone by the sea-shore did she mingle her tears with mine whenever my departed mother happened to be the subject of conversation; but my friend," continued the hermit, as he wiped away the tears which were stealing down his cheek, "I am now near that part of my narrative which, like a thunder-cloud, appals my soul to enter upon, and pierces me anew with a thousand sorrows; yet it must be told, but not now. Let us pause and partake of some refreshment."

The hermit here paused, and wiped the cold perspiration from his brow. His blanched cheek and tremulous voice showed how deeply the recital of those affecting events of his life had stirred his keenly sensitive nature, and made him fear that if he proceeded further he should betray such great weakness as was not desirable for a stranger to witness.

Old Yacob was scarcely less affected. The hermit's

impressive manner, and the deep pathos with which he described some of the more touching scenes at his mother's deathbed, held the old man spellbound, nor did he once attempt to offer any comment of his own, which on other occasions he was so prone to do. He sat silent and motionless, with his hands resting on his knees, except now and then he raised his thumb to dash away an unwelcome tear, which hung glistening at the tip of his nose.

"Eh, Mr Ollison!" he exclaimed at last, "dere's no mony things in dis world dat could draw water fae da e'e o' auld Yacob o' Trosswick. On da keel o' a misforn[1] boat he's seen neeghbours an' relations torn ane by ane fae his side by da rush o' da wild green waves, bit his e'e wis dry, though his cheek wis wet wi' da saut spray dat lashed sairly in his face—but your bonnie dear midder, sae guid an' sae gentle, cut doon like a daisy afore a mawin' sye,[2] is mair den I can stand ta hear aboot. Ales! ales! it wisna my lot ta hae da like o' her ta sheer my life wi', but a roarin' liven' deevil dat wears da flesh aff my banes wi' her sharg, sharg, shargin', eenin', mornin', and midtime o' day, an' aye liven' an life tinkin', sae muckle as da warr."

"Well, my friend," replied the hermit, "we have all our trials, you see; and you must just bear yours with patience, as you see me bearing mine."

"Ay, ay, dats true, Mr Ollison," rejoined Yacob. "Bit ye see ye're a man o' eddication, an' I may say I just ken a B fae a bull's fit; besides, dere is naethin' in dis warl' sae ill ta stand as shargin'. Solomon says, 'It's better to live in a lumhead den wi' a brawlin' woman in a wide hoose;' an' puir Samson, though he cud kill a thoosan' men wi' da jaw-bane o' a ass, an' pu' doon hooses aboot da lugs o' da Phalistians, yet he hed na strent to stand da shargin o' a woman's tongue."

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[1] Castaway. [2] Scythe.

"You rightly interpret Scripture, my friend," replied the hermit; "but come and share my humble meal," he added, as he placed before the old man some dried fish and potatoes which had been cooked in a pot over the fire. The repast being finished, the hermit resumed his tale.

"Just about a year after the death of my dear mother," continued the hermit, "on a lovely moonlight evening, I met my Lelah at our favourite trysting place by the sea-shore. It was autumn, and the harvest moon was at the full, and cast her silvery light over the dark waters which lay beneath us, and stretched far to the eastern horizon. The stars twinkled softly in a cloudless firmament, and the gurgling waves sang a sweet lullaby at our feet.

"O, how beautiful my Lelah looked as the silvery light fell on her lovely countenance while we sat together on a fragment of rock! How my soul was charmed by the modest and timid glances of those eyes, so full of heavenly light and depth of love, as she listened to the outpourings of my heart, overflowing, as it was, with tender love.

"As the 'golden hours with angel wings' sped on, the moon rose high in the firmament, and showed that the hour had arrived when the sillick fishers would return from the cliffs, and when some of them might pass the spot where we were seated, she therefore suggested that we should return home; but I felt that time had fled too fast, and instinctively held the cup to my lips, and would not let it go, but which also I was then destined to drink of for the last time. I suggested that we should descend the declivity of the rock and rest at its base, listening to the murmuring waves and the faint cry of the 'peeweep' until the sillick fishers had all passed, when we could return home unobserved. To this she consented, and we descended to the foot of the rock, but had not been seated there many minutes when we heard a moaning sound proceed from one of the creeks about a hundred yards from the spot

where we rested. Supposing it to be a wounded seal (for sometimes those animals, after being slightly wounded by the sportsmen, escape, but afterwards crawl up on the rock to die), I asked Lelah to wait until I should ascertain the cause of this strange sound, which, I said to her, must proceed from a wounded seal. I kissed her, and tripped lightly over the shelving rock, hearing her voice calling after me, 'Take care of yourself, Olla, dear.' I entered the dark creek from which the moaning sounds proceeded, groping my way amongst the huge masses of detached rock, which had been piled up in wild confusion by the action of the waves, sometimes clambering over huge boulders, and sometimes creeping on my hands and knees through openings between the fallen masses. In forcing my way through one of these openings I felt myself suddenly seized by the feet from behind. I struggled to disengage myself, but could not. I then tried to force myself back, but the unseen hands, with irresistible force crushed my ankles, and forced me forward through the aperture. In vain I struggled with all the energy of despair, until the rock was covered with blood from my lacerated limbs. A faint cry, once or twice distinctly heard, and which I knew to be my Lelah's voice, made me struggle for freedom as the drowning man in the wild agony of death struggles to reach the floating wreck.

