

### THE RAINBOW.

---

A SOLITARY Pedestrian was roaming over the glens and mountains in a wild district of the Northern Highlands of Scotland, when a Rainbow began to form itself over part of the magnificent landscape. He was, not without reason, a melancholy and grief-haunted man ; and the growing beauty of that Apparition insensibly touched his heart with a delighted happiness to which he had for a considerable time been a stranger. As the varied brightness of the arch which as yet was scarcely united, but showed only several glowing fragments, gradually became more vivid, his whole being felt a sympathetic exhilaration—despondency and sorrow faded away, and he once more exulted in the natural freedom of the prime of life. While he was gazing, the Rainbow became perfect, and bound the earth and heaven together in a span of joy. The glory illuminated two mountains, and the glen between them opening up beneath that effulgence appeared to be a majestic entrance into another and more magnificent world. The sides of these two mountains,

rent with chasms and tumbling torrents, were steeped in the beautiful stains of the arch, so that the rocks seemed clothed with purple, and the waterfalls to roll down in gold. As the Rainbow began to dissolve, the summit of the arch gave way, and the gorgeous colours, forsaking the sky, embodied themselves in a mass of splendour on each side of that wide glen. For a few moments the edge of each mountain was veiled and hidden in that radiance; but it gradually melted away into colourless air, the atmosphere was again open, and a few showery clouds seen hanging opposite the sun, were all that remained to tell of the vanished Rainbow. But all the green fields and all the woods were glittering in freshened beauty—the birds were singing—the cattle lowing on the hills—and the raven and the kite were aloft in heaven. There was a jubilee—and the lonely man who had been sitting on a rock, entranced in that vision, rose up and inwardly said, “Let my way lie up that glen whose glorious portal has vanished—let me walk beneath what was like a triumphal arch but a moment ago, into the solitary magnificence of nature.”

The Eremite pursued his way up the wooded banks of a stony torrent, and on reaching the summit of the cliffs saw before him a long expanse of black sullen moor—which he crossed—and a beautiful vale suddenly expanded below his feet, with cultivated fields, woods, and groves, and among many huts sprinkled about like rocks, one Mansion to which they all seemed to apper-

tain, and which, without any grandeur, yet suited in its unpretending and venerable solemnity the character of that lonely and lovely place. He descended into the vale, and happy he knew not why, walked along the widening stream, till he found himself in a lawn, and close by the Mansion which he had discerned from the hill above, but which had till now been concealed by a grove. At this moment, just as he was about to turn back, two Ladies stood close beside him, and with a slight embarrassment the stranger explained to them how unconsciously he had been led to intrude upon their privacy, and after that salutation, was about to retire. But the impression which elegant and cultivated minds make on each other in a moment, when unexpectedly brought together in a situation calculated to show something of their character, now prevented so sudden a parting,—and they who had thus casually met, having entered into conversation, began in a few minutes to feel almost like friends. The stranger, who had been led into this vale by a sort of romantic impulse, could not help feeling as if this meeting were almost an adventure. And it was no doubt an impressive thing to a young Englishman wandering among the Highland mountains, to form an acquaintance in this way with two such persons as those with whom he was now engaged in pleasant conversation. They seemed to be Mother and Daughter ;—and when, after about half an hour's walk, the stranger found himself in a spacious and elegant room, the guest of a high-bred and

graceful Lady in a widow's weeds, and, apparently with one beautiful daughter in her retirement, he could scarcely help thinking that the vague imagination which had led him thither under the Rainbow's arch, might have some influence even on the complexion of his future life. He had long been a melancholy man ; and minds of that character are often the most apt to give way to sudden emotions of gladness. He closed up all remembrance of one fatal incident in his life under a heap of fresh-springing and happy thoughts and feelings ; and animated by the novelty of his situation, as well as by the interesting character of those whose hospitality he was now sharing, never had he felt so free from anxiety and sorrow, and so like his former self, nor so capable of the enjoyment of life and every thing around him that was beautiful and enlivening. As the evening drew on, his heart was sad to think that, as he had come a stranger, so like a stranger must he be departing ; but these few hours had sunk into his heart, and he would remember them as long as he lived, and in the remotest parts of the earth.