"Nature at last gave way, and I sank exhausted and unconscious; and oh! how often have I wished, since that awful hour, that the oblivion which then gathered around me had settled in eternal gloom, and that hated life had not brought back the horrors of unutterable anguish which awaited me; but God's will be done; I know not His dark inscrutable ways, but I know He can make light to shine out of darkness; and that as He shall one day command the obedient sea to give up the dead that are therein, so He shall at the appointed time command it to give me back the treasure of my soul.

"When I regained consciousness, the moon had long since passed the zenith, and the dark shadows of the overhanging cliffs cast themselves far over the silent waters. Like a bright angel surrounded by darkness, my Lelah in a vision stood before me, and in wild transports of joy I stretched out my arms to receive her, but the phantom eluded my grasp. I sprang to my feet, and in an agony of grief I cried, 'My Lelah! O where art thou? O my Lelah!' But the dark frowning cliffs only mocked me by echoing back her loved name. I rushed to the spot where I left her, but she was not there. I again called aloud on her name, but the reverberating rock mockingly answered my call. O God! how can I describe the anguish of that moment! I rushed to the verge of the rock, and stretched out my arms in eager anticipation of the yawning grave. I sought the friendly gurgling waves to quench the fire of my burning grief, but as I bent back for the fatal leap, a voice murmured in my ear 'hope,' and my strength forsook me, and I fell prostrate on the rock, and sweet oblivion again hid my sorrows under her dark mantle."

CHAPTER IX.

Better be with the dead,
Than on the torture of mind to lie
In restless ecstacy.

SHAKESPEARE.

"HUSHED whispers," continued the hermit, "fell upon my ear, and I faintly inquired, 'where am I?' when the well-known voice of my aunt softy answered, 'You are at home, Olla; but you are yet too weak to speak; be content to know that kind friends are around you, who will show you every kindness.'

"On the fatal night which saw the tragic events enacted which I have just related, my uncle and aunt, as well as Lelah's friends, became alarmed when she and I did not return at the usual time; and soon they, with the people from surrounding villages, flocked to the cliffs to seek us. Every creek and crevice was explored by the earnest and, in the case of Lelah's relatives, grief-stricken searchers, until at last I was found by two young men who descended the rock, stretched insensible where I had fallen; but my Lelah—O God, how can I say the word?—could not be found! Many of the searchers, after I was carried home, lingered about the cliffs till dawn; but alas! all in vain; no sound greeted their listening ears but the gurgling waves and the scream of the frightened shelder,[1] as it flew from its roost by the water's edge; and no sight met their straining eyes but the kitty wake[2] and the shag,[3] resting on the lofty edge of the rock. All concluded that Lelah Halcrow had

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[1] Oyster catcher (*H. ostralegus*).
[2] (*Larus tridactylus*).
[3] Cormorant (*P. graculus*).

perished by falling over the rock; but as no trace of her body was ever found, many doubts were afterwards entertained as to this being the correct view of the matter.

"My opinion was then what it ever has been since, viz., that the supernatural hands which took my Lelah from me also held me a captive under that rock until she was carried beyond my reach, and into the regions of the spirit world, which lie far down in the emerald caves of the mighty ocean."

"No a doot bit ye're richt, Mr Ollison," exclaimed old Yacob, unable longer to restrain his desire to record a tale of his own in corroboration of the hermit's opinion. "Nae bodie in der senses doots bit dat dere's a hantle mair i' da sea den we ken aboot; an' just as truly as der hill folk, tangies, and brownies upo' da land, sae hae dey der kith and kin in richt guid plenty i' da sea.

"Nae farder awa den my grandfeader's time, dere wis auld Sandy Bairnson o' Stottrigirt, a man dat a' bodie kent, ae morrin i' da grey licht, whin he wis gaen doon ta da sillicks, he cam upon a muckle grey silkey lien sleepin' i' da scurrick[1] o' da stane. Auld Sandy happened ta hae his sea tullie in da boddom o' his buddie, an' tinkin what a prize da skin o' da silkey wid be fir making wiscoats, bonnets, an' tobacco cashes, as weel as twa or tree can[2] o' gude üiley aff da blubber o' em, he clicks[3] oot da tullie, an' afore ye cud turn your heel whaur your tae stüd, he sticked da silkey anunder da left flipper. Da baste gae an awful groan, and jumped up wi' sic a splore, dat he twisted da blade o' da tullie oot o' da shaft, an' guid ower da face o' da stane in a bulder.[4] In coorse, Auld Sandy wis sair vexed at da loss o' da silkey, as weel as da blade o' his tullie; bit what cud he dü, dere wis nedder hide nor hair o' da baste ta be seen, except a sma' thing o' glettie[5] lumie, upo' da water, whaur he haed gaen doon, an' dis efter a peerie start