Does it require long time, days, weeks, months, and years, to enable human beings to love one another ? Does the human heart slowly and suspiciously lay up one kind thought after another, till the measure of its affection be full ? May gentle words and kindling smiles pass from the lips, and yet the heart remain cold and untouched, and willing to lose sight of, and

to forget, the object of its transitory tenderness? It may be so with many, for the accidents of time teach different lessons, all equally necessary and wholesome perhaps to different hearts; but before human nature has been sorely afflicted, tried, or deceived, its temper is open to kindness and to joy; and attracted by the sympathies of a common nature, why may not those who are strangers to-day, be friends to-morrow? Nor does the deepest affliction always close up the fountains of love in the human soul. The saddest turn often in sudden restoration to the gay and joyful; like light streaming in upon a prisoner through the bars of his dungeon, is the smile on faces not yet bedimmed by grief, to the man of many miseries; and he who hugs his sorrow close to his soul, will often at once lay down that rueful burthen to which he has long clung with infatuated despair, at the sight of youth, beauty, and innocence, rejoicing before him in untamed, fearless, and triumphant bliss. There are often, also, sudden revelations of sympathy made between human beings by a word, a tone, a look, or a smile; truth is then conveyed suddenly and easily into their spirits, and from that moment they rest assured of each other's affection, and each other's worth, as much as if they had been mutually known for years. If there were not these strong and prevailing tendencies in our nature, the paths of human life would be barren, indeed; or the friendships that spring up over them would, in general, be sown by the hand of in-

terest or self-love. But nature follows other processes ; and love and friendship, at first sight, often spring up as necessarily as flowers expand from bud into blossom, in the course of a few sunny and dewy hours of one vernal morning.

The young English stranger felt this when the hour of his departure was come, and when the Mother and Daughter accompanied him down the vale, in the dusk of the evening, on his way from Glen-Creran, never more to return. Little was said as they walked along, and they who, a few hours before, had not known of each other's existence, were now about to say farewell with sighs, almost with tears. At length the stranger paused, and said, " Never will I forget this day, this glen, and those from whom I now part. I will remember them all, when my soul is sad, which it ever must be as long as I live. Take the blessing of a wounded heart. Ladies, farewell ;" and his eyes, dim with emotion, at that moment met those of that beautiful maiden, turned upon him with a heavenly expression of pity, and at last even stained with irrepressible tears. A black scowl was in the heavens, and darkened the green mount on which they stood ; a long dreary sigh of wind came rustling down the vale, and there was a low muttering of distant thunder. " This will be a night of storms," said the Lady, looking kindly towards the stranger. " It is not Highland hospitality to let a guest depart at dark, and in tempest—you must return with us to our house ;"

and a huge thunderous cloud, that overshadowed half the vale, was an argument not to be resisted;—so the party returned together; and just as they reached the house, the long loud rattle was heard along the hills, and the river, swollen on a sudden by the deluging rain, roared along the swinging woods, till the whole valley was in a tumult. It was a true Highland night; and the old house rocked like a ship at sea.

But the walls of the Mansion (which had once been a sort of castle) were thick and massy, and the evening past happily along within, while the thunder and the woods, and the torrents, and the blasts, were all raging without in one united and most dismal howl. These Ladies had not past all their lives in a Highland glen, and they conversed with their guest about foreign countries which they had all visited. The harp was touched, and the wild Gaelic airs sounded still more wildly among the fitful pauses of the storm. She who played and sung was no sorceress inhabiting an enchanted castle; but she was a young, graceful, and beautiful girl of nineteen, innocent as beautiful, and therefore a more powerful sorceress than any that ever wound the invisible lines of her spell round a Knight of Romance. At the conclusion of one air, a Chieftain's Lament, the mother heaved a deep sigh; and in the silence that ensued, the artless girl said to the stranger, who was standing beside her, entranced by the wailing strain, "My poor dead brother used to love that air,—I ought not to have

sung it." But that mood passed away; and before retiring to rest, the stranger said gaily, "Your wandering guest's name is Ashton." "We are Stewarts," was the reply; and in an hour the house was buried in sleep.

The stranger alone was wakeful. Not for several years had he been so happy as during this day and evening; and the image of that lovely girl beside her harp, sweetly singing, while the wild night was roaring in the glen, could not leave his thoughts. Even when, towards morning, he fell asleep, she was in his dreams; and then it seemed as if they had long been friends—as if they were betrothed—and had fixed their marriage-day. From these visions he awoke, and heard the sound of the mountain torrent roaring itself to rest, and the trees swinging less fiercely in the weakened blast. He then recollected where he was—his real condition returned upon him—and that sweet maiden was then to him only a phantom once seen, and to smile upon him no more. He rose at sunrise, and, from the window, contemplated the gradual dying away of the storm—the subsiding of the torrent that became visibly less and less every minute—the calm that slowly settled on the woods—the white mists rolling up the mountain's side—till, at last, a beautiful, calm, serene, and sunny day took possession of the sky, and Glen-Creran lay below, in smiling and joyful beauty, a wild paradise, where the world might be forgotten, and human life pass away like a dream.



It was the Sabbath-day, and Glen-Creran that, a few hours ago, had been as loud as the sea, was now not only hushed in the breathing repose of nature, but all rural labour was at rest ; and it might almost have been said, that the motionless clouds, the deep blue vault, the fragrant air, and the still earth, were all united together in one sweet spirit of devotion. No shepherd shouted on the mountain—no reapers were in the half-shorn fields,—and the fisherman's net was hung up to dry in the sunshine. When the party met again in the parlour whose wide window opening down to the floor let in the pure fragrance of the roses and honeysuckles, and made the room a portion, as it were, of the rich wooded scenery, there was blended with the warmth and kindliness of the morning salutation, a solemn expression belonging to the hallowed day, and to the religious state of feeling which it inspired. The subdued and almost melancholy air of the Matron was now more touching and impressive, as she was dressed in darker widow's weeds for the house of God ; and the sweet countenance of Mary Stuart, which, the night before, had beamed with almost a wild gladness, was now breathed over by a pensive piety, so truly beautiful at all times on a woman's features. The Kirk was some miles distant ; but they were prepared to walk to it ; and Edward Ashton, without speaking on the subject at all, accompanied them on their way to Divine service.

To an Englishman, who had never before seen a

Highland Sabbath, the scene was most delightful, as the opening of every little glen brought upon him some new interesting groupe, journeying tranquilly towards Appin Kirk. Families were coming down together into the wider strath, from their green nests among the solitude; and friendly greetings were interchanging on all sides, in that wild tongue which, to his ear, seemed so well suited to a land of mountains. The many coloured Highland tartan mixed with the pure white of dresses from the Lowlands; and that mingling of different costumes in the same groupe gave intimation of the friendly intercourse now subsisting constantly between the dwellers of hill and of plain. No haughty equipages came sweeping by. Almost all the assembling congregation were on foot—here and there an old man on a rough mountain poney—there perhaps man and wife on a stronger steed—and there a cart with an invalid, or the weak or aged, with a due accompaniment of children. The distinction of ranks was still visible, but it was softened down by one pervading spirit of humble Christianity. So trooped they along to the House of God—the clear tinkle of the bell was heard—the seats were filled—and the whole vale echoed to the voice of psalms. Divine service was, at this time, performed in the English language, and the Kirk was decently silent in sincere and unostentatious devotion.

During service the Englishman chanced to fix his eyes on a small marble monumental slab in the wall

above the seat, and he read these words—SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF CHARLES STUART, LATE CAPTAIN IN THE FORTY-SECOND REGIMENT, WHO DIED AT VIENNA, 3D AUGUST 17—. A mortal sickness instantly struck his heart, and in that agony, which was indeed almost a swoon of the soul, he wished that he were dead, or buried in solitude many thousand miles away from the place where he now sate. He fixed his eyes upon the countenances—first of the mother—and then of her daughter, and a resemblance, which he had not discovered before, now grew upon him stronger and stronger, to one in his grave, and whom he once would have sacrificed his own life to reanimate. He was sitting in the House of God with the mother and sister of the man whose blood he had shed! The place—the name—the day of the month—left no possibility of doubt. And now many other corroborative circumstances came upon him in that ghastly fit. He remembered the daughter saying after that lament sung to the harp, “I ought not to have sung it;—for my poor dead brother used to delight in that air.” The murderer of that poor dead brother had come wandering to a solitary mansion among the mountains, impelled by some evil spirit, and was now sitting below his monument along with her who had given him birth. But every one was intent on the service of God—and his white face, white as a sheet, was observed by none. By degrees he felt the blood circulating again from his stricken heart