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1 Hollow.
2 A measure containing about a gallon.
3 Snatches quickly.
4 Boiling, fierce ebullition.
5 Oily.

made the sillicks begin ta bool[1] i' da scrüiff[2] o' da water. Bit dere's nae mair o' dis, till ae time dat Auld Sandy an' anidder man gengs awa ta Narrawa to buy a new boat, fir den a days a' da boats cam fae Narrawa[3]; dey wir biggit wi' timmer pins, bit efter dey cam hame dey were clinkit wi' seam an' rüove.[4] Da warst o' dey boats wis da misforn knotts dat wir in dem, an' Auld Sandy wis da best haand dat ever wis kent in Shetlan' fir finnin' oot dis knotts, an' naebody laeked ta bring hame a Narrawa boat till Sandy haed seen her. Afore he dee'd he tell'd his son hoo he kent da meenin' o' dis knotts; an' dis wis it. Roond black knotts wis misforn knotts; dat wis, dat a boat wi' dis kind o' knotts in her wis shüre ta be cassen awa. Den dere wis windy knotts; dat wis knotts wi' sprains oot fae dem, an' dat shawed dat da boat wid aye hae da luck o' ill wadder. Den dere wis da richt kind o' knotts, dat wis lucky knotts, da shape o' ling, keillen,[5] or tusk; an' boats wi' dis kind aye haed luck ta get plenty o' fish. Bit as I wis sayin', Auld Sandy guid ta Narrawa ta buy a boat, an' whin he cam dere, he guid ta see da man dat biggit da boats; sae whin he comes in ta da man's hoose ta get some refreshment, he sees a auld man sittin' hurklin i' da chimley neuk, a kind o' cripple lüiken. Efter Sandy is sittin' doon a peerie start. da auld man turns roond aboot his head, and taks a guid lüik at Sandy, an' den he rakes his hand into a holl o' da wa', an' draws oot a auld rusty blade o' a tullie, an' says he ta Sandy, in his broken English—'Mine goot freen, me ask you eef ever you see dis sküan[6] before.' Sandy said, he thocht he sud a faan trow da eart, fir dere, as shüre as da Lord made him, wis da blade o' his ain tullie; an' sae, withoot sayin' a wird, ye may weel tink he wis blyde ta tak da door ower his head as fast as he cud.

"Den dere wis Auld Tammie Toughyarn, da sailor, a man

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1 To stir the calm surface of water, as fish do.
2 Surface.
3 See Note L. Trade with Norway.
4 Iron rivets.
5 Cod.
6 A knife.

The Hurkle Is a Happy Beast

dat wis ower a' pairts o' da warl, an' he tell'd dis ta Auld Ibbie Bartley, dat wis trids o' kin ta my wife's foster midder, an' her oey[1], young Lowrie Legaboot, tell'd me sae, it guid na farder atween, dat ae time da ship dat dis Auld Tammie wis in, wis lyin' at anchor some place far awa, upon a fine Sunday mornin', a merman cam abün da water, an' said dat he wid feel muckle obleeged if da captain wid shift his anchor juist a peerie bit ta ae side, as it wis fairly jammin up his door, an' his wife wid be over late fir da kirk. Noo, I tink dis mermaid—or sea-woman I tink it's mair proper ta ca' her—might set an example ta some dat mebbe tinks mair o' demsells. Hoo mony wid laek ta hae a ship's anchor jammed i' der door upon a Sunday mornin,' just as a gude excuse fir no gaen ta da kirk ava, whin a air o' licht smoor,[2] or saft flucker,[3] is enouch ta satisfee der conscience dat it's no kirk wadder; bit, Mr Ollison, I'm shüre I'm pitten you oot o' a' patience wi' dis auld failin' o' mines, dat I never can mak my tales sae short as dey ought ta be, whin idder folk is waitin' ta spaek. Bit noo geng on wi' your tale, I tink ye wir come ta da time whin ye wir lyin' in your aunt's hoose, just odious ill, an' nae bodie lippenin[4] life o' you."

"Yes," replied the hermit, "I had got to that point in my history; and to resume—When consciousness sufficiently returned to make me understand my loss, the shock proved too great for my enfeebled frame, and fever already burned in my wandering and tortured brain, and the lamp of life glimmered feebly in the socket. Alas! why did not its flickering light go out for ever, so that I might no more have awakened to the knowledge of life's bitterness? but it was to be otherwise, and I cannot penetrate the dark inscrutable purposes of God, nor know what He has in store for me. I will therefore wait patiently until, in His good time and way, He shall bring light out of darkness.

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[1] Nephew.
[2] Fog, drizzle.
[3] Snow falling in large flakes.
[4] Expecting.