—he began to breathe more freely, and had just strength to stand up when the congregation rose to prayer. He saw glimmering and unsteady beside him the meek placid countenances of the widow and her daughter—and turned away his eyes from them, to fix them again on that inscription to which they were drawn by a hideous spell. He heard not the closing benediction—but was relieved in some degree by the fresh air that whispered through the trees, as he found himself walking by the side of his almost unseen companions through the church-yard. “I fear, sir, you are ill,” said Mary Stuart, in a sweet and hurried tone of voice—and no other answer was given but a long deep groan, that sounded as if it rose up in pangs from the bottom of a broken heart.

They walked along together in sorrow, fear, and astonishment, at this sudden change in the looks of their new friend, whose eyes, when they ventured to look towards either of them, were wild and ghastly, and every glance accompanied with a deeper and bitterer sigh. “For the love of God—let us, if possible, retire from the crowd—and lead me to some retired place, that I may utter a few words, and then hide myself for ever from your faces.”

They walked along a footpath that winded through a coppice wood, and crossing a plank over a rivulet, in a few moments they were in a little glen, as lonely as if it had been far among the mountains. “No houses are in this direction,” said the mother some-

what agitated and alarmed, she knew not why—and they sat down together on a seat that had been cut out of the turf by the hands of some shepherd, or schoolboy, in his hours of play. “Mary, bring some water from that pool—Mr Ashton looks as if about to faint. My dear sir, are you better now?”—and the beautiful girl bathed his forehead with the cold limpid water, till he felt the sickness depart, and his soul revive.

He rose up from the seat, and looking stedfastly on their countenances, and then lifting his eyes to Heaven, he sunk down on his knees before them—and said, “My name is now Ashton, but it was not always so—hateful, horrible, and accursed, must that other name be to your ears—the name of Edward Sitwell.”

The mother uttered a faint shriek, and her head fell back, while the daughter sat down by her side, and clasped her arms with loud sobs round her neck. The stranger remained upon his knees, with his hands clasped, and his eyes fixed upon them who now beheld him not, for many a wild thought was hurrying through their hearts. At length the widow looked towards him with a dim and changeful expression, and then covering her eyes with both her hands, indistinctly said, “Fatal—fatal name indeed—has God brought before me, on his bended knees, the man beneath whose sword my dear Charles died! Oh! God of mercy, teach me how I should feel in this wild and

most sudden trial." "Pray for me—pray for me to God—and also intercede for me with your mother when I am far away—for believe me when I say, that I have not had many happy days since that fatal event,"—and rising from the ground, the stranger was about to depart. But there was something so irresistibly detaining in the pity that was fast streaming from the eyes of poor Mary Stuart, to whom he had addressed himself, that he stood rivetted to the spot; and he thought, too, that the face of the mother began to look with less horror upon him, and seemed clouded with a humane and Christian compassion. He said nothing in his own vindication—he uttered a few words in praise of the dead—and standing before them, with his pale cheeks, and convulsed sobs, and quivering lips, the sincerity of his sorrow and contrition could not but affect their souls, and bring over their gradually subsiding aversion a deep feeling of sympathy for him who felt so profoundly his own guilt. "Go not away from us, till we have both forgiven you—yes—receive his mother's forgiveness, and may your soul find rest from remorse, as mine has found rest from grief."

Three years had elapsed since the death of her son abroad in that duel, and the soul of this excellent woman had reached the ultimate stage of resignation. When, therefore, she recovered from that cold damp feeling of horror and aversion breathed over her by the presence of one whom, when the tidings of her son's

death first came to her, she had thought of almost as a murderer, she began to reflect on the few words he had uttered, and on the profound passion manifest in all his behaviour. In spite of her natural repugnance, she could not help feeling that he might have fallen in that quarrel instead of her beloved son—that there were no circumstances dishonourable or cruel attending it—and that by his own confession the day before, when ignorant into whose house he had wandered, he had for a long time led a life of melancholy and despondence, arising from the remembrance of that event. His mild and gentle manners—his intelligent and cultivated mind—and the unequivocal symptoms of sensibility and humane emotions which his whole looks, conversation, and deportment had exhibited, pleaded for him not in vain; and when she looked upon him once more in the calmness of exhausted passion, the mother, who through his means had been deprived of an only son, felt that she had wronged him by the violence of her feelings, and that it would be right, generous, forgiving, and pious, to raise him up from that fit of passion, and to look on him as an erring brother, to whom she knew her brave boy had been reconciled on his death-bed, and who had held his hand when he breathed his last. There was something, too, in the sacred influence of the Sabbath-day that at once softened and comforted her heart; he had walked with her and her Daughter to worship God in that little humble kirk, and ought she not now to prac-