"By the most affectionate care of my aunt, who nursed me with a mother's love, I was brought through the dreadful ordeal, and awakened once more to a knowledge of life's bitterness, and to find around me one dark and dreary waste howling wilderness, without one ray of light or hope to cheer the solitude of my life.

"On my health getting so far restored, an earnest wish was expressed by those interested in the school that I should resume my charge; but I found I could no longer mix with society nor follow its pursuits. I longed to turn my back upon the world, and seek in seclusion that solace for my grief and rest for my aching heart which mankind were incapable of giving.

"In this same cottage there lived an old man—a solitary over whose life hung a dark mystery—and to him I resolved to go. I visited the venerable hermit, and unbosomed to him my grief, and expressed a desire that he would permit me to share his humble abode, as the only retreat where life to me could be endurable. He listened patiently to all I said, and then replied,

"'My son, this is a befitting place for one like me, to whom the lengthened shadows of life show that the day is far spent, and that the night is at hand; but to thee, in whose ear the music of life ought to sound sweetly, and whose eye should be gladdened by the sunshine and flowers which brighten the path of youth, why shouldstt thou seek the life of a solitary, which can only embalm thy griefs instead of removing them?'

"Venerable father," I cried, "seek not to turn me from my purpose; my heart is cold and dead to life and its allurements, and it's only with you that I can bear it as a burden."

"'Well, my son,' the solitary said, 'seeing thou art so minded, welcome to share my humble abode and frugal meal; and I hope thou mayest learn something from old age, while the trials of thy youth teach me that at no period in man's pilgrimage to the tomb is he exempt from the sorrows of life.'

"For two years this venerable hermit was my only companion, and much I learned from his sage experience; but I never could draw from him the secret of his own life, nor the reason why he had become a solitary. After two years the old man died, and left me sole possessor of this cottage, and of the cultivated patches of ground which surround it.

"A blessed retreat it has been to me, because I have been near that dearest spot on earth, the last trysting place with my dearest Lelah,—that spot where we met for the last time, and where I joyously pressed her lips and heard her loving voice. It has been the holy sanctuary of the outpourings of a broken heart. Yea, with pilgrim's feet I have worn that rock smooth, and my tears, too, might have worn channels in its flinty bosom. And now, my friend, you know the story of my life, and your good and honest heart, I am sure, will do justice to my memory when I am gone. That you will bear witness to the truth, and shield my name from the unjust aspersions which have been cast upon it, is at least one drop of balm in the cup of bitterness which has been wrung out for me to drink alone."

The hermit here paused. The tension upon his overstrained feelings while describing those closing and touching scenes in what had passed of his eventful life, was too great for his sensitive nature, and he would have fallen from the settle on which he rested, had not old Yacob caught him in his arms.

"Oh dear, oh dear, Mr Ollison," exclaimed the old man as he supported the hermit, ye're just fairly dejasked,[1] an nae winder; it wid tak a harder hert den yours ta tell sic a woful tale, an' no brak doon afore da end o' it cam; bit trust in da Lord, Mr Ollison, though He hides His face fir a time, yet His compassion never fails, an' He hes promised dat da brüsed reed he will no brak; an' as He kens dat ye've been a brüsed an' broken reed, an' lang tossed upo' da billows o' life's ragin'

[1] Exhausted.

sea, sae will He bring you by-an'-by ta a haven o' rest, an' dat in a wy ye ken little o' at present. I'm a püir sinful craetur, an' kens little o' da wisdom o' dis world; bit I ken dis, dat da Lord is nae respecter o' persons, bit will hear da earnest prayer o' da simple an' unlearned, as weel as dem dats michty in da Scripturs; an' I earnestly pray dat her dat wis ta'en awa fae you may yet be restored ta you, and dat me or mine may in some wy or idder be da means o' bringin' dis aboot.

"I hed a draem no lang sin syne, an' a winderful draem it wis; an' although I dunna ken a' dat it means, yet I'm shüre o' dis, dat sontin is gaen ta happen near dis place, an' dat gude will come oot o' it baith ta you an' me."

"My heartfelt thanks, my dear friend!" exclaimed the hermit, who had now recovered himself, "for those precious words of friendship and comfort; and may God in His mercy grant that your good vision may be realised. I thank the Father of mercies that I am now able to say, 'Thy will be done,' whatever His dispensations may be towards me."

"Ay, dat's da kind o' speerit we a' ocht ta hae," cried old Yacob; "bit noo, I'm tinkin', I maun leave you, fir, as I tauld you, de're wis a storm wi' da auld wife da last time I wis up aside you, an' noo dis time I'm lükin fir a herrican, as I'm been a hantle[1] langer awa,—

"Bit da yatter an' da yowl o' a auld auld wife,
'll no soond doon i' da cauld grave dreary,
Nor da shrag an' cuttieshang[2] o' her weary weary strife,
Yacob's auld lugs, like tunner[3] winna hear aye.
His sair aekin' head shü'll nae mair deave,
When da bonnie cockieloories[4] grows on his grave.

"An noo, blissen be wi' you, Mr Ollison; an' may da praesence o' da Lord bide wi' you an' comfort you until, in

[1] Large quantity or space of time.
[2] Continued bickering.
[3] Thunder.
[4] Daisies.

His ain gude time an' wy, He brings you oot o' a' your trouble."

"Farewell, my good friend," exclaimed the hermit, as he pressed Old Yacob's hand with feelings of fervent friendship; for he felt that the burden of his griefs had been greatly lightened by the genuine sympathy and true friendship of this old man. Thus parted those two friends, Old Yacob pursuing his way towards his cottage, and the hermit retiring to his lonely fireside, where he sat for many hours lost in thought, and gazing at the half-consumed peat brands which lay on the hearth, and formed themselves by the help of his fertile imagination, into many strange fantastic shapes.

One remarkable appearance chiefly attracted his attention. This was a half-consumed brand which had a most striking resemblence to the hull of a ship surrounded by foaming surf, the latter being well represented by the whirling snow-white ashes which lay on the hearth. Just as the hermit was musing on this singular illustration of what scientific men call Pyromancy,[1] another brand fell down and disclosed two smaller ones behind it, and nearer the centre of the fire. These resembled a man and a woman, the former clasping or bearing the latter in his arms, and from the top of each issued a flickering flame, which by interpretation, meant joy or laughter. Although "reading out of the fire," as it was called, as well as cup reading, was not new to the hermit, yet he knew so little of those arts, or believed so little in their pretensions, that those singular appearances produced little other effect on his mind at the time than that of a passing fancy; but when read in the light of the remarkable events which so shortly afterwards followed, he felt the force of the saying, that coming events cast their shadows before; and he was also taught this important lesson, that we should be very slow to condemn the opinions and beliefs of others, merely because they differ from our own.

[1] See Note. Pyromancy.

CHAPTER X.

Some merry friendly country folks
Together did convene,
To burn their nits and pu' their stocks
And haud their Halloween.

BURNS.

IT is night, and the moon has not yet risen, but in the hollow of Trosswick Vale are seen faint glimmering lights marking the site of the village of Trosswick. About three hundred yards from the village, and on the southern slope of the Ness, is seen one solitary light; this proceeds from a single pane of glass in the roof of Widow Harper's cottage, which is lighted inside by a blazing peat-fire and by the "collie" which hangs suspended from the centre of the "rape." Writers of novels would say that if the lonely inmate of this humble dwelling ever smiled, it was through her weeds and tears like the sun in a mist; but as this is a true history and not a novel, the truth must be told, that "Bawby o' Brigstanes"[1] was a hale, hearty, buxom, middle-aged widow, "as canty as a kittlin," and one of the most expert match-makers that ever did honour to the trade.

According to the fashion of the time, Bawby married when very young, but her experience of matrimony proved sufficiently short to enable her to bear the loss of a venerable husband, without any dangerous consequeuces to the organ of her affections.

Old Hyndie Harper o' Helliklees thought that May and December might be better together than separate, and therefore he said, "Bawby, will du tak me?" and she said in reply, "Yea, dat will I, Hyndie;" and so the knot was duly tied. But old

[1] See Note. Bawby o' Brigstanes.

Hyndie, by sage experience and mature years, had come to the conclusion that the increase of the population was being sufficiently well attended to by those to whom the fancies or follies of youth could make such matters attractive, and therefore he more wisely left his not inconsolable helpmate without any kind of incumbrance, unless his old sea boots and "skinjup," which nobody would take as a present, could be reckoned under that head. Bawby o' Brigstanes, however, was a widow, and as such she decently put on a black binder over her white starched mutch. But here the principle of contrast interposed, and Bawby's smiles and simpers looked all the brighter for that, just as a belt of black cloud over the rising sun makes that luminary look all the more gorgeous. As time went on, Bawby set her cap for most of the candidates for matrimony in the parish; but some way or other nothing ever came of it; and as gossips generally have the bump of Causality largely developed, so it was discovered by the aid of this phrenological protuberance, that Bawby's over-sanguine temperament prevented her from waiting until the tree of love should grow like any other plant, and that in her laudable endeavours to force its growth after the manner of Jonah's gourd, it always shared the unhappy fate of that renowned vegetable.

Disappointments are, however, often blessings in disguise, alike to individuals and communities; and so it proved in the history of the parish in which Bawby's usefulness was to be made known. Disappointment did not make her a misanthrope, but the very reserve; it made her a philanthropist, doing all, and more than ever, the golden rule required. She set before her the noble task of conferring those benefits and pleasures upon mankind which she could not experience herself. She established a regular matrimonial agency office, consisting of a News Department, embracing general gossip and the latest matrimonial intelligence; and an Assignation Department, where introductions and love engagements were

carefully and punctually attended to. After a short time she added another department for Cup Reading, the importance and urgent necessity of which soon were made manifest, as matrimonial inquirers felt even more necessity to know something of the future than the past.