tise those lessons of perfect forgiveness of all injuries, be they what they might, enjoined by that religion in which it was her blessing to believe? "Why should I have looked," thought she, "with such abhorrence and creeping of the blood on this young man? My boy is in his grave—I trust in heaven—God has been merciful unto me—and therefore let me now still my beating heart, and administer comfort, since he needs it so much, to one whom not chance, but Providence, has brought to be my guest." Such thoughts, when they had once entered her heart, found a permanent abode there—she was restored to a tranquillity wonderful even to herself—and taking Edward Ashton by the hand, she told him with a faint smile, that he must not so leave them, and plunge alone into the dreary solitude of those black mountains, but accompany them back to the house, and as they had joined together in the public worship of God, so would they that night kneel down together before going to rest, and beseech Him to be merciful to them who were all alike sinners.

During all this time, Mary Stuart had stood pale and breathless as a statue, drinking in every word her mother uttered, marking every tone of her voice, and every change of expression upon her countenance. She had been a mere girl when her brother went abroad, and though she remembered him well, and had loved him with all the tender enthusiasm of childhood, yet her growing thoughts and feelings towards a thousand new objects, calculated by their nature to



interest and delight her heart, had grown over that early affliction; and when she looked at her brother's picture on the wall of her bed-room, or the inscription on the marble slab in the Kirk, it was with a perfectly calm spirit, without vain repining or regret, and with a pleasant revival of old remembrances otherwise half obliterated. When, therefore, she saw her mother once more reconciled to the presence of their guest, and willing that one so mournfully connected with their fate in life, and so strangely brought to them, should not wander off for ever thus forlorn and despairing, her soul rejoiced within her, the former brightness of her visage was restored, and once more the smile was seen that mantles from a heart made happy, without and almost against its will, in the power of its purity and innocence.

As they walked back through Glen-Creran to the Old Mansion, the character of the weather—of the scenery—of the day, seemed to them all to have undergone a change. A more sober music was in the rills; the sky was not so dazzlingly clear; a dim shadow crept over the sweet Loch-Phoil—and, as if a hawk had been in the air, the voice of every bird was silent in the woods. Few words were uttered, but these few became always less and less unhappy; and as the Lady and her Daughter once more welcomed the English guest beneath their gate, it was with a profound feeling, in which aversion, dislike, or repugnance had no share—all these had vanished—although,

when they sat down together in the parlour, there was first an utter silence, and then several sobs and a gush of tears. A few hours ago he was an interesting stranger about to pass away into oblivion—now he was one whom they could never forget—and whom they both felt must be for ever regarded by them, now that the first startling agony was over, with affection for his own sake, with pity for his misfortune, and with sympathy for the contrition which he endured for an act which he, more than themselves or others, regarded as a heinous crime.

The Mother and Daughter retired to their own room early in the evening, and Edward Ashton was left to his own thoughts. He went out into the glen, and walked about the beautiful calm woods till his soul was soothed with the untroubled solitude. He had seen those whom in all the world he had most feared ever to see—and gentle looks and kind words had flowed mutually from each other's hearts. They were both perfectly happy—their grief had passed away—and he began to hope, that, after his long penance, for him too there was to be peace. Across all these thoughts came insensibly the image of sweet Mary Stuart, and he almost ventured to ask himself, "Does she love any one—or has her gentle heart been left to itself in her native solitude?" This was a passing dream—but it passed away only to return; and when he met her again, just as the heavens were beginning to show their stars, he felt towards her an affection so

tender and profound, that he wondered how a day could have produced it ; but then he considered what a day that had been, and he wondered no more.