In all the departments no regular fees were charged, but small gratuities were not refused. Such as "a nicht's kitchen o' pork,"[1] a "cashie o' tatties," "a truncher[2] o' meal in a napkin, wi' a makin' o' tae in ane o' da corners," a "puckle o' oo'[3] when da sheep wis rued," and pieces of "tattie grund" here and there through the parish: the latter she generally obtained for "dellin'[4] a day in voar;"[5] and as the young folks in the families she assisted in this way were ever ready to help her in working the piece of ground set apart for her, she could always command a good stock of potatoes for winter; and, besides, by thus mixing with various families, she laid in a stock of general gossip and matrimonial knowledge, even more valuable than any vegetable product. She always kept two or three lambs or sheep over the winter, whose comfortable quarters were provided in the outer end of the cottage, and though she had neither hay nor cabbage of her own, the animals were nevertheless always in good condition; but this, like many other puzzles, only requires to be explained, and the explanation is, that "Auld Halloween" and taking in the sheep from the fields occurred generally about the same time, and most of the lads in the parish seemed to have been born in the world with a ruling passion for throwing cabbage-stocks down Bawby o' Brigstanes' "lum" on Halloween night; and as evidence of this, the accumulation of that vegetable on the night in question turned out to form a very fair winter stock of

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1 As much pork or beef as serve one meal.
2 Plate.
3 Pulling the fleece from the sheep's back just when about to fall off.
4 Delving.
5 Seed-time.

provender for the four-footed inmates of Bawby's cottage. What particular yard the cabbages came from was a useless question for her to ask, even if she had desired any knowledge of the subject: but this was a field of inquiry she felt no inclination to enter upon; and she therefore contented herself with the reflection that "it was just the boys' fun, püir tings," though it is not unlikely that the owners of the cabbages, when they missed them next morning, might have been so obtuse as not to see the matter exactly in that light.

It is Halloween, and numerous lanterns and fire brands, with tails of streaming sparks moving in the dark like planets, seeking the centre of a new system, are seen seeking that well-known centre of attraction—Bawby o' Brigstanes' cottage. Lads and lasses, fully a score, all in holiday attire as they arrive, take their seats on the long settle by the fireside, or on high-backed wooden chairs, "creepy stools," or any other kind of seat which Bawby, radiant with smiles and kind welcomes, can find for them.

"Ay, dere's himsell noo; come awa, come awa," exclaims Bawby, in her most inviting tones, as Johnnie o' Greentaft steps in over the floor in his thick soled clogs, white duck trousers, and blue jacket, and puts out his lantern, which he places on a chest-lid where others were already standing. "Yea, yea, we ken what's brocht dee a' dis rod da nicht; no ta see Auld Bawby, I'se warren; na, na, somebodie ell's—ahem;" and Bawby smiled and winked, and looked across the fire to "bonnie Annie Leslie," as the lads called her, who was sitting on the settle blushing like a rose, and knitting with nervous activity.

"I sall pluck a craw wi' you fir yon yet, Bawby," said Annie, in a soft tremulous voice as she glanced from her knitting-wires to Bawby, and then at the new comer, who was taking his seat on the only vacant chair in the cottage.

"My bairn!" exclaimed Bawby! "I'm shüre I said naethin; ye a' herd dat I mentioned nae names; sae haud du

dy tongue, my dear bairn; mony a ane wid be blyde ta get da glisk o' a ee fae Greentaft cassin der wy," and Bawby gave a heavy nudge at Johnnie's knee, whose chair happened to be next to hers.

"Ay, ay, we understand you, Bawby," said Johnnie, whose equilibrium had been greatly upset by the blushing charms of his sweetheart on the opposite side of the fire-place, and to relieve his embarrassment was swinging his chair on its hind legs in such a perilous way as might have placed the centre of gravity on the wrong side.

Annie Leslie was acknowledged by all the lads "aneth da Wart Hill" to be "da bonniest lass dat cam in da kirk door;" and therefore, as might have been expected, she had no want of admirers; but as she could only bestow the favour of her heart and hand upon one of them, the gift she wisely reserved for Johnnie o' Greentaft; and no one better deserved it, as he was a well behaved and handsome lad, and as ardent a lover as ever felt Cupid's magic influence, or the pain of his dart when shot from two bright eyes.

"Du düsna mean ta say dat du's brocht a bate we dee da nicht," said Johnnie, as he settled his chair down on its four legs, and seized hold of a bundle of dried bent which Robie Ridland had placed under his limb, and commenced to wind into simmits.

"I ken deil snüid dü sall wind here dis nicht. Dere—just lit da lambs ate hir," said he, as he pitched da "bate" to the outer end of the house. "Boy, du's mad," said Robie, as he looked after his bate to see where it fell. "I may as weel wind a bit simmit as dü naethin, shürly."

"Dü naethin! an' be blowed ta dee," echoed Johnnie; "kiss da lasses, man, if du has naethin else ta dü; dats mair like Halloween's wark, shürly."

"Weel den, boy. I'll begin wi' dy ane first," responded Robie.

"If du's man fir it, I'll no hinder dee," said Johnnie, as Annie looked at him with a reproachful, timid glance, while her fingers moved faster at her knitting than ever. "Bit I'll no dü it, du sees," rejoined Robbie; "I hae mair laekin' for Annie den ta toozle her bonnie new net mutch because du bids me dü it."

"Yea, Lord bliss de, du aye hes some sense," said Annie smiling, "bit he hes nane. Haud du dy tongue, Robbie; I sall dance at dy weddin' fir yon yet."

"Noo, Bawby, what's ta be da ploy?" said Rasme o' Raunshikbraes; "ye ken sae weel aboot it, dat we'll just lit you steer da boat, an' we'll row or sail wi' da wind, just as ye blaw it."

"Eh! my bairns," said Bawby, "I'm shüre, what wid ye dü without me? Ah, weel, I tink every ane sud tell a story or sing a sang, an' den efter dat ye can try your fortins an' some fun laek dat, an' hae it a' by afore da boys begins wi' der stocks. Shame fa' dem fir da dirt it maks aboot da fireside; bit hit min just be borne wi'; ye ken bairns will be bairns, an' I never cud hae da hert athin me ta idder rin efter dem or flyte wi' dem fir castin' twa or tree peegs o' kail in trow my lum on a nicht laek dis."

"Weel, Bawby," said Rasme, "da sun rises i' da aest, an' just whaur your shair is staandin', sae ye'll better begin, and dat'll set a gude hert in us a', and sae lit wis hae your sang ta begin wi."

"I, I!" exclaimed Bawby, "my dear bairns, my time o' singin' is by; anes upon a day I cud a sung as well as some dat tocht mair o' demsells; bit lammit, dat's a' by an' geen, an' sae sing ye dat can sing; an' Lord grant dat ye may lang sing wi' a licht hert."

"O Bawby, haud your tongue," exclaimed Rasme; "ye can sing better yet den ony o' us. I widna gie you yet for da half o' da young lasses; an' I'm shüre ye're as young luikin

yet as da maist o' dem. Why, a bodie widna tink ye wir muckle ower twinty."

"O geng awa wi' dee, boy," cried Bawby, throwing her hand towards Rasme, and her cheeks blushing with delight as she drank in his well-timed flattery. "Weel I'm shüre, what can I sing?" she added after a pause, and then began to sing in a shrill quivering voice, the ballad of 'Annie and Johnnie o' the Glen'—

THE BALLAD.

What bonnie, bonnie lad is yon sae trig an' braw
Dat's comin' trippin' ower da Vadle[1] Tree, O?
It's Johnnie o' da Glen, wi' his crew o' fishermen,
Come ashore wi' locks o' fish fae da sea-e-, O.

What bonnie, bonnie lass is yon sae trig an' braw,
Dat's comin', comin' hame wi' da kie, O?
It's Annie o' da Dale, bit her cheeks is growin' pale,
An' her apron string it winna, winna tie, O.

O sair, sair shü greets, an' sits by her lane,
An' tinks on braw Johnnie o' da Glen, O;
An' da promises he made his bonnie bride ta wed,
An' tak' her to his ain but an' ben, O.

What bonnie, bonnie lass is yon sae dow an' wae,
Dat's wanderin', wanderin' weary by da shore, O?
It's Annie o' da Dale, wi' her cheeks sae wan an' pale,
Seekin' rest aneth da waves fae her sorrow, O.

What bonnie, bonnie lad is yon sae trig an' braw,
Dat's comin' rinnin fast ower da lea, O?
It's Johnnie o' da Glen, left his boat an' fishermen,
For dey manna see da tear dat's in his e'e, O.

What twa lovers true is yon wi' kisses sweet,
In ane anidder's airms greetin' sairly, O?
It's Johnnie o' da Glen, an' sweet Annie o' da Dale,
Wi' love ta ane anidder clingin' dearly, O.

What bonnie, bonnie bride, weel buskit an' braw,

[1] A bridge formed by a single log spanning a burn which runs from the Loch of Spiggie, near Fitful Head, to the sea.

What bridegroom sae gallant an' sae gay, O?
It's Johnnie o' da Glen, an' sweet Annie o' da Dale,
Airm an' airm on der ain weddin' day, O.'

"Noo, bairns, dat's sürely my pairt," said Bawby. "Gude kens if it hedna been til a pleased you, no a cheep wid a come oot o' my head dis nicht. But noo whaa's neist? Oh, it's dee, Johnnie, my bairn; no a better haand i' da hoose; sae come awa wi' dy sang."