All the domestics now came into the room, some of them old grey-haired people, who had been faithful servants to several generations, and Mary Stuart read to them several chapters from the Bible. It was a calm and happy scene ; and as a halo, in old pictures, is drawn round the heads of saints, it might well seem to him who looked on her, and listened to her gentle voice, that a halo now encircled the fair temples of Mary Stuart, as they bent down with their clustering ringlets over the Word of God.

His thoughts, during the wild solitude of the night before, had been many and almost all pleasant, for he had lain in a chamber within an old Tower of the Mansion, like an adventurer of the days of old in the Land of Faëry ; but during this night they were all most solemn under the weight of mere humanity, and while his fancy slept, it may be said, that his heart was broad awake. His hand had deprived that mother of her only son—that sweet maiden of her only brother—and might it not be in his power to supply to each her separate loss ? His own heart had hitherto conceived no deep affection—but had loved phantoms alone of its own creation. He had led a wandering, restless, and wretched life, for several years, and now, when the light of joy seemed to be breaking from a distance like the far-off and faint streak of the doubtful dawn,

his spirit expanded within him, and he dared to look forward to a bright futurity. Had not that fatal quarrel been forced upon him by the impetuous character of his antagonist? Had he not received from him perfect forgiveness, and manly acknowledgment of his courage and his honour? None reproached him for a quarrel that had not been of his own seeking, and he had long used his skill for the defence only of his own life. But two accomplished swordsmen had held each other at the point, and the young Highland chieftain had received his death-wound. This night was as still and breathless as the preceding night had been loud and stormy; and so, in some measure, was it with the heart of Edward Ashton. His thoughts, and feelings, and passions, had worked themselves to rest—a tranquillity, to which he had too long been a stranger, took possession of his mind, and in the morning he cast a rejoicing look over the awakened beauty and magnificence of nature.

The Lady, in whose hospitable house he slept, had thought all night long alternately of him and of her son. The melancholy life he had for some years been leading in his solitary wanderings touched her heart with the profoundest pity, and she wondered if his parents were dead, or if he had a father or a mother who suffered him thus to cherish his unwitnessed and unparticipated grief. Many a one who had been involved in the same fatality easily and soon forgot it, and led the same cheerful or careless life as before,

without blame from others, or remorse of their own consciences; but his whole youth was tinged with sadness, and the solemnity of age was affectingly blended with the natural candour of his prime. How was it possible to refuse affection to such a man? And her last thought, before sinking into the world of dreams, was that her son had expired with a cold hand clasped in his, and with his head on a pillow which his care had smoothed.

As for Mary Stewart, when she "lay down in her loveliness," she tried to banish from her closed eyes the image of the stranger. Yet why should she not think of him? What was he—or could be to her, but one who, when far away, would remember her in sorrow, as the sister of the man whose death lay heavy on his soul? She felt the tears on her cheek, and wiped them away in the silent darkness; once more she prayed that God would send peace to his heart; and when the touch of the morning light awakened her from disturbed sleep, to him her earliest thought unconsciously turned, and he was not forgotten in her orisons.

The rich and cheerful beauty of the early autumn covered all the glen—and it was not easy for the wanderer to leave the heaven that to him lay both within and without the house. Sometimes he ascended by himself to the mountain-tops, and waited till the wreathed mist rose up in the early sun-light, and revealed far below the motionless silence of the wooded glen. He sat alone by the mountain-cataracts, and

traversed the heathery shores of the great wide inland lochs, or the rocky margin of arms of the sea. Valleys that stretched off into the dim and distant day shortened beneath his feet ; and he enjoyed the stern silence of the black pine Forest, darkening for leagues the base of some mighty mountain. The belling of the red deer came to him in the desert, as the echo of his footsteps roused up their antlered heads ; and he strained his eyes to catch a sight of the eagle whose wild shriek he heard in the blue hollow of the sky. These were his day's wild penance in the unaccompanied solitude of nature. But hours of a sweet and human happiness were now often his ; for he walked with fair Mary Stuart alone, or with her mother, through coverts by the streamlet's banks—along green meadow-fields—glades where the young fawn might be seen at play—and into cottages where many a blythe and weather-beaten face welcomed the visits of them whose visits were ever of kindness, charity, or love.

Thus day after day passed along, and still Edward Ashton was in Glen-Creran. He had narrated all the circumstances of her son's death to the mother—and she felt, too truly, that her wild and headstrong Charles had sought his doom ! But not the less on that account did her maternal heart weep blessings on her dead son, while it yearned with indescribable emotions of tenderness and pity towards him who did justice to all his virtues, and who was willing to let all blame rest on his own head, rather than that any of it

should alight on him who was in his grave. "O, sir, —if my dear Charles and you had met as friends, well would you have loved one another! Had he been alive now—and you had come here an unconnected stranger, you would have crossed the moors and mountains together after the roe or the red deer. But his life has passed away, even as that shadow that is now passing over into Glenco—See, it is gone!"

They were sitting alone in the woods—no living thing near them but the squirrel leaping from tree to tree,—no sound but that of the cushat mixing with the murmur of the waterfall. Edward Ashton looked stedfastly in her face, and said, "Why am I lingering here?—need I say it? Your daughter Mary I do most tenderly love; if I can gain her affection, could you bear to look on me as your son-in-law? If not, I will leave Glen-Creran to-night." He spoke with great emotion, although suppressed; for to be pitied, and even esteemed was still far different indeed from being received as a son into the bosom of a family whose dearest peace he had been the means of breaking. He waited in terror for the first words of the reply, and they at once raised up his soul into a heaven of joy. "If I saw you married to my Mary, then could I lay down my head and die in peace. I feel as if God had sent you here to be our comforter." His soul was satisfied, and he gave a history of himself and his family—telling how he had changed his name for that of a kinsman, to whose estate he had succeeded.

“ England is the country where I ought to live—but if your sweet daughter can be won, every year will we visit Glen-Creran. But, alas! all my hopes are but a dream. She never can be made to love me!” The Lady looked upon him with a pleasant countenance, and an encouraging smile. “ My daughter’s heart is free—and it is impossible but that she must soon love you.” They rose up, and returned in silence to the house.

That evening Edward Ashton and Mary Stuart walked up the wild and lonely Glenure, and before they reached home, there was a clear moon to light them through the fragrant birch-woods. Her heart was given up entirely, with all its calm, pure, and innocent thoughts and feelings, to him who was now her lover; it knew no disguise, nor had it one single emotion to veil or conceal. No passion agitated sweet Mary Stuart, no wild dreams of imagination, no enthusiastic transports of the fancy; but his smile was light, and his voice was music to her soul; and in the serene depth of an affection which had been growing within her heart, even from the very first moment she beheld the stranger in the Pine Grove, would she now have willingly gone with him to the uttermost parts of the earth, or laid down her young and happy life for his sake. When he folded her to his heart, as they mutually pledged their faith, her tears fell down in showers, and the kisses that then touched her eyes and cheek thrilled with unutterable happiness through



her innocent and virgin heart. But dear to her as he then was, she felt, when about to part from him in a few days afterwards, that he was then far dearer; she then thought of being his wife in a vision of delight, for she was now deeply in love; and her soul sickened as the shadow fell on the sun-dial in the garden, that told the hour was come in which he must take his departure, for some months, from Glen-Creran.

Mary Stuart, except the year she had lived abroad with her Mother after her brother's death, had led a solitary life in the Highlands. Her heart had slept in peaceful dreams, and had been as undisturbed as that of a child. But now it was overflowing with a pure passion, and her eyes beheld no longer the shadows and mists of her native mountains, her ears heard no longer the murmurs of her native stream. Edward Ashton was now to her all in all—and her former life, happy as she had thought it, seemed now a vapid and empty dream.

The sun was high in Heaven, and with his full radiance smote the distant clouds that were dissolving into a gentle shower, over the woody termination of the Glen. "What a beautiful Rainbow!" said Mary Stuart, with the tears in her eyes—as her Lover kissed them off, about to say farewell. "A Rainbow brought me here, and as I am going away, lo! again shines in all its beauty the fair Arch of Promise!" These were his last words at parting, and they were remembered by Mary Stuart, and often repeated by

her, as she wandered through the solitary woods, thinking on her betrothed Edward. The hours, though they seemed to linger cruelly, at last had chased one another down the channel of time, like the waters of a changeful rivulet; and the morning of Mary Stuart's Wedding-Day shone over Glen-Creran. A happy day it was all among the mountains of Appin, and also over the beautiful Vale of Lorton in England, where, between their Christmas carols, many a cup went round, among his tenantry, to the young Squire and his Scottish Bride.