"O Bawby," said Johnnie o' Greentaft, "I'm shüre ye ken I can sing nane; but I'll ge you a bit o' a auld rime dat'll sair my turn. I tink it's ca'd da 'Mirry Fiddler,' an' dis is it, if I can sing it:—

'I am a fiddler ta my trade,
An a' da world weel knows it,
I screw my pins an' plink my strings,
An' rub my bow wi' roset.
As I go fiddlin', fiddlin', fiddlin',
As I go fiddlin' ferrie, O?
I'll fiddle until my fiddle an' I
Baith gengs tapsill teerie, O.

An' den whene'er I draw my bow,
Up quick da lads gets jumpin':
Dey wheel da lasses on da flür,
An' fast dey a' geng thumpin'.
As I go fiddlin', &c.

A pig[1] o' gin close at my side
Aye keeps my bow in motion,
An' springs mair sprichtly geng as I
Get half across da ocean.
As I go fiddlin', &c.

A dram wi' ivery reel I tak,
An' still der's na confusion
Inta my head, until my pig
Is brought to a conclusion.
As I go fiddlin', &c.

An' den I screw my pegs a' doon,

[1] Jar.

An' plink my strings mair slowly,
Becase da drappie in my ee
Maks rims aboot da collie.[1]
As I go fiddlin', &c.

My fiddle den gengs in her case
(Tree first strings needs restorin'),
But "Bass" goes on wi' steady dron
As lang as I can keep snorin'.
An' nae mair fiddlin', &c.

NEXT MORNING.

When I arise and ope my eyes,
I find I have been deep in—
My banes are sore, as da kill door,[2]
Is nae saft bed to sleep in,
Efter my fiddlin', &c.'

"Noo, I hoop dat will please you," said Johnnie, as he finished his song, and lighted his pipe with a live coal held in the tongs.

"Yea dat will it," said Bawby; "if ivery ane düs as weel dey'll dü. Noo, Lowrie, it's dy turn."

"O dear, a dear! what sall I dü?" said Lowrie o' Lingigart, with an affected sigh. "I can sing nane; an' as fir tales, gude kens my stock o' dem is bit sma'; bit ye maun just tak da will fir da deed, an' I'll dü da best dat I can; an' sae, if ye laek, I'll tell you a hill-folk's story, an' no a wird o' a lee in it, for my midder kent da folk as weel as shü kent her ain fedder and midder.

"Dey ca'd da man Robbie Ruttle, an' da wife Sissie Sandison, an' dey bedd upo' da Grund o' Brew, an' hed a family o' bairns, an' a lock o' kie, sheep an' horses, an' wir winderful weel aff. Bit the wife fell ill, an' efter a while shü deid ta a' appearance, and wis streeked an' kisted just laek ony idder dead boddie; bit whin da men dat wis at da fooneral

[1] A ring or circular haze, such as a person with inflamed eyes sees around a light.
[2] Elevated steps in the entrance to the kiln, where the fiddler usually sits when there is dancing in the barn.

lifted da dust[1] dey said ta ane anidder dat da coffin wis winderful licht, da sam is if dere wis naethin' in it ava, altho' dey niver tocht o' onything bein' wrang, till da news cam oot efter dat.

"Da nicht efter shü wis buried, da man dreamed dat shü cam til him, an' shü says, says shü, 'O Robbie, Robbie, I'm no happy, fir I'm taen awa wi' da hill-folk, an' I want dee ta tak me back agen; sae geng du,' says shü, 'da morn's mornin' wi' da first taws o' daylicht ta da muckle stane o' Stilligart, an' staand dere a peerie while, and den draw a ring roond aboot dee an' say,

'Oot side da ring your power may yet tine,
In side da ring Lord keep me an mine.'

Bit Robbie was a kind o' oorie bodie a' his days, an' tho' he dreamed da sam dream ower an' ower agen for monts, he niver hed da corage ta geng ta da grey-stane, as he wis tauld.

"Da morn efter shü deid wis a heavy faa o' snaw upo' da grund, an' some man bodie gaen up ta da hill ta lüik efter sheep noticed a great lock o' prints o' sma' feet laek bairns' feet in da snaw a' da wy up fae Robbie's hoose alang da yard deck, an' up ta da hill; an' aye here an' dere whaur the prints o' da feet wis, a' da wy up da rod da snaw wis marked wi' draps o' bluid."

"O Lord save dee, Lowrie, an' haud dy tongue noo!" exclaimed Girzzie of Glufftoon, as she let her hands and knitting fall on her lap, "du's makin' me dat oorie dat I'll never be fit ta lave dis hoose da nicht. Oh my Lord, what's yon!" she again exclaimed, as she sprung from her seat, and fled across the fire, seizing Bawby around the neck, and looking behind her with terror depicted in her countenance. "Is du mad, Girzzie;" roared Johnnie o' Greentaft, "sees du no dat it wis just da cat dat wis ununder dy shair?"

"O mercy, what a gluff I got!" sighed Girzzie, as she stepped across the hearth, and resumed her seat.

[1] A term applied to a corpse.